

Yemen's president meets UN and US envoys to discuss Saudi peace initiative

Sun, 2021-03-28 21:44

LONDON: Yemen's President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi has held meetings with the UN and US envoys to Yemen to discuss developments in the country and efforts to end the six-year war, with the Saudi initiative at the forefront. The new peace plan announced by the Kingdom last week includes a nationwide cease-fire, opening Sanaa airport, allowing fuel and other commodities into Yemen through Hodeidah, and resuming the political process. Hadi told UN envoy Martin Griffiths that the Houthi militia's continued escalation in Marib and other provinces confirmed the Iran-backed group's lack of intention to commit to peaceful options to end the war, Yemen's Saba News Agency reported.

Griffiths met today with [@HadiPresident](#) in Riyadh. He briefed him about his meetings in Muscat & discussed efforts to agree on a nationwide ceasefire, opening Sana'a airport, allowing fuel & other commodities into [#Yemen](#) through Hudaydah ports & resuming the political process.

– @OSE_Yemen (@OSE_Yemen) [March 28, 2021](#)

Hadi said that the “Yemeni people will not accept the reproduction of the Iranian experience and the return of defunct priestly rule in Yemen no matter the cost,” adding that his government had made many concessions that have been met with intransigence from the Houthis. Hadi called on the international community to financially support the government to be able to carry out its duties and humanitarian tasks and complete the steps to implement the Riyadh Agreement, stressing the importance of the efforts of the UN envoy. Griffiths said that the humanitarian situation was extremely difficult, and required concerted efforts to end the bloody conflict and suffering. He praised the “positive steps” taken by the Yemeni government in response to the Saudi initiative, and the efforts of the president and the international community to establish peace in Yemen and bring an end to the war. Griffiths also met Yemen's Foreign Minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak.

Griffiths met with Foreign Minister [@BinmubarakAhmed](#) in Riyadh today. They discussed ongoing efforts to resume the political process in [#Yemen](#). Griffiths stressed the importance of seizing the current momentum for peace which is supported by the international community.

– @OSE_Yemen (@OSE_Yemen) [March 28, 2021](#)

Earlier on Sunday, Hadi had a meeting with US envoy, Tim Lenderking, during which he affirmed support for his efforts.

“Unfortunately, the Houthi militia, with Iran’s backing, have not complied with the peace endeavors, the most recent of which was the Stockholm Agreement,” Hadi said. “Rather, they persisted in targeting innocent civilians, besieging Marib with Iranian missiles and drones, and increasing attacks on civilian objects in Saudi Arabia.”

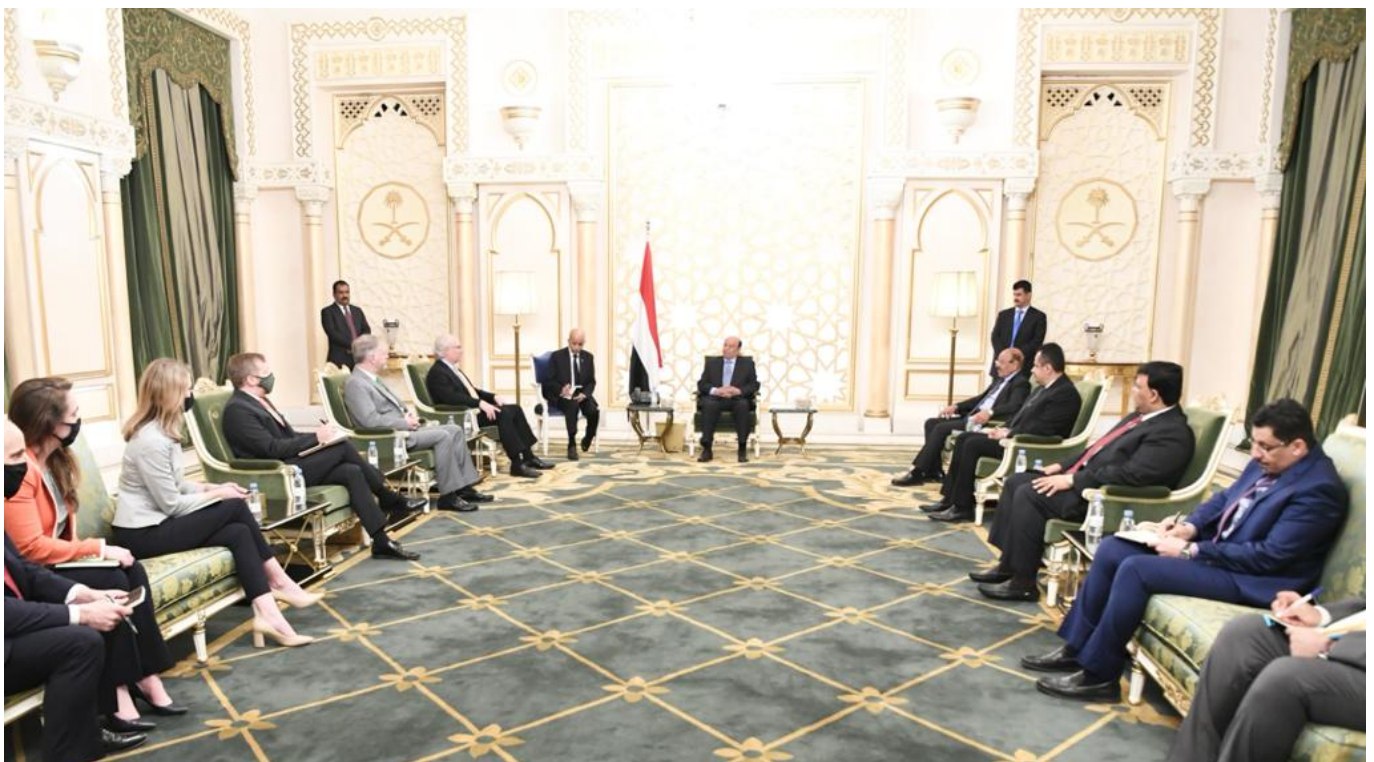
Hadi stressed the depth of the strategic relations that bind Yemen and the US in various files, including combating terrorism, security, stability and promoting the unity of Yemen, protecting waterways and international navigation, and confronting Iranian interference in the region.

Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed stressed the importance of peace and economic support, and Washington’s role, which in turn reflects positively on the peace process and development and stability.

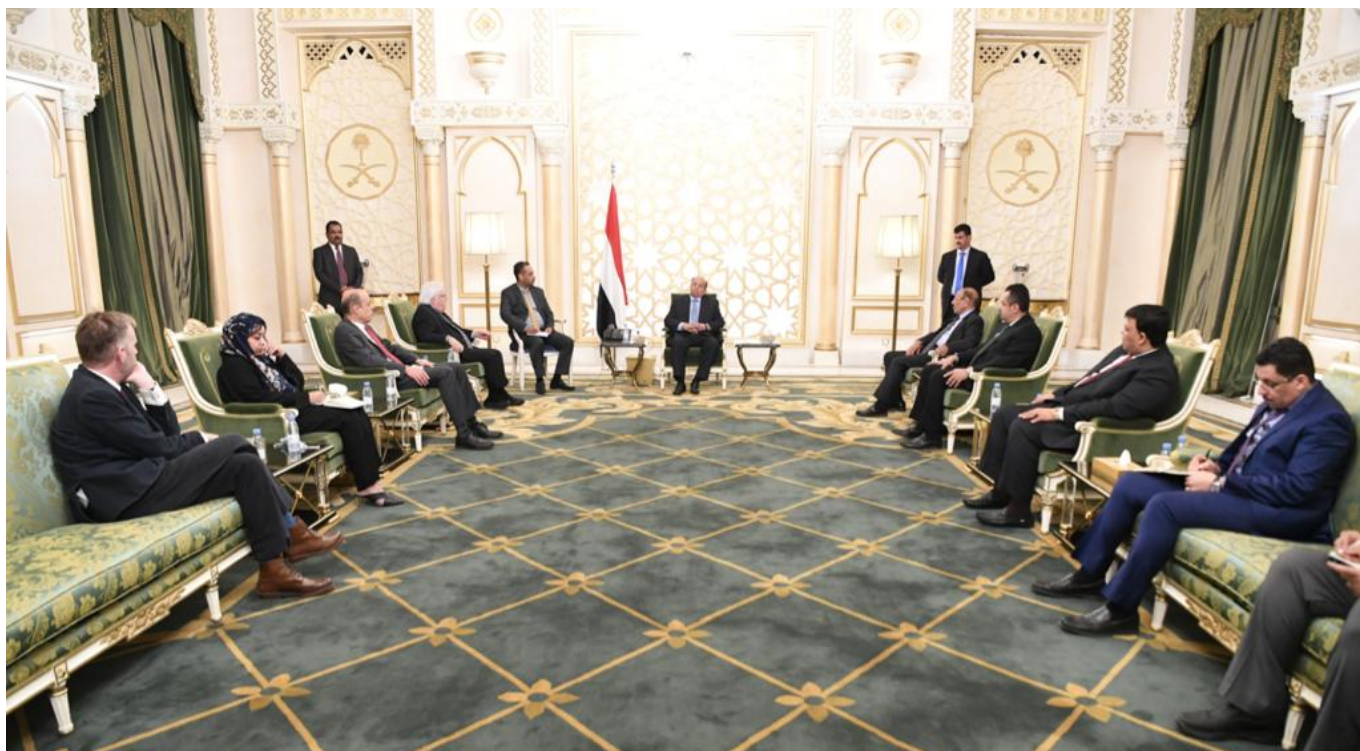
Lenderking reiterated US support for the legitimate government and its stance toward peace. He told Hadi that he hoped the Saudi initiative would succeed, in the interests of the Yemeni people, and bring an end to the war, in cooperation with all partners to preserve Yemen’s unity, security and stability.

He called for strengthening the strategic relationship with Yemen in facing all challenges, including combating terrorism, protecting international corridors and interventions in the region.

Griffiths and Lenderking also both met with Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to Yemen Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Jaber to discuss the Kingdom’s peace initiative and joint efforts to reach a comprehensive political solution to end the crisis in Yemen.







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Saudi envoy discusses Yemen peace initiative with his UN counterparts

[Sudan and main rebel group restart peace talks](#)

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Associated Press

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Sun, 2021-03-28 15:14

CAIRO: Sudan's interim government and the main rebel group in the country agreed on Sunday to re-start peace talks according to the rebel group and Sudan state news.

The agreement was marked in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, which has mediated past negotiations between the Sudan Popular Liberation Movement – North, led by Abdel-Aziz Al-Hilu, and the government.

In a video posted online by the rebel group, the group's leader joined and raised hands with the leader of Sudan's interim sovereign council Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan after the signing.

Al-Hilu's movement is Sudan's single largest rebel group and is active in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan provinces, where it controls significant chunks of territory.

Sudan's transitional government has been engaging in peace talks with rebel groups over the past two years, looking to stabilize the country and help its fragile path to democracy survive following the military's overthrow of longtime autocrat Omar Al-Bashir in April 2019 after nearly three decades in power.

In 2020, Sudan's transitional authorities and another rebel alliance signed a peace deal that was a step toward ending the country's decades-long civil wars. Al-Hilu's group participated in negotiations leading up to it but did not sign the final deal.

The rebels have called for a secular state with no role for religion in lawmaking, the disbanding of all of Al-Bashir's militias and the re-vamping of the country's military. Al-Hilu's group says if its demands aren't met, it will call for self-determination in areas it controls.

Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Sudan, Volker Perthes, welcomed the development, calling it "an important step forward toward comprehensive peace in Sudan," in a Tweet.

In a copy of the initial agreement between the government and the rebel group obtained by The Associated Press, both sides agreed that a principle for the basis of talks was "a civil, democratic, federal State in Sudan."

Sudanese rebels for years fought Al-Bashir's loyalists, in Darfur but also in the southern provinces of Blue Nile and South Kordofan. The fighting has often fallen along religious and ethnic lines. In rebel-held provinces much of the population claims sub-Saharan African descent and are Christian, and were targeted by Al-Bashir's Islamist government in the north of the country.





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US goes ahead with \$1.15bn for Sudan reforms
Sudan's cabinet backs UAE mediation in border, dam disputes with Ethiopia

Jordan considers state takeover of private hospitals to cope with COVID-19 surge

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Sun, 2021-03-28 18:17

AMMAN: The Jordanian government has threatened to place the country's private hospitals under state control to cope with a surge in COVID-19 cases.

In a bid to cope with a sharp increase in demand for hospital and intensive care beds, Minister of State for Media Affairs Sakher Dudin said that the government had set up a number of field hospitals across the kingdom and had rented four private hospitals.

"But the health care system is now on the line with the surge in coronavirus cases," he said on Sunday.

Asked whether the government would nationalize private hospitals to deal with rising cases, the minister said: "Yes, of course, the government would activate the defense order related to taking over private hospitals and health care providers, if it requires, to slow the spread of coronavirus."

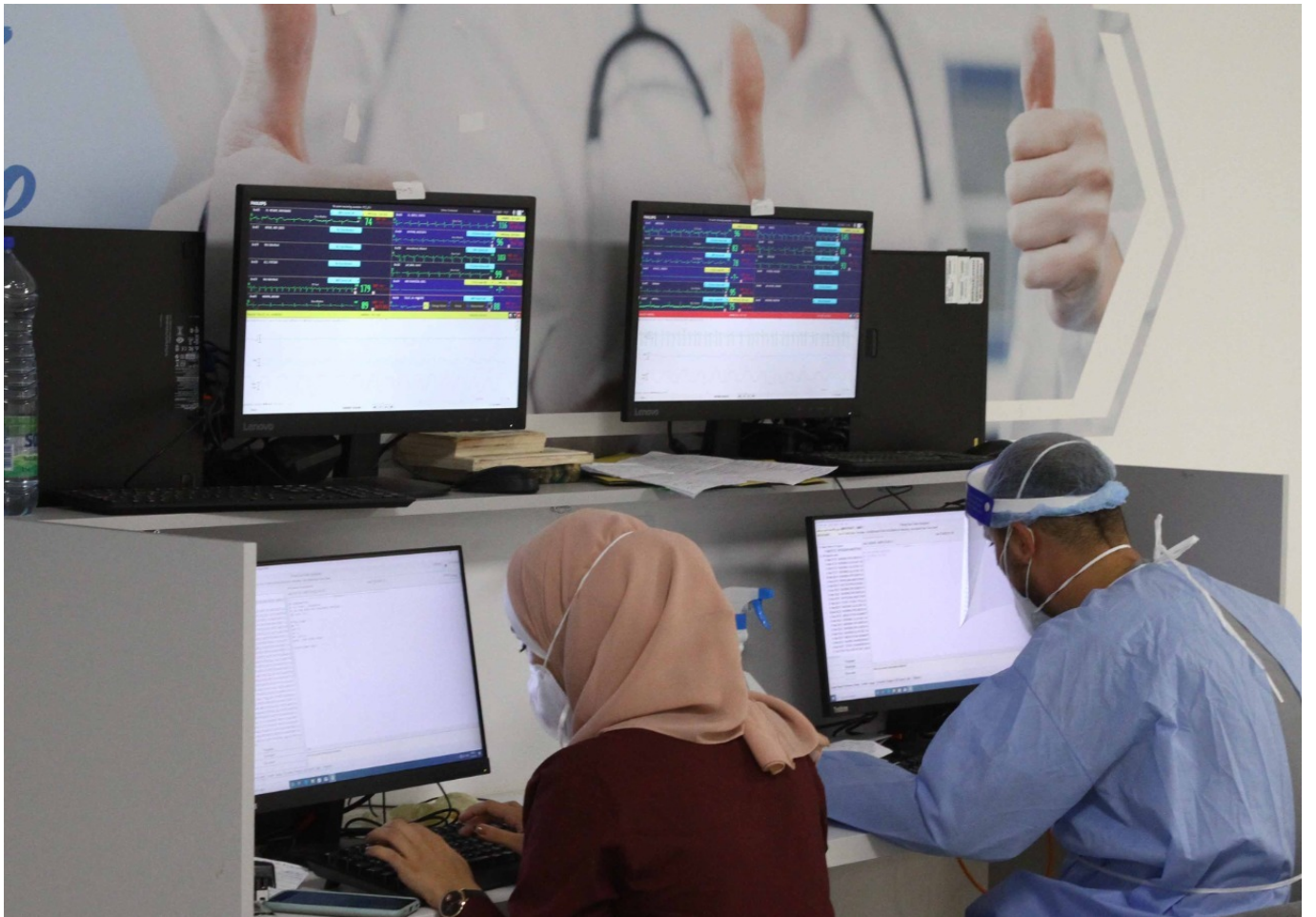
Jordan has seen a surge in COVID-19 cases in recent weeks with hospital occupancy rates reaching around 70 percent.

Health authorities reported 4,399 new cases of COVID-19 and 98 additional deaths on Saturday, bringing the country's total cases to 582,133, with 6,472 fatalities.

Jordan has 70 private hospitals, two university hospitals, 31 public hospitals and 15 royal medical services hospitals.

Dudin said that the government had signed deals with COVID-19 vaccine producers to import 10.2 million jabs – enough to vaccinate more than 50 percent of the kingdom's 10 million population. Some 440,000 doses have already arrived and more than 10 million jabs are to arrive in June, September and December.

Contracts have been signed for the Sinopharm vaccine from China, the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine, Russia's Sputnik V and the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab.



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Jordan inoculates more than 274,000 against COVID-19
Jordan eyeing coronavirus-free tourism zone

[France's Macron and Egypt's El-Sisi discuss Libya, GERD](#)

Sun, 2021-03-28 17:53

LONDON: French President Emmanuel Macron praised Egypt's role in resolving the Libyan crisis during a phone call between with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Sunday.

Macron said Paris was keen to continue intensive cooperation with Cairo on Libya, according to a statement by the Egyptian presidency.

The French president said he appreciated the prominent political weight Egypt holds in the Arab world, Africa and the Mediterranean, and that this had positive repercussions on joint cooperation between the two countries to reach political settlements to existing crises, said Bassam Rady, spokesman for the Egyptian president.

Rady said Macron praised the "vital Egyptian role in resolving the Libyan crisis, and President El-Sisi's efforts, which strengthened the political track to solve the Libyan issue."

El-Sisi affirmed Egypt's efforts to support the new temporary executive authority in Libya in various bilateral, regional and international forums. He called for mercenaries to immediately leave Libya and for the halt of foreign interference in Libyan affairs that contribute to fueling the crisis. The two presidents also agreed on the importance of intensifying joint efforts to combat terrorism in the Sahel region "in addition to the challenge that the phenomenon of terrorism poses to regional security as a whole."

The call also dealt with developments over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The French president said he hoped a solution would be reached between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan that would achieve the interests of all three parties as soon as possible.

They also reviewed the close ties that bind France and Egypt, and ways to strengthen them in various other fields.



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Libya demands mercenary pullout as EU top diplomats visit Egypt and Sudan
welcome UN's support for mediation to solve GERD issue
France to reopen embassy in Libya
Monday: Macron
Sudan's cabinet backs UAE mediation in border,
dam disputes with Ethiopia

[Turkey's daily COVID-19 cases exceed 30,000 for first time this year](#)

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By Associated Press

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1616866236920067900

Sat, 2021-03-27 17:19

ISTANBUL: Turkey has recorded 30,021 new coronavirus cases in the space of 24 hours, the highest number this year, health ministry data showed on Saturday. Measures to curb the pandemic in Turkey were eased this month. The cumulative number of cases stood at 3,179,115 and the latest daily death toll was 151, bringing the cumulative toll to 30,923.

The country will begin vaccinating people over 60 and some risk groups as daily infections climb, Turkey's health minister said. Minister Fahrettin Koca announced on Twitter the spouses of people above 60 are also eligible. The risk groups included in this round of vaccinations are people with underlying conditions. Turkey rolled out its vaccination program in January with CoronaVac by Chinese biopharmaceutical company Sinovac and has administered more than 14.6 million shots. This week, the country also received approximately 1.4 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine.



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