

# Italy fears current crisis in Tunisia may lead to new waves of migrants

Author:

Tue, 2021-07-27 16:33

ROME: Italian authorities fear that the ongoing political turmoil in Tunisia may result in a drastic increase in migrants arriving from Tunisia, with numbers potentially reaching up to 15,000.

Despite bad sea conditions, yesterday nearly 200 people arrived on dinghies and small boats from the Tunisian shores to Lampedusa, the tiny Italian island in the Mediterranean, where the local holding center known as the "hotspot" and designed to accommodate only 100 people came under pressure once again.

However, in the next few days, the situation could progress from strained to intolerable. As weather forecasts announce calm seas, this could significantly incentivize migrants to depart from Tunisia toward the Italian shores.

"We are seriously worried about this situation," Adm. Giovanni Pettorino, chief of the Italian Coast Guard, told Arab News.

"Our primary mission is saving lives at sea. In the past 10 years, 900,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean, and we have always made every effort to save them. We will continue to do so, but solutions to the issue of migrant flows must be found on land and not at sea. Every time a boat leaves the coasts of North Africa overcrowded with people, it's a defeat for everyone. The solution must go beyond rescue," he added.

A source in the Italian Interior Ministry believes that "the political turmoil could exacerbate the economic crisis in Tunisia, which is already severe due to the impact of the pandemic."

The same source added: "If Tunisia faces social unrest, protests, or even civil war or a new dictatorship, as it is realistic to expect, the impact will immediately be felt in Lampedusa with a surge in arrivals by sea."

Since the beginning of the year, 5,805 Tunisians have arrived in Italy. Italian intelligence services told Arab News they estimate that over 15,000 Tunisians could reach Italy by the end of the year if the situation in the country does not improve.

Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio immediately called on the EU Commission for help, asking for increased cooperation with Tunisia to solve the local economic crisis and discourage the departure of migrants. The government is also worried about the Italian community in Tunisia, comprising 3,537 nationals.

"In this situation, we can only show great concern for what is happening now

in Tunisia. We believe that this crisis can be solved through democracy,” Di Maio said.



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Video of Italian police abuse of Tunisian migrants goes viral  
Tunisia rescues 166 migrants at sea, 16 dead

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## [Discontented Iranians march through central Tehran, chanting 'death to the dictator'](#)

Tue, 2021-07-27 15:24

LONDON: Disgruntled Iranians held protests in central Tehran on Monday.

Demonstrating in Jomhuri Avenue and other parts of central Tehran, angry protestors shouted “death to the dictator,” and “Khamenei, shame on you, leave our nation alone.”

Other chants from the crowd included “Tanks, guns (are not going to save your regime), the mullahs must go,” and “Neither Gaza, nor Lebanon, I sacrifice my

life for Iran.”

The Tehran protests come after recent violent protests over water shortages in Iran’s southwest Khuzestan province.

Ahwazi Arabs are one of the largest minority groups living in Iran and most of them live in Khuzestan.

Protesters, rights groups and activists say the water demand by Ahwazi Arabs is part of wider discontent over historic and systematic racial discrimination.

The President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) Maryam Rajavi praised the protestors in Tehran.

“The sacrifices of martyrs in Khuzestan now echoes in the cries of “Death to the dictator” in Tehran’s central streets, near Khamenei’s headquarters. The uprising continues on for the twelfth day and shows that the henchman of the 1988 Massacre cannot save Khamenei from his inevitable destiny,” Rajavi said.



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## [Egypt officials: Cairo apartment building collapses; 1 dead](#)

Author:

AP

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Tue, 2021-07-27 15:42

CAIRO: An apartment building in the Egyptian capital of Cairo collapsed on Tuesday, killing a man while rescue workers hours later pulled his wife alive from under the rubble, officials said.

The woman spent more than five hours buried under the rubble of the four-story building in the city's Waraq neighborhood, officials said. She was taken to hospital. No other residents were believed to be inside the building at the time of the collapse.

Earlier, the rescuers had managed to locate and speak with the woman – even passing her a bottle of water, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Prosecutors opened an investigation, the state-run MENA news agency reported. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the collapse but such incidents are common in Egypt, where shoddy construction is widespread in shantytowns, poor city neighborhoods and rural areas.

Last month, at least five women died when an apartment building collapsed in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria. Another building in Cairo collapsed in March, leaving at least 25 dead.

With real estate at a premium in big cities such as Cairo and Alexandria, developers seeking bigger profits frequently violate planning permits. Extra floors often, for example, are sometimes added without proper government permits.

The government recently launched a crackdown on illegal construction across the country, jailing and fining violators, and in many cases demolishing the buildings.



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## [Egypt steps up efforts to meet high demand for water from Nile](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-07-26 22:58

CAIRO: Egyptian authorities have stepped up measures to ensure the country's water needs continue to be met over the coming months.

At a recent meeting of a committee responsible for regulating Nile revenues, members agreed to carry on operating water emergency units in all governorates to monitor river levels.

Mohammed Abdel-Ati, Egypt's minister of water resources and irrigation, presided over the meeting that was also attended by top ministry executives and leading officials from the National Center for Water Research.

The committee reviewed Nile River revenues for the current water year and supply issues during the current period of maximum need. Delegates discussed measures being taken by the ministry to ensure the most efficient management of water resources and contingency plans put in place to meet all water requirements.

Abdel-Ati pointed out the importance of maintaining constant checks on water levels, and the condition of canals, drains, bridges, waterways, and power stations responsible for supplying them.

He noted that the ministry and its agencies had efficiently managed the water system during the current period of high demand while also hitting sustainable development goals.

The minister added that the committee was regularly monitoring rainfall rates at the sources of the Nile and recording quantities of water reaching the lake of the high dam to ensure the most efficient management of water supplies.

He said rainfall levels were at present about average and that it was too early to make accurate predictions for the remainder of this year.



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## [Biden, Kadhimi seal agreement to end US combat mission in Iraq](#)

Mon, 2021-07-26 21:27

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi on Monday sealed an agreement formally ending the US combat mission in Iraq by the end of 2021, more than 18 years after US troops were sent to the country.

Coupled with Biden's withdrawal of the last American forces in Afghanistan by the end of August, the Democratic president is completing US combat missions in the two wars that then-President George W. Bush began under his watch. Biden and Kadhimi met in the Oval Office for their first face-to-face talks as part of a strategic dialogue between the United States and Iraq.

"Our role in Iraq will be ... to be available, to continue to train, to assist, to help and to deal with Daesh as it arises but we're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat zone," Biden told reporters as he and Kadhimi met.

There are currently 2,500 US troops in Iraq focusing on countering the remnants of Daesh. The US role in Iraq will shift entirely to training and advising the Iraqi military to defend itself.

The shift is not expected to have a major impact since the US has already moved toward focusing on training Iraqi forces.

A US-led coalition invaded Iraq in March 2003 based on charges that then-Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's government possessed weapons of mass destruction. Saddam was ousted from power, but such weapons were never found. In recent years the US mission was dominated by helping defeat Daesh militants in Iraq and Syria.

"Nobody is going to declare mission accomplished. The goal is the enduring defeat of ISIS," a senior administration official told reporters ahead of Kadhimi's visit. He was using an alternate acronym for Daesh.

The reference was reminiscent of the large "Mission Accomplished" banner on the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier above where Bush gave a speech declaring major combat operations over in Iraq on May 1, 2003.

"If you look to where we were, where we had Apache helicopters in combat, when we had US special forces doing regular operations, it's a significant evolution. So by the end of the year we think we'll be in a good place to really formally move into an advisory and capacity-building role," the official said.

US diplomats and troops in Iraq and Syria were targeted in three rocket and drone attacks earlier this month. Analysts believed the attacks were part of a campaign by Iranian-backed militias.

The senior administration official would not say how many US troops would remain on the ground in Iraq for advising and training.

Kadhimi is seen as friendly to the US and has tried to check the power of Iran-aligned militias. But his government condemned a US air raid against Iran-aligned fighters along its border with Syria in late June, calling it a violation of Iraqi sovereignty.

The US-Iraqi statement is expected to detail a number of non-military agreements related to health, energy and other matters.

The US plans to provide Iraq with 500,000 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine under the global COVAX vaccine-sharing program. Biden said the doses should arrive in a couple of weeks.

The US will also provide \$5.2 million to help fund a UN mission to monitor October elections in Iraq.

“We’re looking forward to seeing an election in October,” said Biden.



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Biden, Iraqi PM to announce end of US combat mission in IraqIraq says



militants planned other attacks during Muslim holiday