

Algerian President Bouteflika, 82, to run for 5th term

Author:

Associated Press

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Sat, 2019-02-02 (All day)

ALGIERS: Algeria's prime minister says 82-year-old President Abdelaziz Bouteflika will seek a fifth term in this year's election through a letter to the Algerian people in the coming days.

Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia told a press conference Saturday about his "strong belief" that Bouteflika will run in the North African nation's April 18 election. He says "all signs show it and with a little bit of analysis we can easily understand that he's in and that it's only a matter of time." Ouyahia added that he thinks Bouteflika remains "the best candidate" despite ailing health. The Algerian leader is partially paralyzed from a stroke and is rarely seen in public.

Two other candidates, former Prime Minister Ali Benflis and Ret. Gen. Ali Ghediri, have already declared they are running for president.



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[Abdelaziz Bouteflika](#)

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Algeria plans solar energy tenders to tackle rising electricity needs
Algerian opposition names its candidate for presidential poll

[Sudanese man dies in detention after protests](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1549109508291407700

Sat, 2019-02-02 12:06

KHARTOUM: A Sudanese school teacher died in detention after being arrested in connection with protests in the east of the country, members of his family said on Saturday.

The 36-year-old man was arrested at his home on Thursday after protests in the town of Khashm Al-Qirba, the family members said, adding that security officials had told them he died of poisoning.

He had marks of being beaten on his body, the family said. The man's funeral took place on Saturday.

Security officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Students, activists and other protesters have held almost daily demonstrations across Sudan since Dec. 19, calling for an end to economic hardships and mounting a sustained challenge to President Omar al-Bashir's three decades in power.

Rights groups say at least 45 people have been killed in the protests, while the government puts the death toll at 30, including two security personnel.

Bashir has shown no sign of being prepared to concede any power and has blamed the protests on foreign agents, challenging his rivals to seek power through the ballot box.

The information ministry said on Tuesday Sudan's intelligence and security chief had ordered the release of all those detained during the protests.

However, the next day security forces detained the daughter of opposition leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi, her family said.

Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court over charges, which he denies, of masterminding genocide in the Darfur region. He has been lobbying to have Sudan removed from a list of countries, along with Syria, Iran and North Korea, that Washington considers state sponsors of terrorism.

That listing has deterred the influx of investment and financial aid that Sudan was hoping for when the United States lifted sanctions in 2017, economists say.

Sudan has been rapidly expanding its money supply in an attempt to finance its budget deficit. But that has caused spiralling inflation and a steep decline in the value of the country's currency on foreign exchange markets.



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Sudan police fire tear gas on protest after prayers
Sudanese opposition leader's daughter detained: family

[Catholics in UAE await arrival of Pope Francis](#)

Sat, 2019-02-02 15:48

DUBAI: Catholics in the UAE and around the Gulf are waiting expectantly for the touchdown of Pope Francis in Abu Dhabi on Sunday night – the first time a pontiff from the Church of Rome has set foot on the Arabian peninsula.

The visit coincides with a trip to the UAE by Sheikh Ahmed El-Tayeb, grand imam of Al-Azhar in Cairo. It will be the first time two such senior leaders of Islam and Catholicism have met.

The historic papal visit is the first in a series of events to mark 2019 as

the “year of tolerance” in the UAE. Francis will take part in the Human Fraternity Meeting in Abu Dhabi, where he will meet other leaders of the world’s great religions, “reflecting the values of brotherhood, love and peaceful dialogue,” the organizers said.

The highlight of the visit will be an open-air service in Abu Dhabi, where the pope will celebrate mass before a crowd estimated at 140,000 watching in the Zayed Sports City Stadium and outside on giant TV screens.

Hundreds of coaches will leave Dubai on Monday evening with worshippers hoping to catch a glimpse of the Pope in Abu Dhabi, in what one observer described as a “Christian pilgrimage” in Arabia.

Leaders of other religions in Abu Dhabi include a representative of the Jewish community, and many Catholic expatriates living in Saudi Arabia are also expected to fly to the UAE for the historic event.

Raad Jabouri Al-Sheikh, an Iraqi Catholic who has lived in the UAE for 17 years, told Arab News: “It is an amazing thing. I never expected to see this. He has visited other parts of the world where there are many more Catholics, so it is an honor he is coming to see us.”



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Catholics in the UAE: ‘Pope’s visit a testament to peace and tolerance’We’ve

got a ticket to the pope... and a day off

US Consulate employee charged with espionage

Author:

Fri, 2019-02-01 23:28

ANKARA: A Turkish court on Friday accepted an indictment charging a local employee of the US Consulate in Istanbul with espionage and attempting to overthrow the government, state media reported.

Metin Topuz, who liaised with the US Drug Enforcement Agency for the American mission, is accused of having links to US-based Turkish preacher Fethullah Gulen.

Ankara alleges that Gulen ordered a failed coup in 2016, but he denies the claims.

The Istanbul court, which accepted the prosecutor's indictment issued last month, ordered Topuz to remain in jail, state news agency Anadolu said. He has been in custody since September 2017.

Topuz's trial will begin on March 26 and the first hearing will last three days. He faces life in jail if found guilty.

The consulate employee is suspected of having contacts with former police officers and a prosecutor on the run accused of links with the Gulen movement, Anadolu reported.

The agency added that the indictment claimed Topuz had "very intense contacts" with former police chiefs involved in a 2013 probe into corruption allegations that affected government officials at the time.

Ankara has dismissed that investigation as an attempted "judicial coup" against the government by the Gulen movement.

Topuz had been at the center of a visa row between Ankara and Washington in late 2017 after his arrest.

Turkey-US relations have been strained in recent years over multiple issues including the US refusing to extradite Gulen.

There was also a bitter row last summer over the detention of an American pastor, but tensions eased after his release in October.

The court's decision comes a day after a judge in the southeastern city of Mardin convicted a former local employee of the US consulate in Adana,

southern Turkey.

Hamza Ulucay was found guilty of helping outlawed Kurdish militants, and sentenced to four years and six months in jail.

But the Mardin court ruled he be released because of the time he had already served in jail since March 2017.



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Turkish US consulate worker faces charges over Gulen links: DHATurkey orders arrest of nearly 200 people over suspected Gulen ties

[Venezuelan gold trade strains ties between Turkey, US](#)

Author:

Fri, 2019-02-01 22:56

ANKARA: Washington will monitor trade between its NATO ally Turkey and Venezuela in case gold sanctions on Caracas are violated.

Reuters quoted a senior US official on Thursday, who called the issue a “hot potato” which was raised during a meeting of the US Treasury’s assistant secretary for terrorist financing, Marshall Billingslea, and Turkish officials in Ankara on Friday.

The head of the Turkey-Venezuela Parliamentary Friendship Group, Serkan Bayram, said that Turkish trade with Venezuela would continue despite US sanctions.

“Our businesspeople will continue to develop trade relations. Such a decision falls under our sovereignty, and it is in our national interest to do business with Venezuela,” Bayram told Arab News.

“Turkish trade with Caracas is in line with international norms and regulations. All our transactions with a democratically elected country are conducted openly, under the international community’s eyes,” he added.

According to official figures, Turkey imported precious metals worth in excess of \$900 million from Venezuela in 2018 – having imported none in 2017 – and Ankara now ranks among the largest importers of Venezuelan gold.

However, in November, Washington imposed sanctions on gold sales from the South American country, following accusations of government corruption and human rights violations.

In the face of international pressure, Caracas is now shifting toward Turkey, desperate for new trading partners to help prop up the country’s deteriorating economy.

In a visit to Caracas in December last year, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, an ally of Venezuela’s incumbent leader, Nicolas Maduro, criticized the sanctions on Venezuela. “Political problems cannot be resolved by punishing an entire nation. We don’t approve of such measures that ignore global trade rules,” he said.

On a visit to Turkey two weeks ago, Venezuela’s minister of industries and national production, Tareck El Aissami, toured the Anatolian town of Corum, where Turkey refines most of its imported Venezuelan gold.

Cem Barlas Arslan, a legal expert from Kirikkale University, told Arab News: “From the perspective of international law, countries may implement sanctions through customs levies or similar foreign trade instruments, like the US has done to China, Russia, Iran and even Turkey.

“In this tense trade war, Ankara has two options: Either it minimizes all trade relations with Venezuela, or increases the trade in gold,” he added.

Close relations between Ankara and Caracas are likely to strain relations between Turkey and the US if the latter insists on enforcing sanctions on Venezuelan gold, as has previously happened between the two over US sanctions on Iran.

However, Karol Wasilewski, an analyst at the Warsaw-based Polish Institute of

International Affairs, disagrees that there is a direct comparison.

“Although it may seem that, in Venezuela, Turkey is trying to repeat the ‘Iran’ approach, for now we lack evidence that it has substantially violated American sanctions,” he told Arab News.

“Diplomacy between Turkey and US has been so intense that I think both countries will sort the issue out, especially if the US decides to use the leverage it has over Turkey in terms of its economy and role in Syria.”



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Venezuela's Guaidó courts Russia; powers divided on Maduro
Venezuela detains Colombian, Spanish, French journalists