

Sudan interim military council chief Al-Burhan meets with Egypt's President El-Sisi

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CAIRO: Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, head of Sudan's ruling interim military council, arrived in Cairo on Saturday and met with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in the capital's Ittihadia Palace, the Egyptian presidency said.

Al-Burhan is on his first trip abroad since taking power following the ouster in April of Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir after months of protests.

El-Sisi and Burhan "agreed on the priority of supporting the free will of the Sudanese people and its choices," Egyptian presidency spokesman Bassam Rady said.

El-Sisi also said Egypt was ready to "provide all means of support to the brothers in Sudan to overcome this stage in line with the aspirations of the Sudanese people, away from external interventions," according to the spokesman.

The visit comes a few hours after a visit paid by the vice chairman of the Sudanese Interim Military Council, Mohammad Hamdan Duklu, to Saudi Arabia to meet with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Al-Burhan's visit comes after Sudanese protest leaders announced a two-day strike from Tuesday, as talks with the military over installing civilian rule remain suspended.

At odds

The Alliance for Freedom and Change umbrella movement is at odds with the military council over whether the transitional body to rule Sudan should be headed by a military or civilian figure. The negotiations have been on hold since Monday.

Egypt, whose president currently chairs the African Union, has voiced support for Sudan's military council.

Last month, El-Sisi hosted a summit where African nations urged the regional bloc to allow Khartoum "more time" for a handover to civilian rule.

Protest leaders were set to hold meetings with demonstrators at a sit-in

outside the army headquarters in Khartoum on Saturday to discuss how to resolve the deadlock.

On Friday, they said their strike at “public and private institutions and companies,” accompanied by civil disobedience, was “an act of peaceful resistance with which we have been forced to proceed.”

Thousands of protesters remain at the sit-in to demand the departure of the generals, who seized power after ousting Al-Bashir.

Protest leaders have called for people to march on Sunday from residential areas of Khartoum toward the sit-in.

Several rounds of talks have so far failed to finalize the makeup of the new ruling body, although the two sides have agreed it will hold power for a transitional period of three years.

Western nations have called on the generals to hand power to a civilian administration, while the ruling army council has received support from regional powers.

Al-Burhan thanked Gulf states – including Saudi Arabia and the UAE – and Egypt for their support during the current tumultuous times.

(With Reuters)



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Sudanese protesters call for strike amid divisions with army
Sudan's transitional council vows to back Saudi Arabia against Iran threat

[Iranian FM meets Iraqi PM as part of regional tour](#)

Sat, 2019-05-25 18:11

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdulmahdi met with the Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who arrived in Baghdad on Saturday.

Abdulmahdi and Zarif have agreed on the importance of the stability of the region and how to revive the US-Iran nuclear deal to maintain the interests of the two countries and the region.

Zarif earlier on in the day held talks with his Iraqi counterpart.

The two sides have discussed the bilateral relationships and the latest regional developments and the impacts of the US imposed sanctions on Iran and the region.

During his his two-day visit, Zarif will also meet the Iraqi president. On Sunday morning, Zarif will meet several senior politicians before he heads to Najaf to meet some clerics, sources told Arab News.

The discussions will mainly focus on the current crisis and its impacts on the two countries in addition to possible options to reinforce the attempts to start dialogues with the related sides to reach a compromise or solutions for the current standoff between Iran and US.

The Iranian official will leave Iraq on Monday. Zarif's tour also includes trips to Turkey, India and Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Iran's deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will begin a separate tour on Sunday which will see him visit Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, according to Iranian news sources.



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[Iran tensions](#)

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[Lebanon denies forcing Syrians home from Beirut airport](#)

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Sat, 2019-05-25 13:35

BEIRUT: Lebanese security forces on Saturday denied accusations by rights groups that they had coerced Syrians who had landed at Beirut airport into signing forms to return to their war-torn country.

Human Rights Watch and four other groups Friday accused Lebanon of "summarily deporting" at least 16 Syrians on April 26, after forcing them to sign "voluntary repatriation forms."

Most of them had been sent back to Lebanon after they were barred from entering northern Cyprus via Turkey, quashing their plans to seek asylum, HRW said.

But Lebanon's General Security agency "categorically denies it forced any Syrian to sign any form," it said in a statement carried by state-run news agency NNA on Saturday.

"Any Syrian who arrives in Lebanon and does not meet entry requirements, and... wants to go to Syria because they do not wish to remain in their country of residence for a number of reasons, signs a declaration of responsibility for choosing to return voluntarily," it said.

Lebanon hosts almost one million Syrian refugees, a significant burden for a country that had 4.5 million inhabitants before the Syrian civil war erupted in 2011.

The latest deportees said they were "pressured" by General Security officers at the airport, the rights group said.

Around 30 Syrians have been deported from Beirut airport this year by the General Security agency, the rights group said, citing local refugee organizations.

General Security estimates that over 170,000 Syrians returned home from Lebanon between December 2017 and March 2019.

The conflict has wound down in Syria, after a string of victories by the regime and its Russian ally since 2015, but the United Nations has stressed all returns should be voluntary.

The rights groups say some 74 percent of Syrians in Lebanon lack legal residency and are at risk of detention.

Local media in Lebanon have reported that the Supreme Defense Council, whose decisions are not made public, recently instructed General Security to deport all Syrians who have entered the country illegally.

The official NNA news agency, quoting a "security report," said Friday that Lebanese authorities had deported 301 Syrians between May 7 and May 20.

Syria's war has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions inside the country and abroad.

The war was triggered in March 2011 by a violent crackdown on anti-government demonstrations.



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Lebanon deports 16 Syrians
Northwest Syria fighting damages schools, health facilities

[Six women are all that remain of a once-thriving Jewish community in Cairo](#)

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Sat, 2019-05-25 01:09

CAIRO: In 1971, Egyptian daily newspaper Akhbar Al-Youm published a story by journalist Abdel Wahab Mursi about Cairo's "Jewish Alley," and how it had changed during successive migrations by Jews from Egypt. Mursi pointed out that the name is misleading and that this "alley" was in

fact an entire neighborhood which, at the time of his report, was home to about 25,000 people. However, only 18 of them were Jewish, all of them elderly or widows. The rest were Muslims and Copts.

"The Jews who did not sell their property during the time of immigration never allowed others to live in the houses they left," wrote Mursi. He also writes about a number of synagogues, including one called Rab Ishmael at 13th Al-Sakkia Street. Another, called Moses Ben Maymon and also known as Hermban, at 15th Dar Mahmoud had collapsed suddenly on the first day of Ramadan in 1970. Other temples mentioned in his story include Al-Torkeya, Al-Istaz, Rab HayiinQabous, Ram Zamra and Al-Yahoud Al-Feda'eya.

Almost 50 years after the story was published, much has changed in Jewish Alley. Most notably, the entire Jewish community in Egypt, led by Magda Shehata Harun, now numbers six women, according to a statement they issued in 2016 following the death of one of their number, Lucy Sawel. As for the synagogues, all but one – the Adli Temple in Downtown Cairo – have vanished or become derelict ruins.

"Both the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the outbreak of war between Jews and Arabs had a distinctive impact on the role of the Jewish community in Egypt," said Egyptian historian and writer Mohammed Abul Ghar. Most of the Jews liquidated their businesses and property and migrated to Europe, America or Israel."

Egypt was once host to the largest Jewish community in the Arab world. It was influential and involved in various aspects of Egyptian society. Although there are no accurate census figures, the Jewish population of the country was estimated to be between 75,000 and 80,000 in 1922, but had fallen to fewer than 100 by 2004.

At its peak, it included Arabic-speaking, Rabbinic and Karaite Jews, along with Sephardic Jews who had come to Egypt after they were expelled from Spain. In addition, trade flourished after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, attracting Ashkenazi Jews fleeing massacres in Europe. As a result, Egypt became a safe haven for Jews, who congregated in Jewish Alley and established a commercial and cultural elite. It would not last, however.

BACKGROUND

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Egypt became a safe haven for Jews, who congregated in Jewish Alley and established a commercial and cultural elite.

"During the era of Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt's president from 1954 until 1970), the conflict between Egypt and Israel increased dramatically," said Abul Ghar. "From the moment the State of Israel was established and invited Jews from all over the world to immigrate to it, Muslims started burning well-known shops owned by Jews, such as Chicoril and Ads.

"Several Israeli espionage networks, the members of which were Egyptian Jews, were discovered. In the 1980s, after Egypt's victory in the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, some attempts to emigrate to Egypt by a few families were made. However, according to the Egyptian constitution, after someone acquires Israeli nationality he is stripped of Egyptian citizenship and so faces

rejection of all applications for emigration.”

In the days when the Jewish community was thriving in Egypt, Abul Ghar said that wealthy Jews monopolized certain fields of commerce, including “Mosa Dubik,” “Marco E’nteibe” and “Jalabaj.” They traded in scrap and toys, while “Mizrahi” and “Mozaki” organized textile auctions in Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra city.

Jewish Alley, meanwhile, was not very hospitable to non-Jews. Hajji Abdul Latif Fawzi, an 82-year-old former assistant secretary at a medical center, said that when he went there one day at the age of 10 he was hit in the eye with a stone that had been thrown at him. The Jewish residents prevented any outsider from entering their neighborhood except for the few Egyptians who worked with them in workshops and textile shops.

Fawzi said when he entered the alley, he heard someone saying “Joey ... Joey.” This was a word used to describe “someone who is not Jewish” though he did not know this at the time. Then a group of young men rushed toward him and attacked.

“In the 1950s things began to change gradually in the neighborhood, as Jews started emigrating to Israel,” he added.





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House arrest for Jewish minors held over killing of Palestinian
Israel arrests Jewish students over Palestinian woman's death

[An NGO strives to stem brain drain of talent from Lebanon](#)

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LONDON: Lebanese professor Mustapha Jazar has made it his life's work to help connect students to the jobs they deserve.

While Lebanon has long produced highly educated students, this promising pipeline is badly affected by a lack of matching job opportunities.

Jazar set up the Lebanese Association for Scientific Research (LASeR) 10 years ago to "try to help the students through their journey from school to the job market."

"The government itself isn't doing anything about it," Jazar said.

LASeR is a research-driven nongovernmental organization (NGO) that focuses on

selecting candidates to pursue work-orientated research programs. Through the undertaking of specific research initiatives, the students are trained in areas that will have a positive impact on Lebanon's socio-economic condition, and can acquire skills that will improve their employability. Jazar says: "I'm a true believer in research. Throughout my life I have been a researcher and I've tried to find funds to do research; for myself, for my students and my colleagues. Then one day I had the idea to create an NGO to mobilize the benefits of research in a more systematic way."

For the first five years, LAsER was focused on university professors but the NGO has since shifted its focus to undergraduates. The program now takes in about 150 students annually. Jazar says: "LAsER's programs include a mix of capacity-building, soft skills and advanced technical skills according to their major. The aim is that students will be better equipped for the job market at the end of three years of university."

The framework is called "E2C: Education To Community." It has three modules: Media to Community, Health to Community and the soon-to-be launched Engineering to Community. "The idea is to take a bunch of students nearing graduation in their third year of study, call them to apply, and then enroll them in a competition-based experience for three to four months where we deliver training. At the end, they have to deliver a product," Jazar said. He said that previous projects have included society-wide health-awareness campaigns and public-technology solutions. At the end of the training period, a jury assesses the outcome of each group and gives a grade, along with the public's assessment. Jazar said: "In this way, they will learn the basics of how to deliver an awareness campaign and how to run a budget. If they need specific training, we will find a senior or alumni to deliver the training. Every team has a mentor. In the media group, most of the students have already found jobs." Jazar said LAsER was funded by donations and corporate sponsorship. The NGO relies heavily on volunteer expertise from corporates and within the university.

Local enrollment at Lebanese universities is exceptionally high – at about 50 percent – but the country's small size and job pipeline inefficiencies mean career opportunities are limited. "Lebanon is educating many highly skilled people but they are going abroad to work in the Gulf, Canada, Europe or the US," Jazar said. "We are facing a real problem, especially in research. Jobs are becoming competitive. Right now, we are nearing saturation. We will be observing brain drain soon."

In 2018, 4,000 students graduated in engineering, which is a huge number for a country that has a population of four million, he says. "We do believe that there will be a scarcity of job offers, but what is also lacking in Lebanon is self-employment, start-ups and initiatives led by young people, especially in coding," Jazar said. Through LAsER, Jazar aims to create a framework that cherry-picks the best talents from society and focuses these talents on addressing Lebanon's biggest issues and opportunities. "We believe there's a huge amount of social problems that need to be

addressed. We aim to raise awareness about our society and the environment with our students.

“We are training our students to look for problems and come up with solutions that will make money for their livelihoods – and for the betterment of Lebanon.”



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