

Gold laden private plane seized in Sudan

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Thu, 2019-05-09 18:40

KHARTOUM: Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) seized a private plane that attempted to smuggle a large amount of gold on Thursday, the RSF's Facebook page reported.

The plane, that belonged to a foreign company, was seized by the RSF in Sudan's River Nile state, the forces said.

The aircraft was due to land at Khartoum International Airport within the next few hours, according to the RSF.

The RSF grew out of the government-backed Janjaweed militia and is headed by Lt Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.







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Egypt deports dozens of Sudanese migrants Sudan army rulers want to retain Sharia as legal guide

[**Controversial minister back for third**](#)

stint in reshuffled Jordanian government

Author:

Associated Press

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1557414825451876000

Thu, 2019-05-09 15:05

AMMAN: Jordanian Prime Minister Omar Razzaz's newly reshuffled government was on Thursday sworn in before the country's King Abdullah.

The reorganization was marked by the appointment of political hardliner Salameh Hammad as the new minister of interior replacing the outgoing Samir Mubaideen.

It is the third time Hammad has held the interior ministerial post, his first stint being between 1993 and 1996, and his second in 2015 during the administration of Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour.

In April 2016 Ensour was forced to ask for Hammad's resignation after a large number of parliamentary members signed a petition expressing no confidence in him.

Haytham Erefej, a founding member of the Civil Coalition party, told Arab News that the government rejig will make things more difficult.

"This is a strange reshuffle, normally there is a goal behind the change, for example to lessen tension in the street, but this change will make the public angrier than before and this is in total contradiction to Prime Minister Omar Razzaz who was brought in as a liberal savior," said Erefej.

Sabri Rbehat, a former Jordanian minister, questioned the need for change. "It produces no advancement in the badly needed political process," Rbehat told Amman's Radio Al-Balad.

Abla Abu Elba, secretary-general of the left-wing Hashd party, said: "Even though we don't want to be pessimistic, the message in the appointment (of Hammad) signals that we will be facing a harsh position in the future."

Jordan MP Tariq Khoury told Arab News he was opposed to appointing government Cabinet members based on a quota system rather than qualifications. "We need to end this idea of making appointments based on geography or tribalism but on qualifications," he said.

Ali Khawaldeh, director general of the Jordanian Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, told Arab News he welcomed some of the changes particularly the renaming of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to the Ministry of Local Government. He said the new name was in accordance with "international norms" and that it will "strengthen the current decentralization efforts."

The country's Ministry of Telecommunications will now be called the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship with Mothana Gharabia continuing to head up the ministerial role.

Razzaz had asked on May 8 for all his ministers to resign ahead of the third reshuffle in the space of a year. It follows a change of personnel in the general intelligence directorate and at the royal court.

Bisher Al-Khasawneh was appointed as adviser to his majesty for communication and coordination as of April 23, 2019, and Maj. Gen. Ahmad Husni was appointed as director of the General Intelligence Department (GID) as of May 1.



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Jordanian Cabinet resigns ahead of government reshuffle
Jordanian mayor apologizes for helping Israeli tourists

El-Sisi and Haftar discuss Egyptian support for Libyan National Army

Thu, 2019-05-09 17:44

CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi discussed Egypt's support for the Libyan National Army (LNA) with its commander Khalifa Haftar on Thursday.

El-Sisi confirmed Egypt's support for efforts to counter terrorism and militias in order to achieve safety and stability in Libya, a presidential spokesman said.

Last month, Haftar's forces, which are loyal to the administration based in Eastern Libya, launched an offensive against the capital Tripoli which is held by a rival government.

The country has been divided since the downfall of Muammar Qaddafi, and Egypt has supported Haftar as a bulwark against extremist forces in Libya.

During Thursday's meeting at the Ittihadiya presidential palace, Haftar explained Libyan efforts to address foreign interference in the country, which he said aims to smuggle weapons, fighters and foreign terrorists into Libya. Haftar has accused Turkey and Libya of backing hardline militias in the country.

Earlier, the head of Libya's Tripoli-based government met British Prime Minister Theresa May and Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt in London.

Fayez Al-Sarraj, whose government is backed by the UN, has been in Europe this week seeking support against Haftar's Tripoli offensive.

Haftar's Libyan National Army launched an assault on Tripoli on April 4, setting off another deadly escalation in a country mired in violence since Qaddafi's death after an Arab Spring uprising in 2011.

Britain has pushed for a resolution at the UN Security Council demanding a ceasefire in Libya but its efforts have foundered amid divisions at the world body.



Meanwhile, three people were killed Thursday in a suspected hit-and-run attack by Daesh militants on a town in southern Libya, residents and a military official said, the second such attack within days.

Gunmen stormed the southern town of Ghadwa and opened fire before retreating back into the desert, residents said.

The attack came after nine soldiers were killed on Saturday in an attack claimed by Daesh on a training camp for Haftar's forces.

In Tripoli, three rockets hit a western suburb overnight close to the heavily fortified UN compound but otherwise there was less fighting than last week as life slowed down with the start of the holy month of Ramadan.



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Three killed in suspected Daesh attack on southern Libya: official Daesh attack on Haftar camp in south Libya kills 9 soldiers

Over 500 foreign Daesh men 'convicted' in Iraq

Author:

Wed, 2019-05-08 22:21

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi judiciary has tried and sentenced more than 500 foreigners since the start of 2018 for joining Daesh, the country's Supreme Court announced on Wednesday.

It said: "514 verdicts were issued, for both men and women, while another 202 accused are still being interrogated and 44 are still being tried." Another 11 were acquitted and released, it said. The statement referred to "different nationalities" but did not list any specific countries.

It said interrogations were taking about six months for those simply accused of Daesh membership, but anyone accused of actively taking part in the militant group's operations could be questioned for up to a year.

Iraq declared victory over Daesh in late 2017 and began trying foreigners accused of joining the militant faction the following year.

It has condemned many to life in prison, including 58-year-old Frenchman Lahcen Ammar Gueboudj and two other French nationals.

It has also issued death sentences for other foreign Daesh members, although they have not yet been carried out.

Among those awaiting trial in Baghdad are 12 accused French Daesh members, who were caught in Syria and transferred to Iraqi custody in February.

Government source have told AFP that Baghdad would be willing to try all foreigners currently held in Kurdish detention in northeast Syria for a price.

Around 1,000 suspected foreign Daesh militants are in detention in northeast Syria, in addition to around 9,000 foreign women and children in camps there.

Rights groups including Human Rights Watch have criticized the trials, which they say often rely on circumstantial evidence or confessions obtained under torture.

Wednesday's statement by the court "urged all trials of foreign terrorists to be moved to Baghdad, as most of the embassies are in the capital and so embassy representatives from the terrorists' countries can attend the sessions."

Iraq has also already tried thousands of its own nationals arrested on home soil for joining Daesh, including women.

It has begun trial proceedings for nearly 900 Iraqis repatriated from Syria and sentenced four to death last month under its counter-terrorism law.

The country remains in the top five "executioner" nations in the world, according to an Amnesty International report released last month.

The number of death sentences issued by Iraqi courts more than quadrupled from 65 in 2017 to at least 271 last year.

But fewer were actually carried out, according to Amnesty, with 52 executions in 2018 compared to 125 in 2017.



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Daesh leader Al-Baghdadi appears in new propaganda video Iraq says Daesh leader Baghdadi filmed video in 'remote area'

Anti-Kurdish demonstrations grow in Syria's Deir Ezzor

Author:

Wed, 2019-05-08 22:10

AMMAN: Arab inhabitants of Syria's Deir Ezzor began a third week of protests against Kurdish rule, the largest wave of unrest to sweep the oil-rich region since US-backed forces took over the territory from Daesh nearly 18 months ago, residents, and tribal figures said.

The protests which erupted weeks ago in several towns and villages from Busayrah to Shuhail have now spread to remaining areas where most of the oilfields are located in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)-controlled part of Deir Ezzor, east of the Euphrates.

Arab residents under People's Protection Unit (YPG) who have been complaining about a lack of basic services and discrimination against them in local administrations run by Kurdish officials have been growing restive in recent months.

The forcible conscription of youths into the SDF, as well as the fate of thousands imprisoned in their jails, have been major bones of contention, according to residents and tribal figures.

"Their repressive rule has turned many against them," said Abdul Latif Al-Okaidat, a tribal leader.

The protests took a violent turn when angry mobs took to the streets and disrupted the routes of convoys of trucks loaded with oil from nearby fields that cross into government-held areas. In some villages, SDF forces fired at angry protesters.

"No to the theft of our oil!" chanted demonstrators in the town of Greinej, part of the Arab-Sunni tribal heartland seized over a year ago by the Pentagon-backed SDF and spearheaded by the Kurdish YPG militia.

The YPG has long sold crude oil to the Syrian regime of Bashar Assad, with whom it maintains close economic ties and exports wheat and other commodities through several crossings between their territory.

The stepping up of oil sales to alleviate a fuel crunch facing Damascus has infuriated the local Arab protesters, with many holding placards saying they were being "robbed" of their wealth.

"We are deprived of everything while the Kurds are selling our oil to help the regime and enriching themselves," said Abdullah Issa, a protester from Al-Tayaneh town.

Syria's most productive fields are now in Kurdish hands since the YPG extended control over large swathes of northeastern Syria after capturing the city of Raqqa from Daesh in late 2017.

The Syrian regime controls areas west of the Euphrates river that are less endowed with oil resources.

Diplomats say Washington has also in recent weeks tightened efforts to clamp down on small shipments of oil by smuggler networks that are exported across the Euphrates river to traders working on behalf of the Syrian government.

The SDF has not publicly commented on the most serious challenge so far to its rule over tens of thousands of Arabs.

The YPG has sought to redress decades of repression against minority Kurds under Syria's Arab Ba'ath party.

SDF commander in-chief Mazloum Kobani, in remarks that seem to refer to the unrest, said his group was the only "institution that had "steered away from any form of racism."

The protests persisted after YPG commanders failed to make significant concessions to tribal figures who gathered at their invitation last Friday in the city of Ain Issa, two attendees said.

Among the Arabs demands were ending forcible conscription, releasing detainees and stopping oil sales from their region to the Syrian government.

The risks of wider confrontation were now growing, analysts say.

"The protests are now more organized and wider with a higher ceiling and developing gradually to a popular uprising where people are asking to be ruled by themselves and ending Kurdish hegemony," said Feras Allawi, a political analyst from the area.

"The response of SDF to the popular demands will dictate whether this leads to a more violent confrontation," he added.



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Arabs in Syria's Deir Ezzor protest against ruling Kurdish militia - residentsAt least 84 die fleeing Daesh in Deir Ezzor in east Syria: UN