

Sudanese woman in iconic protest image reports getting death threats

Fri, 2019-04-12 17:00

NEW YORK: A woman who has come to symbolize protests in Sudan after being photographed chanting atop a car during protests against President Omar Al-Bashir said on Thursday she had received death threats since her image went viral.

Clad in white, Alaa Salah can be seen poised above the crowds in Khartoum, where demonstrators gathered to demand the military hand over power to civilians.

The ouster on Thursday of Bashir, 75, followed months of protests against his rule.

"I wanted to get on the car and speak to the people," according to a post on a Twitter account for Salah, 22, an engineering and architecture student at Sudan International University.

the struggle continues... [#thawra #Sudan pic.twitter.com/zJ91Xqsew5](#)

– Alaa Salah (@iAlaaSalah) [April 11, 2019](#)

"We need international support, for people to be aware of what's happening and to understand our demands."

The post praised the role of Sudanese women, many of whom have taken to the streets in protest.

Figures from the World Bank show that less than half of women finish secondary school in Sudan where female life expectancy is about 66 years old. "You cannot have a revolution without women. You cannot have democracy without women," read the tweet. "We believed we could, so we did."



Dubbed online as “Kandaka”, or Nubian queen, she has become a symbol of the protests which she says have traditionally had a female backbone in Sudan. (File photo/AFP)

Calling herself “very proud to take part in this revolution,” Salah said her life has been threatened since her picture and video went viral on social media.

“I will not bow down. My voice can not be suppressed,” according to a tweet on her account, adding that she would hold Bashir responsible “if anything happens to me.”

The Thomson Reuters Foundation could not reach Salah for comment or verify that she wrote the tweets herself on her account rather than representatives. Bashir has been indicted by the International Criminal Court in The Hague and faces an arrest warrant over allegations of genocide in Sudan’s Darfur region during an insurgency that began in 2003 and led to the death of an estimated 300,000 people. He denies the allegations.





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Viral 'Nubian queen' rally leader says women key to Sudan protests
Sudan should free protesters, investigate use of force: UN

[Morocco sentences Swiss man to 10 years in jail for 'terrorism'](#)

Fri, 2019-04-12 16:57

RABAT: A Moroccan court has sentenced a Swiss citizen arrested in connection with the murder of two Scandinavian hikers to 10 years in prison on terrorism charges, his lawyer said Friday.

Kahlil Idriss said the man, identified only as Nicolas P., 33, was convicted Thursday in the city of Sale, near Rabat, in a case unrelated to the double murder.

A dual Swiss-Spanish citizen was among more than 20 people arrested after

Danish student Louisa Vesterager Jespersen, 24, and 28-year-old Norwegian Maren Ueland were found beheaded on December 17 in the High Atlas mountains south of Marrakesh.

Nicolas P. was arrested in January for having had contact with the Swiss-Spanish national as well as compatriots with ties to Syria, Idriss said. He was found guilty of "forming a terrorist group."

The lawyer said he has filed an appeal on the basis that his client had signed a police report in Arabic without having read it.

The accused told the court he had been paid by Switzerland's secret services for making contact with Swiss terror suspects.

Moroccan authorities allege the four main suspects in the hikers' murders were sympathizers of Daesh but not in direct contact with Daesh members in Iraq or Syria.



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[Saudi Red Crescent, UAE to help Iranian citizens affected by floods](#)

Fri, 2019-04-12 15:01

The Saudi Red Crescent Society, in coordination with its UAE counterpart, has

announced a joint initiative to alleviate the suffering of Iranian citizens affected by the unprecedented floods in Iran, SPA reported on Friday

In a joint statement, the two bodies said that this joint initiative comes from “the bonds of Muslim brotherhood and emphasizes on human solidarity” with the Iranian people.

The Saudi Red Crescent Society and the UAE Red Crescent Authority are currently considering mechanisms to activate this initiative and to contribute positively to reducing the impact of floods in the affected areas.



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70,000 ordered to flee their homes in Iran flood disasterRouhani: Iran will continue resisting US pressure

[**Netanyahu looks to form right-wing**](#)

government after victory

Author:

Thu, 2019-04-11 21:54

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to form a right-wing governing coalition on Thursday after securing victory in a high-stakes Israeli election despite a strong challenge from a centrist alliance.

The results from Tuesday's vote came despite corruption allegations against the 69-year-old premier and kept him on course to become Israel's longest-serving prime minister later this year.

The allegations are likely to play an important role in coalition negotiations as many analysts expect Netanyahu to demand pledges from potential partners to agree to remain in his government if he is indicted.

Nationalist bend

Netanyahu will rely in part on politicians of the nationalist right opposed to a Palestinian state to put together his government.

His current government is already seen as the most right-wing in Israel's history, and his next is expected to be similar if not even further to the right.

Netanyahu himself, in a campaign pledge just three days before polling day, pledged to begin annexing settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Applying sovereignty in the West Bank on a large scale could effectively end remaining hopes for a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu's pledge was widely seen as an appeal to the far right, and it appears to have worked: He boosted the number of parliamentary seats for his Likud, while smaller, far-right parties struggled.

The Likud said late on Wednesday that Netanyahu "will form a right-wing government and he is already in advanced negotiations with the national camp partners."

Throughout the campaign, Netanyahu highlighted his bond with US President Donald Trump, who has swung US policy sharply in Israel's favor and openly backed the prime minister.

On Wednesday, Trump said the incumbent's election to a fifth term gives the White House's long-awaited peace plan, expected to be released in the coming weeks, a "better chance."

It was not clear what he meant.

He also tweeted a picture of a Netanyahu supporter waving a Trump flag and telephoned the premier to offer congratulations.

The election was seen as a referendum on the veteran prime minister, who has built a reputation as guarantor of Israel's security and economic growth, but whose divisive right-wing populism and alleged corruption led to calls for change.

The results reflected his deft political skills, Israel's shift to the right and wide satisfaction with Netanyahu's achievements, but also the fact that many voters are fed up with him.

The new centrist Blue and White alliance put together by ex-military chief Benny Gantz will finish with a similar number of seats to the Likud even though it came together less than two months before the polls.

Gantz's alliance, which conceded defeat on Wednesday night, however could not peel away enough right-wing votes to unseat Netanyahu.

The results showed that the Likud together with other right-wing parties allied to the prime minister would hold around 65 seats in the 120-seat parliament.

Final official results are expected to be announced by Friday.

They leave President Reuven Rivlin, who must ask one of the candidates to form a government, with little choice but to pick Netanyahu.

Intensive coalition negotiations could drag on for days or even weeks.

Rivlin said he would begin consultations with party leaders next week ahead of making his decision.

His office said the consultations would be broadcast live in their entirety for the first time.

Gantz, a 59-year-old former paratrooper, mounted a strong challenge by brandishing his security credentials while pledging to undo damage he says Netanyahu has inflicted on the country with divisive politics.

"We respect the decision of the people," Gantz said on Wednesday night.

Former Finance Minister Yair Lapid, who co-led Blue and White, vowed to "make life bitter for the Netanyahu government."

The close race between the two main parties had led to uncertainty after polls closed Tuesday night and exit surveys were released.

Both Netanyahu and Gantz claimed victory after the initial exit polls, though even then it appeared Netanyahu was best placed to form a coalition.

Speaking in the early hours of Wednesday at the Likud's post-election party in Tel Aviv, Netanyahu called it a "magnificent victory."

The vote had been expected to be close as Netanyahu faced potential corruption charges.

Fighting for his political life, he spent the weeks ahead of the vote campaigning furiously to energise his right-wing base.

Netanyahu has been premier for a total of more than 13 years, but now faces the prospect of becoming the first sitting prime minister to be indicted.

The attorney general has announced he intends to charge Netanyahu with bribery, fraud and breach of trust pending an upcoming hearing.



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Netanyahu victory torpedoes two-state solution, say analysts
Netanyahu rival concedes defeat in Israeli election

[Historic water levels at Iraq reservoirs and dams](#)

Author:

Thu, 2019-04-11 21:42

SAMARRA, Iraq: Water levels in Iraq's reservoirs and dams have reached historic heights, officials have told AFP, with thousands of families facing

possible displacement by more flooding.

Weeks of rain compounded by melting snowcaps in neighboring Turkey and Iran have almost filled Iraq's four main reservoirs and swelled the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

In Samarra, north of Baghdad, water is being diverted into the natural reservoir at Tharthar Lake in amounts unseen in decades, said dam chief Kareem Hassan.

"Today, the Tharthar barrage is seeing the highest levels of water passing through in its history," Hassan told AFP.

"We haven't seen such levels pass through the structure since it was founded in 1956, so 63 years."

The Dukan dam in the northeast also "had not witnessed water levels this high since 1988," said manager Hama Taher, calling on people living nearby to leave.

Authorities have said the excess will be stored in reservoirs ahead of expected droughts during blistering summer months, and have pre-emptively restricted farmers from planting crops that need high amounts of water.

The water arriving at Tharthar is gushing south from Iraq's largest reservoir in Mosul, currently holding 9 billion cubic meters of water – some 2 billion short of capacity, the Water Ministry has said.

The high levels have put two bridges linking the banks of Mosul under water, leaving truck drivers stranded with goods on either side.

"We have officially told kiosk owners and residents to get away from the banks," said Hussem Al-Sumaidai, who heads civil defense operations in the broader Nineveh province.

Water levels in Mosul were also blamed by some for last month's ferry drowning that killed more than 100 people.

Further south, villages and surrounding fields have been flooded, sending farmers into a frenzy.

More than 8,000 hectares of agriculture have been flooded in the small village of Huweidi in Basra province alone, according to its mayor, Mohammad Nasseh.

Hundreds of families were displaced in the southern province of Missan, with another 2,000 possibly forced to flee soon, the UN has said.

The UN has had to deliver humanitarian aid by boat in some areas due to flooding, it said on Wednesday.

Despite reassurances by the Iraqi government, the high levels have sparked concern among observers including environmental scientist Azzam Alwash.

The Mosul dam was built atop a bedrock of gypsum, a mineral that dissolves in water. That foundation requires regular cement injections to prevent cracks in the gypsum from expanding.

“If the bedrock settles as a result of cavities, that settlement will translate into damage to the core of the dam which cannot be undone and can possibly lead to catastrophic consequences,” Alwash told AFP on Thursday.

“If the dam fails when it’s full, the area will be under five meters of water,” he said.



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Several dead, thousands flee homes in Iraq floods
Emergency workers in Iraq struggle to help flood victims