

Italy urges EU to ready plan for Libya refugee flight, work on joint initiative

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Wed, 2019-04-24 14:42

ROME: Italy's government has written to the European Union asking it to ready a plan of action to deal with a possible flight of refugees from the armed conflict in Libya, Italian Foreign Minister Enzo Moavero said on Wednesday.

Moavero was speaking at a joint news conference in Rome after talks with the UN envoy on Libya, Ghassan Salame.

He also said that the European Union was working on developing a Europe-wide initiative for the country, as the bloc fears the emergence of fresh terrorist activities.

Moavero said the situation in Libya required a lot of "time and support."

Salame said that contacts had been established and he hoped to see results before the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan begins in early May.

"I hope that the contacts we have established or re-established among the two belligerents can bear fruit before the holy month of Ramadan," Salame told a news conference.

Salame, visiting Rome to enlist support from Libya's former colonial power for a possible ceasefire, did not elaborate on the nature of the contacts with the two warring groups.

Italy, whose southern islands lie very close to the North African country's coast, fears a mass exodus of refugees from Libya which is already a jumping-off point for boatloads of African migrants seeking to a new life in Europe.

Libya has been in a state of chaos since dictator Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in 2011 with Western intervention and the latest flare-up threatens to disrupt oil flows and leave a power vacuum that militants could exploit.



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UN: Libya fighting reaches facility holding migrants
Life must go on for Libyans despite war on their doorstep

[Yemeni officials say 5,000 migrants detained in Aden](#)

Wed, 2019-04-24 16:09

SANAA: Yemeni security officials say police have detained at least 5,000 migrants over the last 10 days who were attempting to cross the Saudi Arabian border.

The officials said Wednesday that the migrants, most of them from African countries, are being held in police stations across the southern city of Aden.

Aden's security chief, Shalal Shaye, says the migrants have launched a hunger strike. He says authorities are seeking assistance from the UN migration agency and aid groups.

The other officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief media.

Migrants from the Horn of Africa continue to travel to Yemen en route to jobs in Gulf countries despite the four-year war between the Arab coalition and Iranian-backed Houthi militia.



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[Sudan protest leaders threaten strike unless demands met](#)

Author:

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Wed, 2019-04-24 12:10

KHARTOUM: Protest leaders in Sudan threatened Wednesday to launch a "general

strike” unless the country’s military rulers meet their demand to hand power to a civilian administration.

Responding to a journalist’s question on what steps demonstrators would take if the ruling military council fails to cede power, protest leader Siddiq Farouk threatened “escalatory measures.”

“We will launch a million-strong march, and we are preparing for a general strike,” he said.



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Women’s key role in the Sudan protests that toppled Omar Al-Bashir
Sudan tensions escalate after talks with military break down

[**Egypt referendum extending El-Sisi rule to 2030 passes with 88 percent of**](#)

[vote](#)

Tue, 2019-04-23 20:58

CAIRO: Egypt's election commission says voters have approved constitutional amendments allowing President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to remain in power until 2030.

Lasheen Ibrahim, the head of the commission, said on Tuesday the amendments were approved with 88.83% voting in favor. The turnout was 44.33% of eligible voters. The nationwide referendum took place over three days, from Saturday through to Monday to maximize turnout.

Pro-government media, business people and lawmakers had pushed for a "Yes" vote and a high turnout by offering incentives.

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Final day of Egyptian referendum to extend El-Sisi's rule

Israel to name Golan settlement after Trump

Author:

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Tue, 2019-04-23 15:42

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday he plans to name a new settlement in the occupied Golan after US President Donald Trump in appreciation of his recognition of Israel's claim of sovereignty there. Netanyahu, who has been on a trip to the region with his family for the week-long Passover holiday, said in a video message that he would present a resolution to the government calling for a new settlement named after the US president.

"All Israelis were deeply moved when President Trump made his historic decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights," he said. Trump again broke with longstanding international consensus on March 25 when he recognized Israel's claim of sovereignty over the part of the strategic plateau it seized from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War.

The decision came only two weeks ahead of a tightly contested Israeli election, which saw Netanyahu win a fifth term in office.

Trump has shifted US policy sharply in Israel's favor since taking office, most notably by recognizing the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Israel annexed 1,200 square kilometers (460 square miles) of the Golan it seized in 1981, a move never recognized by the international community. Around 18,000 Syrians from the Druze sect – most of whom refuse to take Israeli citizenship – remain in the occupied Golan.

Some 20,000 Israeli settlers have moved there, spread over 33 settlements.



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Trump's Golan Heights move causes concern in Lebanon for land owners
US criticized for recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Golan