

US calls for 'independent and credible' investigation into violence against protesters in Sudan

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LONDON: An "independent and credible" investigation into acts of violence committed by authorities against protesters in Sudan is essential for political progress to be made in the country, according to Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy.

Speaking to the media from Addis Ababa on Friday, Nagy also reaffirmed the US position in Sudan – namely a civilian-led government which is acceptable to the Sudanese people.

Thousands of protesters who were demonstrating outside the army headquarters in central Khartoum for several weeks were dispersed, in violent clashes, on June 3.

"The US believes very strongly there has to be an investigation which is independent and credible which will hold accountable those committing the egregious events," Nagy said.

At least 120 people were killed and hundreds more were wounded in the clashes, and Nagy said the crackdown by the country's military had crushed all hope of a transition to civilian government which had existed before June 3.

"The events of June 3rd constituted, in our point of view, a 180-degree turn in the way events were going, with murder, rape, by members of the security forces.

"Until June 3rd, everybody was so optimistic. Events were moving forward in such a favorable direction after 35 years of tragedy for Sudan," he added.

Nagy and Donald Booth, who was appointed as Special Envoy for Sudan last week, visited Khartoum on earlier this week and spoke to Transitional Military Council chairman Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, leaders of the opposition as well as victims of the violence – including a US citizen who had been shot.

While in Khartoum, Nagy met opposition groups and civil society as well as military council head Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan.

The conversation with Burhan "was about as frank and direct as possible ... it was quite an exchange of views and obviously we did not agree on some of the

key points," Nagy said.

"Why mediation, why not direct negotiation between the parties? The two parties absolutely do not trust each other in any way," Nagy said.

Sudan's ruling military has acknowledged that security forces committed violations when they moved in to disperse a protest sit-in camp outside the military headquarters in Khartoum last week.

The spokesman of the ruling military council, General Shams Eddin Kabashi, said an investigation is underway and several military officers are already in custody over the violations.

He didn't elaborate on the violations beyond saying they were "painful and outrageous." He also rejected all calls for an international investigation into the incident.

In addition, earlier on Friday, Sudanese opposition leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi called for an "objective" international investigation.

Mahdi's elected government was toppled in 1989, in a coup led by former president Omar Al-Bashir.

After thirty years of rule, Al-Bashir was ousted in April following mass protests.

Al-Bashir was replaced by a military council, but protesters carried on with a sit-in outside Khartoum military headquarters to demand a transition to civilian rule.



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Sudan military acknowledges violations in sit-in dispersal
Sudan's state prosecutors charge former president Omar Al-Bashir with corruption

[Algerians rally even after ex-premiers detained](#)

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Abdellah Cheballah with Aymeric Vincenot in Paris | AFP

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Fri, 2019-06-14 16:19

ALGIERS: Demonstrators rallied in the Algerian capital Friday to keep up their demands for the ouster of all officials linked to the former president, unappeased by the detention of two ex-premiers.
The protest came a day after former prime minister Abdelmalek Sellal joined a

long list of prominent politicians and businessmen who have been detained as part of investigations into corruption.

"Thieves, you have pillaged the country," the crowds of protesters marching in Algiers chanted.

"They deserve what they got... and they must be held accountable by the people for their actions," said protester Mohammed, who declined to give his surname.

Thursday's supreme court decision against Sellal, an ally of ex-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, came a day after another former premier, Ahmed Ouyahia, was also remanded in custody as part of a graft probe.

"Jailing Ouyahia and Sellal is an excellent thing," said Cherif Tigrin, a 40-year-old carpenter taking part in the massive rally in the center of Algiers. "But we must continue" to protest as long as Bouteflika's cronies remain in power, he said.

Algerians have been holding massive protests since February, after an ailing Bouteflika announced plans to seek a fifth term in office.

The veteran leader resigned on April 2 as the pressure against him to quit mounted from all sides, only hours after army chief and close ally General Ahmed Gaid Salah demanding impeachment proceedings against him.

Gaid Salah has since emerged as a key power broker in the North African country.

Although the army chief has ordered anti-corruption investigations in the country, according to observers, he has not won favor with the demonstrators who are also calling for his departure.

"Gaid Salah to the (rubbish) bin," protesters chanted on Friday, according to footage posted online by local journalists.

They also called on interim president Abdelkader Bensalah and his prime minister, Noureddine Bedoui, to step down.

Several demonstrators also held up signs to mark the 18th anniversary of the "Black Spring" bloody riots of 2001, sparked by the death of a high school student in a police station in the Kabylie region.

The mountainous Kabylie region east of Algiers is home to the largest Berber community in Algeria who have long suffered marginalization.

"April 2001 and February 2019... the struggle continues," read one of the signs.

Demonstrations also took place Friday in several other Algerian cities and towns, according to social media reports.

It was not immediately clear, however, how many protesters took to the streets nationwide as official figures were unavailable.





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Algerian ex-PM Sellal remanded in custody over graft allegation
Algeria's ex-PM Ahmed Ouyahia appears in court in corruption probe

[Blood donation in the Middle East: The gift of life that is easy to give](#)

Fri, 2019-06-14 01:10

DUBAI: Blood donations in the Middle East have been described as “the gift of life” as the region struggles to cope with the demands posed by conflicts, humanitarian emergencies and the medical needs of a growing population.

International health experts have called on regular donors to step forward to mark World Blood Donor Day on June 14.

This year's campaign focuses on blood donation and universal access to safe blood transfusion, and according to the World Health Organization (WHO), more donors are needed “to step forward to give the gift of life.”

Those who benefit most from blood donations include people suffering from thalassaemia, a blood disorder that affects hemoglobin and the red blood cell count, as well as victims of road accidents, cancer patients and sickle-cell disease patients.

Experts say while the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have launched numerous initiatives to raise awareness of the lifesaving importance of blood donation, there is an increasing need across a wider region for regular donors.

“Many countries in the region face challenges in making sufficient blood available while also ensuring its quality and safety, especially during humanitarian emergencies and conflicts,” Dr. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, told Arab News.

The GCC countries say they collect in total more than 10 whole blood donations per 1,000 population per year, or about 1 percent, Al-Mandhari said.

According to WHO, blood donations by 1 to 3 percent of the population are sufficient to meet a country's needs. Even so, achieving self-sufficiency is a daunting challenge for many countries.

Al-Mandhari said that more than 90 percent of the blood is collected from voluntary, unpaid donors, aged from 18 to 44, with an increasing proportion of repeat donors. What is more, blood demand is unpredictable and even differs with each blood type. “For example O- blood can be given to patients with all blood types. But AB+ can only be given to patients with AB+,” he said.

Then there is the issue of short shelf life.

“To be ready to help patients in all hospitals, countries aim to stock usually six days’ worth of each blood type at all times,” Al-Mandhari said. “Since blood has a short shelf life – a 42-day window – and cannot be stockpiled, blood banks are forced to depend on donors to help maintain stocks.”

WHO’s most recent report on blood safety and availability points to “gaps in the key elements of national blood systems” in the Middle East.



A Saudi donor flashes the v-sign for victory as he gives blood in Jeddah. The Kingdom has one of the highest rates of repeat donors in the region. (AFP)

While GCC countries have taken steps to keep stocks at optimum levels, other countries in the Middle East are lagging behind international standards. The WHO report shows wide variations in annual blood-donation rates among countries, ranging from 0.7 per 1,000 population in Yemen to 29 per 1,000 population in Lebanon.

Al-Mandhari laid out the solution in a few easy steps: “Governments need to provide adequate resources, and put in place systems and infrastructure to increase the collection of blood from voluntary, regular unpaid blood donors, provide quality donor care, promote and implement appropriate clinical use of

blood; and set up systems for oversight and surveillance across the blood-transfusion supply chain.”

On the positive side, Saudi Arabia recorded a rate of 13.8 per 1,000 population, with a healthy spread across all age groups. The country also has one of the highest rates of repeat donors (91 percent) in the region. According to the WHO report, the proportion of repeat, voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation in the Kingdom is 65.3 percent, which “will keep the prevalence of transfusion-transmissible infections among blood donors at much lower levels than in the general population.”

In recent years, Saudi health officials have introduced a number of measures to ensure adequate stocks in blood banks, including those run by the Ministry of Health and dedicated centers. These include a large facility at King Fahad Medical City (KFMC) and the country’s Central Blood Bank.

In the Kingdom, to be eligible for blood donation, donors must be aged over 17, weigh more than 50 kg, and have passed a brief medical examination. The health ministry recently launched Wateen, an app designed to ease blood-donation procedures and help ensure facilities across the Kingdom have adequate quantities of blood by 2020.

KFMC officials say that every day at least 2,000 units of blood components are needed to sustain a minimum supply for patients at the facility and other governmental and non-governmental hospitals in Riyadh. Donated blood components are essential for the management of cases involving cancer, sickle-cell disease, organ transplant, surgery, childbirth and trauma, to name just a few.

The situation is not very different in the other GCC countries, which also need more donors.

In the UAE, Dubai Blood Donation Center, which accounts for roughly half of the total blood collected in the emirates, frequently highlights the urgent need for donors. In 2018 alone, it ran 635 blood-donation campaigns, which resulted in 63,735 donors and a collection of 50,456 blood units.

While all blood types are needed, negative blood types are in greater demand due to their rarity. “There is a continuous demand for all blood types as blood lasts for only 42 days. So donors are always needed to come forward to replenish these stocks,” Dr. Mai Raouf, director of Dubai Blood Donation Center, said.

“People can donate blood every eight weeks, with each donation potentially saving up to three lives,” she told Arab News.

Given that transfusion of blood and blood products save millions of lives every year, and the fact that “regular donors are the safest group of donors,” the importance of encouraging people to return to donate blood, rather than be one-time donors, can hardly be overemphasized, experts say.

“Without a system based on voluntary, unpaid blood donation, particularly regular voluntary donation, no country can provide sufficient blood for all

patients who require transfusion,”
Al-Mandhari said.

“WHO is calling on all countries in the region to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood – and to encourage those who have not yet donated blood to start donating,” he said.



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Health Ministry honors Najm for blood donation drive
Saudi health ministry organizes blood donation campaign for Hajj pilgrims

[OIC condemns Mołdova embassy move](#)

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Fri, 2019-06-14 01:58

JEDDAH: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned Moldova's decision to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on Thursday.

In a statement, the OIC noted the decision violated the UN Security Council's resolutions on the political situation in Jerusalem and occupied Palestinian territories, and the General Assembly's resolution opposing attempts to change the city's historical, legal and political status, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

The OIC urged the government of Moldova to reverse this decision and honor its legal and political obligations under international law. It also asked it to take decisions that would help achieve a lasting peace based on the two-state solution in the future.

The Arab League denounced the embassy move on Wednesday, saying: "It is a blatant violation of international law." It added that the decision was an open threat to the Palestinian people.

It urged the Moldovan government to change its position, which could have negative impacts on relations with other Arab countries.



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[Syrian refugee businessmen target of](#)

campaign in Egypt

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Thu, 2019-06-13 23:33

CAIRO: Since the outbreak of the war in Syria in March 2011, many Syrians have fled their country. In Egypt, Syrians have entered many industries, including food, textiles and real estate.

But a recent campaign against them alleges that they are providing financing for the Muslim Brotherhood, which is classified as a terrorist group in Egypt.

The campaign began with a tweet by Nabil Naeem, a former leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

"The economic activity of the Syrians in Egypt is part of the funds of the international organization of the Muslim Brotherhood," he wrote.

Egyptian lawyer Samir Sabri submitted a report to the attorney general, demanding legal action to reveal the sources of Syrian funds coming to Egypt. He accused Syrians of buying shops and apartments in commercial areas of Egypt, and renting them at high prices.

But Youssef Aboud, a Syrian who works in a shawarma restaurant in Cairo, said: "If those who promote the campaign in Egypt have evidence of a suspicious source of funds, the accusation should be made against individuals, not all Syrians."

He added: "I came to Egypt six years ago. (Among Egyptians) I feel like I live among family. Fleeing Syria to Egypt was the best decision I made. The choices were Turkey, Iraq and Egypt." Aboud said: "My family and I preferred Egypt because I feel that the ties that bind us are historic and deep."

Syrian businessmen "are trying to work, and to help us young people," he added.

"I don't think there are ulterior motives."



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