

# US threatens to veto French draft UN resolution on Mideast

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Wed, 2021-05-19 15:46

UNITED NATIONS: The United States said Wednesday it would not support a United Nations Security Council draft resolution proposed by France calling for an Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire, saying it could undermine efforts to de-escalate the crisis.

"We've been clear and consistent that we are focused on intensive diplomatic efforts underway to bring an end to the violence and that we will not support actions that we believe undermine efforts to de-escalate," a US spokesperson at the UN told AFP.

The remarks indicated that Washington was ready to veto the French proposal if it came to a vote.

French President Emmanuel Macron and his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who was in Paris for summits on Africa, agreed on the resolution in a video conference with Jordan's King Abdullah II, according to a statement late Tuesday.

The Security Council has failed to adopt a simple declaration on the conflict, with the United States, a staunch Israel ally, vetoing three prior statement drafts proposed by China, Norway and Tunisia which called for an end to the fighting.

Raising diplomatic pressure on the US, France had proposed a "short and simple" resolution calling for a halt to hostilities and access for humanitarian aid.

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday told Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he expects "significant de-escalation" during the day.

Deafening air strikes and rocket fire once more shook Gaza in the conflict that has, since May 10, claimed 219 Palestinian lives according to the Gaza health ministry and killed 12 people in Israel according to Israeli police. "The president conveyed to the prime minister that he expected a significant de-escalation today on the path to a cease-fire," the White House said after a fourth phone call in a little over a week.



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Escalation of violence in Israel-Palestine conflict must stop, says Saudi Arabia's Prince Faisal bin Farhan  
Israel bombs another building housing media office in Gaza

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## [\*\*Egypt extends measures to contain coronavirus to end of May\*\*](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Wed, 2021-05-19 18:27

CAIRO: Egypt will extend measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus,

including early closing hours for shops, until the end of May, the cabinet said on Wednesday. Public parks and beaches will be allowed to reopen in two weeks' time, with appropriate precautions. Since May 6, stores, malls and restaurants have had to close by 9 p.m.



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## [EU top negotiator says confident deal will be reached in Iran nuclear talks](#)

Wed, 2021-05-19 17:47

VIENNA: The European Union's political director said on Wednesday that he was "quite sure" that there would be a final agreement to revive the Iran nuclear deal.

"We have made substantial progress over the last 10 days but there are still



things to be worked on and we will reconvene next week and we will continue working,” Enrique Mora, who is coordinating indirect talks between Iran and the United States, told reporters at the end of a fourth round of negotiations in Vienna.

Talks resumed in Vienna on May 7 with the remaining parties to the deal – Iran, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany – meeting in the basement of a luxury hotel, and the United States based in another hotel across the street.

Iran has refused to hold direct meetings with the United States on how to resume compliance with the deal, which former President Donald Trump abandoned in 2018, prompting Iran to begin violating its terms about a year later.

“I am quite sure that there will be a final agreement,” Mora said. “I think we are on the right track and we will get an agreement.”

Asked if he was saying there would be a deal in the next round: “I cannot venture such a prediction. What I can venture is that there will be an agreement, yeah, sure.”

The crux of the original agreement was that Iran committed to rein in its nuclear programme to make it harder to obtain the fissile material for a nuclear weapon in return for relief from US, EU and UN sanctions.

Officials have said they hope to reach a deal by May 21, when an agreement between Tehran and the IAEA, the UN nuclear watchdog, on continued monitoring of some Iranian nuclear activities is due to expire.

Mora said Iran was continuing to negotiate with the IAEA on extending that agreement.



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Iran press voices concern over presidential poll turnoutIran's judiciary chief declares candidacy for presidential election

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## [Egypt allocates \\$500m to rebuild Gaza](#)

Author:

Tue, 2021-05-18 22:08

CAIRO: Egypt is allocating \$500 million for reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip following Israeli airstrikes, with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi saying that specialist Egyptian firms would contribute to the rebuilding efforts.

"We will work to solve the crisis," El-Sisi said on the sidelines of a conference in Paris. "There is hope for collective action to end the conflict."

El-Sisi has ordered the government to coordinate with Palestinians in Gaza to find out what their needs are and fulfill them.

Egypt has opened the Rafah crossing through which travelers, students and those wishing to receive medical treatment have begun arriving.

Egypt is leading mediation efforts to reach a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians.



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Macron, Egypt's El-Sisi, Jordan king to hold talks seeking Mideast cease-fire  
Gaza facing water, power crisis after deadly Israeli attacks lift death toll to 200

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## [UAE says it will offer Sinopharm booster shot](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Tue, 2021-05-18 20:02

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates said on Tuesday it would offer a booster shot of the COVID-19 vaccine from China's state-owned drug-maker Sinopharm for those who have already received two doses.

The move is part of the UAE's "proactive strategy to provide maximum protection for society," the National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority (NCEMA) said, with priority given to those aged above 60 or suffering a chronic disease.



The country of some 9 million has vaccinated around 73 percent of the eligible population, NCEMA said. The UAE is providing four vaccines for free but does not provide a breakdown for each one.

The UAE, a regional business and tourism hub, on Tuesday reported 1,270 new coronavirus infections to take the total to 548,681 cases with 1,637 deaths. The World Health Organization, which last week approved Sinopharm for emergency use, has said a large Phase III trial of Sinopharm had shown that two doses, administered at an interval of 21 days, have an efficacy of 79 percent against symptomatic infection, 14 or more days after the second dose. The UAE has started manufacturing the Chinese vaccine under a joint venture between Sinopharm and Abu Dhabi-based technology company Group 42.



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Emirates boss hopes UAE could move off UK red list in a weekHoneywell deploys tech to combat use of fake COVID-19 respirators in UAE