

Car bomb in Mogadishu leaves 6 dead, many wounded

Wed, 2019-05-22 23:19

MOGADISHU: A car bomb exploded at a checkpoint near the presidential palace in the Somali capital Mogadishu on Wednesday, killing at least six people and wounding 12 others, a Somalia police spokesman said.

The deadly incident occurred as soldiers were conducting security checks on vehicles on the main road.

Capt. Mohamed Hussein said most of the casualties are soldiers and more than 13 people were injured.

The bombing was claimed by Somalia's Al-Shabab militant group, which said in a statement it had targeted a convoy escorting government officials and lawmakers heading to the presidential palace.

"A car bomb blast struck at a checkpoint near Daljirka, there are some casualties including members of the security forces," said security official Abdukadir Ahmed after the attack in the south of the city.

Abdikadir Abdirahman, director of Amin ambulance service earlier told AFP two people were killed and 12 others wounded in the blast.

FASTFACT

The bombing was claimed by Somalia's Al-Shabab militant group, which said in a statement it had targeted a convoy escorting government officials and lawmakers heading to the presidential palace.

Other witnesses said they had seen three killed.

"I saw the bodies of three people among them a military woman," said witness Mohamed Saney.

"Several vehicles were destroyed in the blast and ambulances rushed to the scene to collect wounded people."

Al-Shabab militants have been fighting for more than a decade to topple the government.

Al-Shabab frequently carries out bomb blasts in the capital near the presidential compound and at hotels frequented by government officials and foreigners. They fled positions they once held in Mogadishu in 2011, and have since lost many of their strongholds.

But they retain control of large rural swathes of the country, and continue

to wage a guerrilla war against the authorities.



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Somalia making progress but 'must tackle extremism' Millions hungry as drought grips Somalia

[Netanyahu's July hearing on possible indictment delayed to October](#)

Author:

Wed, 2019-05-22 23:06

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received on Wednesday a three-month delay, until October, for a hearing to argue against the attorney-general's plan to indict him on graft charges.

Netanyahu's attorneys had requested a postponement until May 2020 to give them more time to examine the evidence in three corruption cases, in which he denies wrongdoing, Attorney-General Avichai Mandelblit's office said.

In a letter to one of Netanyahu's lawyers that was released to the media, Mandelblit said he was shifting the dates for the hearing from July to Oct. 2-3.

He said a longer delay to a year from now would have "harmed the vital public interest in deciding as soon as possible" whether to issue an indictment.

In office for the past decade, Netanyahu won a fifth term in April despite an announcement by Mandelblit in February that he intended to charge him with fraud and bribery, pending a hearing with the attorney-general.

Expecting legal challenges, they also have been advocating legislation that would annul any Supreme Court ruling rescinding immunity.

Opposition legislators have described any attempt to shield Netanyahu or put limitations on Israel's highest court as threats to Israeli democracy.

Set to become Israel's longest-serving prime minister in July, the right-wing leader has called the allegations a political witch-hunt and said he has no intention of resigning if charged, with a renewed public mandate to govern.

Netanyahu, who formally heads an interim administration, is trying to put together a new coalition with right-wing, ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox parties that would give him control of 65 of Parliament's 120 seats.

Under law, he has until May 29 to inform President Reuven Rivlin that he has formed a new government. If he fails – which political commentators say is unlikely – Rivlin can ask another party leader to try.

With a new Parliament already sworn in, members of Netanyahu's Likud party have said they will work toward granting him parliamentary immunity from prosecution while he serves as prime minister.

Postponing the hearing with Mandelblit could take some of the pressure off Netanyahu's loyalists to rush immunity moves through parliament in the initial days of a new government.

In one of the investigations against him, Netanyahu is suspected of wrongfully receiving gifts, including champagne and cigars, from wealthy businessmen.

In a second case, he is alleged to have negotiated a deal with the owner of Israel's best-selling daily newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth, for better coverage in return for legislation that would slow the growth of a rival daily newspaper.



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Anger over Netanyahu pledge to annex illegal settlements Israel eases Gaza fishing restrictions after truce

[Deposed Istanbul mayor blasts 'lies' used to annul election](#)

Author:

Wed, 2019-05-22 22:57

ISTANBUL: Istanbul's deposed mayor Ekrem Imamoglu said on Wednesday that no one believed the "lies" used to overturn his recent election and called on voters to "correct this great shame" in next month's re-run.

"Nobody believes their claims," Imamoglu said at a meeting in Istanbul to launch his re-election campaign.

He accused President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party of peddling "lies" and "excuses" to overturn his narrow victory in the mayoral election in March.

"When I look at their facial expressions, I see that they themselves do not believe them either," Imamoglu said. The election board earlier this month accepted the ruling party's allegations of "irregularities" and called a re-run of the vote for June 23.

Imamoglu's victory for the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) was the first time Erdogan's party and its predecessors had lost control of the metropolis in 25 years.

Analysts say the government is reluctant to cede control of Turkey's biggest city, which provides its mayor with significant resources for patronage as well as a high-profile platform.

"We will show the whole of Turkey on June 23 that there is no way out other than democracy and the ballot box," Imamoglu said.

"Come and let's correct this great shame and unfairness all together."

Imamoglu said his campaign would focus on reversing extravagant spending in the city's finances which he said he discovered during his brief 18-day stint as mayor.

"The resources of Istanbul municipality are being plundered ... Istanbul municipality is not the property of a handful of people," he said.

The opposition candidate also accused the ruling party of copying his proposals, including reduced water bills and discounted student transport, saying it was like a schoolboy copying his homework.

But he sought to maintain a positive message, in line with his efforts to bring unity to Turkey's fiercely partisan politics.

"We will embrace everyone ... Everyone is a patriot ... You will see at the end of this process we will love each other more."

The election board was due to release its full explanation for canceling the results of the first election.

It did not annul the votes for the city council that were cast at the same time, and where the majority of seats went to Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party.



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CNN Turk criticized for cutting opposition mayor interview
Turkey ruling party veterans criticize Istanbul vote re-run

[Sabotage of oil tankers stirs concerns over Gulf shipping](#)

Wed, 2019-05-22 00:51

DUBAI: Amid rising tensions between the US and Iran, sabotage attacks on four commercial vessels off the coast of the UAE's Fujairah port have raised serious questions about maritime security in the Gulf.

The incidents, which included attacks on two Saudi oil tankers, were revealed by the UAE government on May 12, drawing strong condemnation from governments in the Middle East and around the world as well as the Arab League.

Now experts have warned that the sabotage attacks highlight a new threat to

maritime traffic and global oil supplies.

A Saudi government source said: "This criminal act constitutes a serious threat to the security and safety of maritime navigation, and adversely affects regional and international peace and security."

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) said the incidents threatened international maritime traffic.

While crimes on the high seas, including piracy, have tapered off in recent years, the attacks on the ships, three of which are registered to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have called into question common assumptions about the Gulf's stability.

Opinion

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)

Theodore Karasik, a senior adviser at Gulf State Analytics in Washington D.C., said governments of the Gulf region are mandated to watch over oceans and waterways. "On top of this requirement is the need for a new regime of maritime coordination to prevent attacks on shipping because of the repercussions for logistical chains, corporate strategies and insurance rates," he told Arab News.

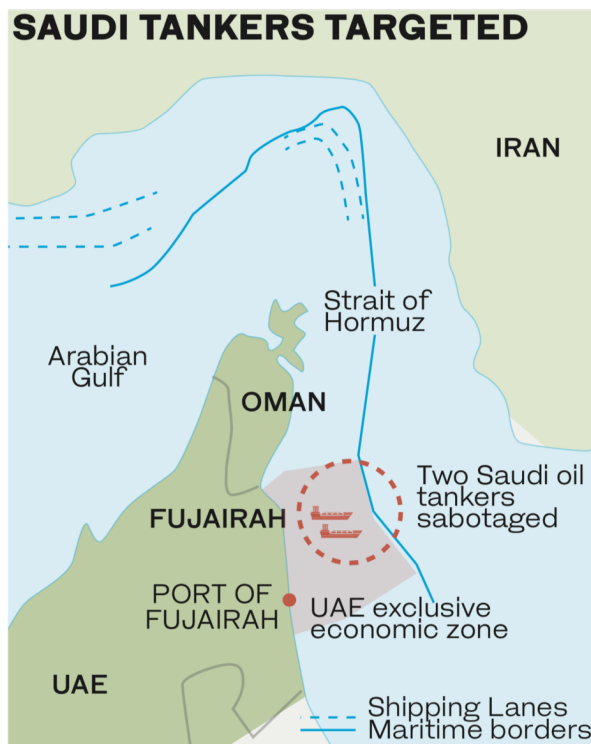
The sabotage attacks took place east of Fujairah port, outside the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway through which most Gulf oil exports pass and which Iran has threatened to block in the event of a military confrontation with the US.

Johan Obdola, president of the International Organization for Security and Intelligence, said the recent attacks underscore the need for closer intelligence-coordinated capabilities among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including satellite communication and maritime or vessel security technology.

"The threats to oil tankers are not limited to the Gulf, but have a global dimension," he said.

According to Obdola: "A coordinated joint task force integrating oil, intelligence security and military forces should be (established) to project and prepare (for potential future attacks). This is a time to be as united as ever."

GCC countries have intensified security in international waters, the US navy said. Additionally, two US guided-missile destroyers entered the Gulf on May 16 in response to what the US called signs of possible Iranian aggression.



“The attack has brought (the region) a bit closer to a possible military confrontation amid the escalation in tensions between the US and Iran,” Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a former chairman of the Arab Council for Social Sciences, told Arab News.

He said Iran is purposely dragging Saudi Arabia, the UAE and possibly other Gulf countries into its fight with the US. “The credibility of the US is at stake and Trump has said he will meet any aggression with unrelenting force. If Iran continues on this path, we might see some kind of a military showdown on a limited scale.”

Given the importance of the region’s oil supplies to the US, Abdulla said “it’s not just the responsibility of Arab Gulf states but an international responsibility” to keep the shipping lanes safe.



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If Tehran 'wants to fight' it will be 'official end of Iran': Trump

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Author:

Wed, 2019-05-22 00:32

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