

Yemenia to operate direct flights between Houthi-held Sanaa, Cairo

Tue, 2022-05-24 18:35

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen's government on Tuesday praised Egypt for allowing the country's national carrier, Yemenia, to operate direct flights from Houthi-held Sanaa to Cairo as part of the UN-brokered truce.

The agreement facilitated the resumption of flights from Sanaa airport for the first time in six years.

On Monday, Sameh Shoukry, Egypt's foreign minister, said that Egyptian authorities would allow the resumption of flights between Sanaa and Cairo as part of efforts to cement the truce and support peace efforts to end the war in Yemen.

During a call with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Shoukry expressed his hope that the move would consolidate the UN truce in Yemen, alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people and contribute to efforts to establish stability in Yemen.

Under the UN-brokered truce that came into effect on April 2, Yemenia will operate weekly flights from Sanaa airport to Amman and Cairo as warring factions commit to stopping hostilities across the country. The agreement also allows fuel ships to enter Hodeidah seaport.

The first commercial flight since 2016 left Sanaa airport on May 16 – a move that enhanced hopes of strengthening the truce and finding a peace deal to end the war.

The Egyptian decision sparked jubilation among Yemenis, especially among medical patients who seek treatment in Egypt. It was also met with praise from foreign envoys and international mediators.

Baligh Al-Mekhlafi, the information counselor at the Yemeni embassy in Cairo, told Arab News that thousands of Yemenis, mainly patients, will benefit from the resumption of flights, since Egypt is a top destination for Yemenis.

"Opening the airport will contribute to alleviating human suffering and the cost of travel for citizens, especially that 80 percent of the passengers come to Egypt for medical treatment," Al-Mekhlafi said, announcing the departure of the first flight from Sanaa to Cairo next week.

During a meeting with the Egyptian ambassador in Washington DC, the US Yemen envoy, Tim Lenderking, thanked Egypt for supporting peace in Yemen and the UN-brokered truce.

"The US appreciates Egypt's strong support for Yemen peace efforts, including the ongoing truce," Lenderking tweeted.

The Chinese Embassy in Yemen also tweeted praise for Egypt. “We appreciate the Egyptian efforts to operate direct flights from Sanaa to Cairo, hoping that the suffering of the Yemeni people will be alleviated,” it said.

Separately, in the southern port city of Aden, Rashad Al-Alimi, chief of the Presidential Leadership Council, received foreign delegations that visited the interim capital of Aden to express support for the government and listen to plans for reforming state bodies, unifying military and security units, and reviving the economy.

Official media reported on Monday that Al-Alimi met Peter-Derrek Hof, the Dutch ambassador to Yemen, and Birgitta Tazelaar, deputy director general for International Cooperation at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“We talked about the reforms the Presidential Leadership Council is working on, including the unification of the military and security institutions under the Riyadh Agreement, and the economic, service and judicial files,” Al-Alimi said, according to SABA news agency.

The Yemeni leader also met with Richard Oppenheim, the UK ambassador to Yemen. Al-Alimi urged the international community and the UK to mount pressure on the Houthis to respect the truce and open roads in Taiz.

The UK ambassador tweeted from Aden that he had “fruitful” meetings with Al-Alimi and Prime Minister Maeen Abdul Malik Saeed. “I urge all parties to continue with the constructive approach taken. Yemen needs peace,” he said.



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Second flight lands at Sanaa airport as Yemen parties pressured to extend truce
First commercial flight in six years leaves Sanaa for Amman

[UAE announces first case of monkeypox](#)

Tue, 2022-05-24 18:11

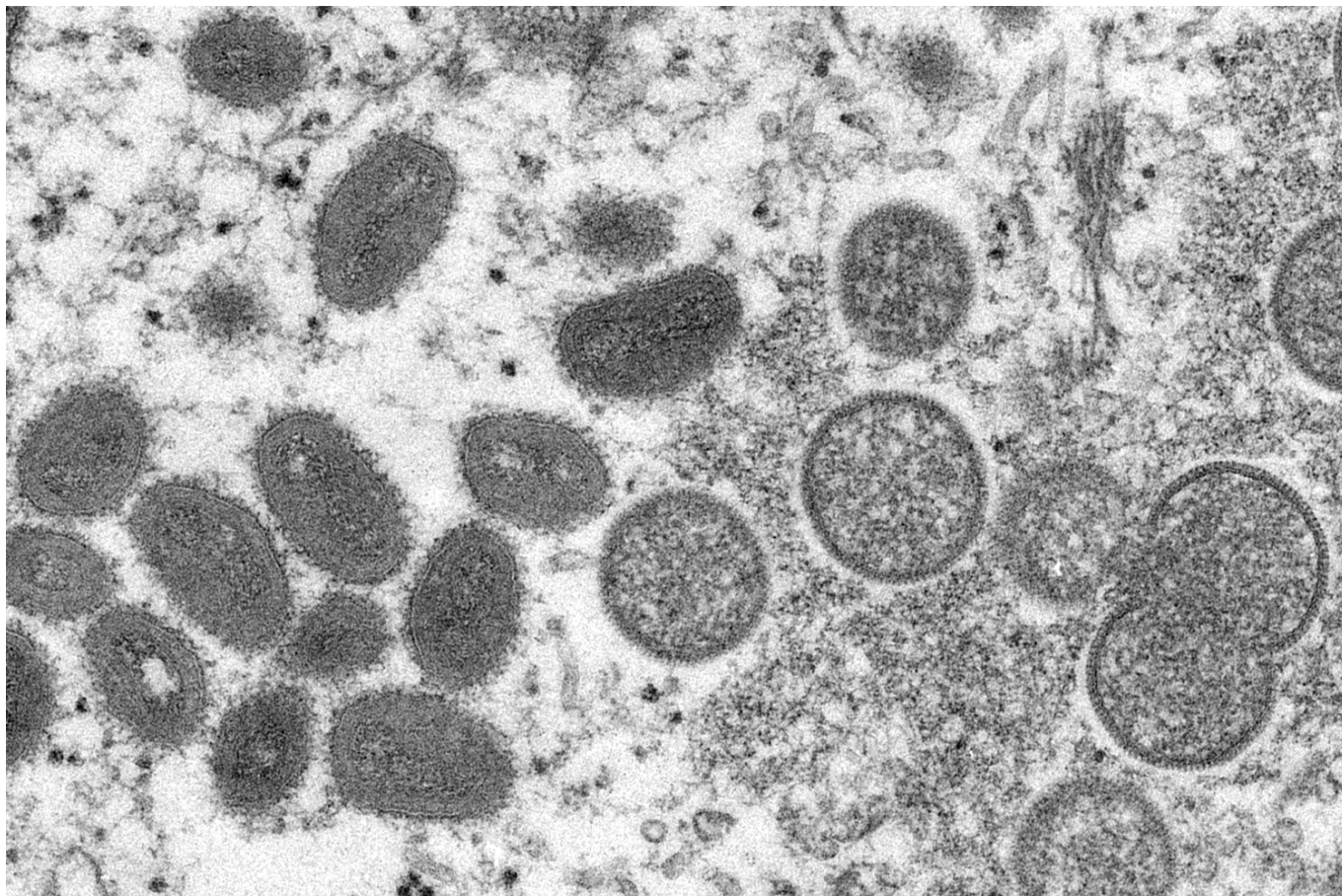
DUBAI: The UAE's Ministry of Health and Prevention announced the country's first case of monkeypox on Tuesday.

The case was detected in a 29-year-old woman who arrived from West Africa and is receiving the necessary medical care, Emirates News Agency reported.

The ministry assured the public that health authorities are taking all necessary measures including investigation, the examination of contacts, and monitoring their health.

It added that it is cooperating with other health authorities in implementing an epidemiological surveillance system to ensure sustainable efficiency, protection from communicable diseases, and rapid detection of all diseases and viruses, including monkeypox, in the UAE.

The ministry called on members of the public to obtain information from official sources in the UAE, and to refrain from spreading rumours and false information, highlighting the importance of staying updated on developments and guidelines issued by UAE health authorities.



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Germany orders 40,000 vaccine doses as precaution against monkeypox spread
No monkeypox cases detected in Saudi Arabia, health ministry says

[Yemeni army reports 4,276 Houthi truce violations](#)

Mon, 2022-05-23 22:41

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen's army has said that the Iran-backed Houthis have violated a UN-brokered truce more than 4,276 times since day one by mobilizing fighters and launching drone and missile attacks on government troops, even as the militia indicated its acceptance of its renewal.

The truce, which is the longest since the war began, came into effect on April 2 and has led to reduced violence and deaths across the country, the UN said.

But the Yemeni army said the Houthis continued to gather heavy artillery, military vehicles, and fighters outside the strategic city of Marib, had attacked government troops in Marib, Taiz, Saada, and Hajjah, and created new military outposts.



Members of Yemen's government forces search for explosive devices in a house in the village of Hays in the western province of Hodeida on Monday. (AFP)

"The Houthis are challenging the truce and international resolutions. They have not adhered to the truce," Maj. Gen. Abdu Abdullah Majili, an army spokesperson, told Arab News on Monday.

FASTFACT

The UN's Yemen envoy Hans Grundberg is pushing the government and militia to extend the truce and put into place its unfulfilled components, including opening roads in Taiz and other provinces.

The Houthi violations come as the UN's Yemen envoy Hans Grundberg pushes the government and militia to extend the truce and put into place its unfulfilled components, including opening roads in Taiz and other provinces.

On Sunday, the head of the Houthi Supreme Political Council, Mahdi Al-Mashat, said the movement would accept an extension of the truce with its opponents, boosting hopes of stopping hostilities across the country for another two or three months.

"We affirm that we are not against extending the truce, but what is not possible is the acceptance of any truce in which the suffering of our people

continues,” the Houthi leader said.

In Aden, the head of Yemen’s Presidential Leadership Council, Rashad Al-Alimi, also expressed his support on Saturday for current efforts by international mediators to extend the truce.

At the same time, activists and rights groups intensified their campaigns on the ground and on social media to highlight the grave consequences of the Houthi siege on thousands of Taiz residents.

The Abductees Mothers’ Association, an umbrella group for relatives of those abducted in Yemen, said Sunday that checkpoints manned by the Houthis outside Taiz had seized 417 people seeking to enter or leave the city since the beginning of the war.

The Houthis have laid a siege on Yemen’s third-largest city since early 2015 after failing to seize control of it due to strong resistance from troops and local fighters.

The Houthis barred people from driving through the main roads, deployed snipers, and planted landmines, forcing people into using dangerous and unpaved roads.

“Civilians in #Taiz are forced to use alternative long, narrow, winding, and unsafe routes, which caused a lot of accidents that killed and injured hundreds of victims,” tweeted the American Center for Justice, a rights group established by Yemeni activists. It added that Houthi snipers indiscriminately gunned down civilians while they carried out their everyday activities.

“Most of the children sniped by Houthi snipers were targeted while fetching water, grazing the sheep, playing near their homes, or returning from schools,” the organization said.



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Chief of Yemen's Presidential Council backs extending UN-brokered truce
Pressure mounts on Houthis to lift Taiz siege

[Zaghari-Ratcliffe 'was forced to sign false confession at airport'](#)

Author:

Mon, 2022-05-23 23:07

LONDON: A British-Iranian charity worker who was detained in Tehran for almost six years says she was forced by Iranian officials to sign a false confession to spying before she was freed two months ago. Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe said British government officials were present at Tehran airport when "under duress" she signed the false admission to spying. She said she was told by Iranian officials that "you won't be able to get on the plane" unless she signed. "The whole thing of me signing the forced confession was filmed," Zaghari-Ratcliffe told the BBC in an interview broadcast on Monday. "It's a tool. So I'm sure they will show that some day."

Opposition Labour Party lawmaker Tulip Siddiq, who represents Zaghari-Ratcliffe's home district in London, said the revelation raised "serious questions" for the British government.

She said Foreign Secretary Liz Truss "must set out in Parliament what she knew about this shocking revelation and what consequences it could have for my constituent."

Zaghari-Ratcliffe was detained at Tehran's airport in April 2016 as she was returning home to Britain after visiting family in Iran. She was employed by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of the news agency, but she was on vacation at the time of her arrest.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe was sentenced to five years in prison after she was convicted of plotting the overthrow of Iran's government, a charge that she, her supporters and rights groups denied.

She had been under house arrest at her parents' home in Tehran for the last two years.

She and another dual citizen, Anoosheh Ashoori, were released and flown back to the UK in March.

Their release came after Britain paid a £400 million (\$503 million) debt to Iran stemming from a dispute over tanks that were ordered in the 1970s but were never delivered.



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[Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe](#)

Zaghari-Ratcliffe returns to school runUK PM defends Zaghari-Ratcliffe from online trolls after she criticized government

Tunisian union calls national strike over wages and the economy

Author:

Mon, 2022-05-23 22:51

TUNIS: Tunisia's labor union said on Monday it would hold a national strike over wages and the economy after refusing to take part in a limited dialogue proposed by the president as he rewrites the constitution.

With more than a million members, the UGTT is Tunisia's most powerful political force and its call for a strike may present the biggest challenge yet to President Kais Saied after his seizure of broad powers and moves to one-man rule.

Saied has focused on his political agenda since last summer when he brushed aside the parliament and discounted most of Tunisia's democratic constitution to say he would rule by decree despite a gathering economic crisis.

The president's opponents accuse him of undermining the democratic gains of the 2011 revolution that triggered the Arab spring, but he says his moves were legal and needed to save Tunisia from a prolonged political crisis.

The union has demanded a meaningful national dialogue on both political and economic reforms, but it rejected Saied's proposal that it join a small advisory group of other civil society organizations that could submit reform ideas.

BACKGROUND

President Kais Saied's government is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout but the labor union has rejected proposed spending cuts and instead wants wage increases for state workers.

Saied said last week that political parties would be barred from a role in forming the new constitution, which would replace the 2014 document that emerged from an inclusive debate among Tunisia's main political factions and social organizations.

"We reject any formal dialogue in which roles are determined unilaterally and from which civil and political forces are excluded," UGTT spokesperson Sami Tahri said.

Tunisia's major political parties pledged to fight Saied's decision to exclude them from key political reforms including the drafting of a new constitution and accused him of seeking to consolidate autocratic rule.

Achaab, the newspaper of the union, said that Saied met with the UGTT leader on Sunday and informed him that he insisted that the dialogue will be in its current formula that he proposed.

The date of the strike, by UGTT members working in public services and state companies, will be announced later, Tahri said.

Saied's government is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout, seen as necessary to ward off national bankruptcy, but the UGTT has rejected proposed spending cuts and instead wants wage increases for state workers.



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Tunisia heads for 'new republic' in dialogue without political parties
Thousands in Tunisia protest against president, demand democratic return