

France's Macron says hoping for progress on Lebanon 'within next hours'

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PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said on Friday he hoped there would be progress on the Lebanon crisis in the next hours.

"We will do all we can to re-engage the Gulf regions for the benefit of Lebanon... I hope the coming hours will allow us to make progress." Macron said during a visit to the United Arab Emirates.

Lebanon is facing a diplomatic crisis with Gulf states, spurred by a minister's critical comments about the Saudi Arabia-led intervention in Yemen that prompted Riyadh, Bahrain and Kuwait to expel Lebanon's top diplomats and recall their own envoys. The UAE withdrew its envoys.



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US critics of Israel face challenges in redrawn Congress districts

Author:

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CHICAGO: Nine members of Congress who have been vocal critics of Israel's policies towards the Palestinians could face tougher re-election campaigns as a result of their districts being redrawn, an analysis by Arab News shows.

Every 10 years, the dominant political parties in many states re-draw district boundaries based on demographic data provided by the US Census, which does not count Arab and Muslim Americans as a separate category.

Where population shifts have led to proposed boundary changes, incumbents may be forced to stand in new districts. That's the challenge facing Illinois representative Marie Newman, who won election in 2020 in the 3rd Congressional District, which has the largest concentration of Palestinian American voters.

Newman has chosen to face-off with Sean Casten, who is very strong on climate change, in the new 6th District rather than stand against Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, who is one of only two Hispanic congress members in Illinois, in the 4th District. Casten is a strong supporter of Israel and silent on Israeli violence against Palestinians, while Garcia has often joined Newman to support pro-Palestinian legislation, including voting against a bill giving Israel \$1 billion for its Iron Dome defense system last September.

"Rep. Newman was supportive of the push to create a second congressional district of Latino influence and understood that doing so would mean the need to shift boundary lines of existing CDs in the Chicagoland area," Newman campaign spokesperson Ben Hardin said.

Describing the challenges as "inevitable," Hardin said: "Representative Newman is grateful ... to have the support of so many people here in Chicago's southwest side and in the south and west suburbs, including a strong coalition of supporters from the Arab and Muslim American community."

The new Illinois district map was approved by Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, one of Israel's strongest advocates, in November. Pritzker aroused anger among Arab Americans after refusing to apologize for disparaging remarks he made in a 1998 congressional race in which he accused a rival of accepting money from a Muslim group that Pritzker asserted supported terrorists.

"There is no doubt that the Illinois Democrats are seeking to undermine Newman, who has been a vocal supporter of Palestinian, Arab and Muslim rights," said Hassan Nijem, the president of the American Arab Chamber of Commerce.

"She and Chuy Garcia are the only Illinois Democrats to defend Palestinian

rights and recognize our growing community.”

The Illinois primary has been delayed from March until June 28, 2022, because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to Newman and Garcia, seven other members of Congress who voted against the Iron Dome money could be affected by district changes.

They include Cori Bush of Missouri; André Carson of Indiana; Raúl Grijalva of Arizona; Ilhan Omar of Minnesota; Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts; Rashida Tlaib of Michigan; and Thomas Massie of Kentucky, a Republican Congressman who consistently votes against all foreign aid regardless of the recipient.

Tlaib, Pressley and Omar are members of the “Squad,” a group of progressive Democrats that includes New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Instead of voting against the Iron Dome funding, however, AOC voted “present” not taking a position.

In Michigan, which is holding its primary on Aug. 2 next year, mapmakers are proposing to re-draw Tlaib’s 13th district, increasing the number of African American voters. That could be important even though Tlaib defeated several African American candidates when she first ran and won office in the predominantly African American district in 2018.

Tlaib may be forced into a new district against pro-Arab Democrat Debbie Dingell. However, she could survive as the Michigan process puts remapping in the hands of an independent commission rather than partisan politicians. The final Michigan remap might not be completed until late January.

Also in Michigan, proposed changes would pit Jewish Democratic Congressman Andy Levin, who has been an outspoken supporter of the two-state solution for Palestine and Israel, against Brenda Lawrence.

Minnesota congressional remapping plans have targeted Omar and another pro-Palestinian Congresswoman, Betty McCollum, although maps in those districts have not been finalized.



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UN warned its credibility is at stake over the Palestinian question
UN marks International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian people

[Israeli agents convinced Iranian scientists to blow up their own nuclear facilities](#)

Author:

Fri, 2021-12-03 14:29

LONDON: Agents from the Mossad convinced Iranian scientists to blow up their own nuclear facilities by “posing as dissidents” and smuggling explosives disguised as food into facilities, according to reports.

According to The Jewish Chronicle, Israeli agents convinced up to 10 scientists to destroy the Natanz nuclear facility, wiping out 90 percent of

its centrifuges – crucial for research into nuclear weapons.

They are said to have smuggled some explosives into the plant in food lorries, while others were dropped in via drones and picked up by scientists – who they convinced to use against the nuclear sites by posing as Iranian dissidents.

The attack on the facility is just one of a long line of Israeli sabotages of Iranian nuclear facilities, a strategy that they have engaged in more as Iranian nuclear research has progressed.

The Natanz facility, a critical nuclear research site, has been hit by at least three attacks linked to the Israeli secret service, the Mossad.

In another incident, agents used a quadcopter drone to fire missiles at the Iran Centrifuge Technology Company in an attempt to disrupt its research.

In recent years, following the US withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Iran has increased its atomic energy research, including enriching growing quantities of uranium above the levels required for civilian nuclear activity such as energy production.

In April Iran said that it would start enriching uranium up to 60 percent after the attack on its Natanz plant which it blamed on Israel – that is closing in on the 90 to 95 percent enrichment required for nuclear weapons.

This week – much to the ire of Israel – Iran and the US returned to the negotiating table to try to find a deal to curb Iran's nuclear activity in exchange for relief from crushing economic sanctions imposed on the country by the US and its allies.

But on Thursday, Israeli officials called on the US directly to cease those negotiations.

In a phone call with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett called for “concrete measures” to be taken against Iran.

He said that Tehran was carrying out “nuclear blackmail” as a negotiation tactic and that “this must be met with an immediate cessation of negotiations and by concrete steps taken by the major powers,” according to a statement released by his office.

The Israeli leader also expressed his concern about a new report from the UN, issued during the US-Iran talks in Vienna, which showed that Iran had “started the process of enriching uranium to the level of 20 percent purity with advanced centrifuges at its Fordo underground facility.”

Israel, the only nuclear-armed state in the Middle East, has pledged never to allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons.



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Iran names suspect in Natanz nuclear site attack, says he fled country

[Iran makes nuclear advance despite talks to salvage 2015 deal, says IAEA](#)

Fri, 2021-12-03 03:14

VIENNA, JERUSALEM: Iran has started producing enriched uranium with more efficient advanced centrifuges at its Fordow plant dug into a mountain, the UN atomic watchdog has said, further eroding the 2015 Iran nuclear deal during talks with the West on saving it.

The announcement appeared to undercut indirect talks between Iran and the US on bringing both fully back into the battered deal that resumed this week after a five-month break prompted by the election of hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi.

Western negotiators fear Iran is creating facts on the ground to gain leverage in the talks.

On the third day of this round of talks, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Iran had started the process of enriching uranium to up to 20 percent purity with one cascade, or cluster, of 166 advanced IR-6 machines at Fordow. Those machines are far more efficient than the first-generation IR-1.

Underlining how badly eroded the deal is, that pact does not allow Iran to enrich uranium at Fordow at all. Until now Iran had been producing enriched uranium there with IR-1 machines and had enriched with some IR-6s without keeping the product. It has 94 IR-6 machines installed in a cascade at Fordow that is not yet operating, the IAEA said in a statement.

A more comprehensive IAEA report circulated to member states said that as a result of Iran's move the nuclear watchdog planned to step up inspections at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant that houses the centrifuges, but the details still need to be ironed out.

The US sounded pessimistic on Thursday about the chances of reviving the deal, with Washington saying it had little cause for optimism and Tehran questioning the determination of US and European negotiators.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Iran starts enriching at Fordow with advanced machines.
- West fears Iran creating facts on ground for leverage.
- IAEA report says agency plans to step up inspections.

"I have to tell you, recent moves, recent rhetoric, don't give us a lot of cause for ... optimism," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in Stockholm, saying he could judge in a day or so if Iran would engage in good faith.

Israel urged world powers to halt nuclear talks with Iran immediately. "Iran is carrying out nuclear blackmail as a negotiating tactic, and this should be answered by the immediate halt to negotiations and the implementation of tough steps by the world powers," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office quoted him as saying in a call with Blinken.

An Israeli official said Bennett told Blinken of his objections to any lifting of sanctions against Iran, particularly under an interim deal, which would effectively mean "the massive flow of funds to the Iranian regime."

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that negotiations in Vienna were "proceeding with seriousness" and that the removal of sanctions was a "fundamental priority."



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'No cause for optimism' on Iran nuclear deal: USIAEA plans to step up inspections at Iran's Fordow plant

[Hashemite kingdom's Expo 2020 Dubai provides an authentic Jordanian experience](#)

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DUBAI There are two main types of pavilions at Expo 2020 Dubai: "Self-build" pavilions that were funded by the participating nations themselves, and those that either received financial assistance from, or were fully built by, the expo.

Despite an unassuming exterior, Jordan's pavilion – which sits within an

expo-built structure at the heart of the Mobility District – is a must-see.

This standard style of fitted pavilion has been transformed into a unique space filled with varying textures and experiences. The resultant atmosphere is inviting, stylish and sensory.

As soon as they enter the reception area, visitors are welcomed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. A relief display outlines the country's territory and highlights the significance of its position between Turkey to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south.



Jordan's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai captures the sights and sounds of the country through interactive, multimedia exhibits. (Supplied)

From there, visitors walk down a winding wooden path called the Siq, with every step on their journey accompanied by multimedia effects and sounds. In Jordan, the Siq is the pathway through rock canyons that marks the entrance to the Nabataean city of Petra, which was built 2,500 years ago.

The Siq at Expo 2020 Dubai is a 30-meter, wooden sided path that leads to the pavilion's main exhibition stage. Here, visitors are invited to enjoy a one-of-a-kind, authentic Jordanian experience that will stimulate all of their senses.

At the end of the pathway, they are greeted by a series of tassel curtains that they must walk through to enter a room bustling with light and sound. It is alive with images of Jordanian landmarks and attractions, including Wadi Rum, The Dead Sea, archaeological sites and lush green landscapes.

In a matter of minutes, visitors can get a taste of the finest experiences Jordan offers, from the lowest land-based point on Earth, on the shores of the Dead Sea, to the highest viewpoints across the country.

For a more immersive experience, they can put on a headset and explore the country in virtual reality.

Visitors are encouraged to explore the exhibition space at their leisure and fully engage with the displays. Every element includes an interactive or sensory element. The highlight is an audio-visual journey that introduces the country's treasures, past and present.

A PAVILION FOR EVERY NATION

Expo 2020 Dubai is the first World Expo to adopt a "One Nation, One Pavilion" approach, which means each of the 192 participating countries has its own pavilion.

This gives them the chance to showcase their national identities, stories, innovations and future strategies in dedicated spaces assigned to one of three key, themed districts devoted to a particular concept: Sustainability, Mobility or Opportunity. This gives visitors a chance to fully experience the beauty and culture of every participating nation.

To make the "One Nation, One Pavilion" goal a reality, host country the UAE set up an assistance fund to support the participation of countries that otherwise might not have been able to justify the cost.

Countries that received assistance were carefully selected based on criteria such as level of development, income and geography, with smaller landlocked countries and island nations given special consideration.

As a result Expo 2020 Dubai features two main types of pavilions: "Self-

build” structures that were fully funded by the participating nations themselves, and those fully or partly funded by the expo.

Self-build pavilions vary in size, are spread across the expo site, and are accessible from the main concourses. They are large and diverse, featuring unique facades adorned with national symbols and branding. The largest of these pavilions belong to the UAE, China and India.

The structures built by, or with assistance from, the expo are more similar in external appearance, and surrounded by courtyards or exhibition spaces. The eligible developing countries were provided with a fully fitted pavilion of their own, complete with internal finishing, fittings and basic furnishings, situated at the heart of one of the themed zones to ensure high visibility.

Illuminated fields are projected onto the floor, and when stepped on they change shape and trigger the sounds of traditional Jordanian song and musical instruments, including the oud, nai and tabla.

The role of an expo pavilion, whatever its shape, size or design, is to tell the story of the country it represents from the cultural and economic standpoints.

While some of the interactive displays that help to do this in Jordan’s pavilion are fun and immersive, others provide more specialized, technical information on a range of business topics, including the country’s economy, its agenda for entrepreneurship and policies for female empowerment.



Despite an unassuming exterior, Jordan's pavilion – which sits within an expo-built structure at the heart of the Mobility District – is a must-see.

Jordan links the content of its pavilion to Expo 2020's wider, future-focused theme with a display dedicated to the launch of the first Jordanian satellite, CubeSat, which is one of the smallest of its kind.

The innovative design is the product of a cooperative program that partners engineering students at Jordanian universities with experts from NASA, under the supervision of Jordan's Crown Prince Foundation. It is the first Jordanian venture in the space industry and was of particular interest during Expo 2020's space-themed week.

Throughout the expo, Jordan will be hosting events designed to promote trade and cultural understanding and to stimulate inbound tourism. On Nov. 12, for instance, the country marked its National Day with a show at the expo featuring traditional music, a military band and other live performances.



Jordan's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai includes a gift shop offering authentic artisan products from the Hashemite kingdom. (Supplied)

After experiencing all that the pavilion has to offer, visitors can browse a gift shop showcasing a wide range of beautiful and unique Jordanian products, including handbags, olive oil and beauty products derived from the minerals of the Dead Sea.

Artisans are on hand to explain the cultural significance of the products, including face masks adorned with the national colors, bracelets made from local turquoise and other natural stones, and tea trays painted and decorated

in traditional styles.

A message at the entrance to the pavilion states: “Whatever appeals to you, no doubt you’ll find it in Jordan. This hospitable land was, and still is today, a destination to many who call it home. Its people are known for their generosity and hospitality, making Jordan a visitors’ haven.”

Jordanians who have visited the pavilion told Arab News it lived up to their expectations, capturing not just the sights and sounds but also the spirit of their home country. Visitors are, indeed, likely to find something that appeals to them, they added.



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