

Unilever expects new Ben & Jerry's 'arrangement' for Israel by year-end

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1644507609339230000

Thu, 2022-02-10 19:11

LONDON/BOSTON: The board of Ben & Jerry's aims to work out a "new arrangement" for sales in Israel before the end of the year, Unilever PLC's CEO said on Thursday.

This comes after the US-based independent ice cream brand last year committed to halting sales in Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.

"Our absolute focus right now is to figure out what the new arrangement will be for Ben & Jerry's," CEO Alan Jope said on a conference call with journalists after the company announced earnings.

Jope's comments were the most specific he has given about the actions of the ice cream brand, based in the state of Vermont.

Ben & Jerry's said in July that it would halt sales in Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, a protest against Israeli settlements that has sparked some backlash including divestments by US pension funds.

Jope did not directly criticize the sales limit but said, "On subjects where Unilever brands don't have the expertise or credibility, we think its best that they stay out of the debate."

"Ben & Jerry's is a great brand – most of the time they get it right – they have a great track record of campaigning on important issues that are relevant to their consumers," Jope added.

Investors are watching the ice cream controversy as a test of Jope's ability to balance his emphasis on marketing tied to social issues with financial results.

Speaking before Jope's remarks, Kevin Dreyer, a portfolio manager at Gabelli Funds, whose parent GAMCO owns about 225,000 Unilever shares, said that while many Unilever consumers like its green-labeled products, some political activism by Unilever's brands could alienate some consumers.

Jope has previously said Ben & Jerry's board acted independently and that Unilever does not support efforts to isolate Israeli, where it employs nearly 2,000 people. Ben & Jerry's had said it would continue to sell ice cream in Israel "through a different arrangement."

Ben & Jerry's accounts for about 3 percent of the world's ice cream market. The brand's sales grew 9 percent last year, Unilever said, outpacing overall underlying sales growth of 4.5 percent. The company did not give further details on sales.

"I definitely would not make a connection between those (Ben & Jerry's) statements and its sales growth," Jope said on the call.

"The growth that we're seeing on Ben & Jerry's is driven much more by their innovation program," Jope added.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Ben & Jerry's](#)

[ice cream](#)

[Israel](#)

Jewish founders of Ben & Jerry's back West Bank boycott decision
American Jewish groups support Ben & Jerry's decision to end sales in Occupied Territories

[Libyan prime minister unharmed after assassination attempt: Al-Hadath TV](#)

Author:

Roma Lota

ID:

1644452347569948300

Thu, 2022-02-10 03:19

RIYADH: The Libyan Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibeh escaped unharmed after an assassination attempt in Tripoli, Al-Hadath TV reported early on Thursday.

– More to follow.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Libya](#)

With elections delayed again, Libya's endless transition angers its people
Libyan parliament interviews prime minister candidates

[Sudan arrests leading anti-coup bloc figures](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1644441374488898000

Wed, 2022-02-09 00:19

KHARTOUM: Sudanese security agents on Wednesday arrested two leading figures including an ex-minister from the opposition Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), the civilian group driving protests against last year's military coup. The men are the latest in a long line of activists detained since the October 25 military takeover led by army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, in which the civilian leadership and FFC figures were ousted.

Plain-clothed officers arrested Khaled Omar Youssef, a former minister of cabinet affairs, during a meeting of the FFC bloc at the headquarters of the Sudanese Congress Party, senior member Mohamed Hassan Arabi said. Officers said they were affiliated with a police station in Khartoum without elaborating, Arabi added.

Also arrested was Wagdi Saleh, a leading figure of the protest movement and an FFC spokesman, according to FFC leader Omar Al-Degeir.

The reasons for their arrest were not immediately clear.

The arrests come a day after the two men joined an FFC delegation for talks with UN special representative Volker Perthes, as part of efforts launched last month hoped to resolve the deepening crisis.

Leading FFC figure Yasser Arman said the latest arrests "will affect the UN process."

Youssef and Saleh were among the figures who were detained immediately after the coup, before they were released weeks later.

Since the coup, the authorities have launched a deadly crackdown on regular mass anti-coup protests, leaving at least 79 people killed and hundreds wounded, according to independent medics.

The October military power grab, the latest coup in Sudan since the independence, has sparked wide international condemnation and punitive measures.

The United States, which suspended \$700 million in assistance, has warned there would be "consequences" if a crackdown by the authorities continues. "Arbitrary arrests and detention of political figures, civil society activists and journalists undermine efforts to resolve Sudan's political crisis," Lucy Tamlyn, the US charge d'affaires in Sudan, wrote on Twitter late Wednesday.

The BBC said three of its reporters were also briefly arrested on Monday while covering anti-coup protests in Khartoum, but the trio were released later that day.

Multiple journalists have been targeted while covering the protests.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Sudan](#)

[Coup](#)

[Protesters](#)

[Khartoum](#)

Sudanese envoy in Israel to promote ties, source tells ReutersBBC says Sudan arrested 3 of its journalists amid protests

[Iraq struggles to make use of Saddam Hussein's crumbling palaces](#)

Author:

Wed, 2022-02-09 23:36

BAGHDAD: Scattered across Iraq lie more than 100 opulent palaces and villas built by former dictator Saddam Hussein – some in use, many in ruins like much of the war-scarred country.

With their marble columns, ornate carvings and gaudy furniture, they reflected the megalomania and delusions of grandeur of Saddam, who visited

some of them only once or twice.

In his Babylon residence, the feared strongman's profile is engraved in bas-relief like that of the Mesopotamian emperor he idolized, Chaldean dynasty King Nebuchadnezzar II.

In many places, the initials "S.H." are still visible as reminders of the despot who was toppled by the 2003 US-led invasion, captured later that year and executed in 2006.

Most of his palaces were looted during the chaos of the invasion, when thieves scavenged all they could carry, even ripping electric cables out of walls.

Since then, only a handful of the palatial residences have been given a second lease on life, often as military bases or public administrations, more rarely as museums.

Most lie empty, in part because the cost of renovating them is prohibitive. "We can turn palaces into museums, at least in Baghdad – a tapestry museum, for example, or on the royal family or Islamic art," said Laith Majid Hussein, director of the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage.

But he conceded that rehabilitating many of Iraq's "gigantic castles" would require "astronomical sums."

Red tape and entrenched graft spell other hurdles, said a senior government official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Bureaucracy and corruption hinder the restoration of these palaces to turn them into tourist complexes or heritage centers," he said.

Saddam, during his more than two decades in power in the oil-rich country, had many monuments and palaces built while cheerfully defying the Western embargo of the 1990s.

In the turmoil of war, many were damaged in fighting or used as bases by US and other foreign forces.

In Baghdad, three palaces now house the presidency and the prime minister's offices.

The sumptuous Al-Faw complex – encircled by an artificial lake – has since 2021 housed the private American University, built by an Iraqi investor.

Al-Faw, situated near the airport for Saddam's VIP guests, once served as an American base. Now its stone and marble buildings house auditoriums, amphitheaters and a food court.

The university's president Michael Mulnix voiced pride about the project which saw "the palace of a former dictator and a fairly ruthless man" become an institution of higher learning.

While the main palace had survived relatively intact, he said, "all of the other buildings ... were really destroyed.

"The windows were all broken out, there were birds flying around, snakes on the floor, literally. So it was very messed up. We had to go in and do substantial renovation."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iraq](#)

[Saddam hussein](#)

Door reopens to candidates after Iraq president vote fails
Chaos in Iraq over vote for president

[Tunisian president to change judicial council: Minister](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1644437963808121800

Wed, 2022-02-09 20:08

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied will change the Supreme Judicial Council

but not abolish it, the justice minister said after meeting him on Wednesday, days after his stated plan to dissolve the body met intense criticism. Justice Minister Leila Jaffel said on television that Saied would maintain the council as a constitutional institution but change the law regulating it and set up a temporary judicial authority in the meantime. Jaffel gave no details as to how the council's composition or role would change, or about the composition, role or tenure of the temporary authority. Saied's announcement on Sunday that he would dissolve the body prompted immediate criticism from judges, rights groups, opposition parties and Western donors whose help is needed to avert a crisis in public finances. They said abolishing the council would undermine judicial independence and could help Saied cement one-man rule after his suspension of parliament and seizure of broad powers last year, which critics call a coup.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Tunisia](#)

[Tunisian President Kais Saied](#)

[Supreme Judicial Council](#)

UN's rights chief: Scrapping of Tunisia's Judicial Council 'a big step in the wrong direction'
Tunisian president dissolves supreme judicial council