

Kuwait bans entry for non-Kuwaiti citizens until further notice

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CAIRO: Kuwait's Civil Aviation Authority on Saturday announced it was extending an entry ban for non-Kuwaiti citizens until further notice as part of coronavirus restriction measures, it said on Twitter.

Citizens are still allowed to enter but they must spend a week in quarantine at a hotel and another week at home.



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Travelers arriving in Kuwait from COVID-19 hotspots must isolate in local hotelsKuwait's emir postpones parliament meetings for a month

Iran closes Iraq border points to stem spread of coronavirus variant

Author:

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Sat, 2021-02-20 16:52

DUBAI: Iran closed several crossing points with Iraq on Saturday in an effort to stem the spread of a mutant variant of coronavirus which the Iranian health minister said was entering from the neighboring country.

Crossing points to Iraq from Khuzestan province as well as the nearby provinces of Ilam and Kermanshah were being closed to travelers, Saeed Namaki told state TV.

Iran, the worst-hit country in the Middle East, faces a surge of new infections as 11 cities and towns in its southwestern Khuzestan province were declared high-risk "red" zones, state media reported.

Iraq's health minister said on Monday that the new variant first found in Britain had been detected in the country which has been recording a sharp rise in infections.

"The main source of infection ... with the British coronavirus in Khuzestan province were travelers who came from Iraq, and for this reason we have closed the borders of this province until further notice," Namaki said. Last week, Namaki reported Iran's first three deaths from the new virus variant and warned that it was spreading and soon "may be found in any city, village or family" in a fourth wave of infections.

Iran's health ministry on Saturday reported 7,922 new cases of coronavirus and 68 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking the total death toll to 59,409, with 1,566,081 registered cases.

State broadcaster IRIB said goods transports were not affected by the passenger terminal closure at the main border crossing of Shalamcheh near Iraq's southern city of Basra.



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Old habits imperil Iraq as doctors warn of second coronavirus wave
Briton held in Iran 'completely shut off' after losing phone access

[Turkish court upholds jail sentence for pro-Kurdish lawmaker](#)

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Sat, 2021-02-20 19:27

ANKARA: Turkey's Court of Appeal has upheld a prison sentence for a pro-Kurdish lawmaker and activist.

A two-and-a-half-year jail term is being sought for Omer Faruk Gergerlioglu, who is also a member of a parliamentary commission responsible for monitoring

human rights violations and has consistently drawn attention to allegations of rights abuses.

"We are with him until the end," his supporters tweeted.

Gergerlioglu is a deputy in the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), which the government accuses of having links with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party.

He was convicted on charges of "making terrorist propaganda" for retweeting a T24 news story about the Kurdish conflict and the collapse of the peace process.

His conviction over a social media post had the "hallmark of an attempt to silence him," Amnesty International's Turkey campaigner Milena Buyum told Arab News.

"The extent of the dissenting opinion of the appeal court judge confirms this concern," she added. "No one should be subjected to judicial harassment for highlighting allegations of human rights violations."

Gergerlioglu said last December that female suspects and detainees had been subjected to humiliating strip searches by police in provinces across Turkey.

While his allegations were supported by thousands of prisoners who told dissident media outlets about their experiences of systematic sexual violence at the hands of the police, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu denied them and accused Gergerlioglu of being a "terrorist."

The lawmaker is also a doctor, but was dismissed from the profession by presidential decree.

"After my dad was dismissed from his medical profession a couple of years ago, he was punched in the middle of the street by someone who claimed that my dad was a terrorist," Gergerlioglu's son Salih told Arab News. "I remember very well the big bruise on his face. He was so calm but I wasn't. He explains to everyone that he was on the right track."

The ruling government had "instrumentalized statehood for consolidating its power" rather than reaching out to people in need, he said, and had prioritized the party over society by criminalizing dissident people. "We need to communicate with every vulnerable segment of society, be it Armenians or Kurds, in order to heal these fault lines in society. It is a must. Struggling for a cause starts with knowing the land you live in. Thanks to my dad, I have been immersed in the struggle for defending human rights from my childhood. I owe him a lot."

Salih founded the Movement of the Others with friends who felt alienated in Turkish society because of reasons connected to their identities.

"This society will change one day," he added, "and this transformation will be realized with the cooperation and mutual understanding between those who are oppressed. Whatever they do, they cannot silence my dad, who keeps telling me to gauge my justness all the time with fairness and not to give up my cause if I am right."

Prosecutors have prepared summaries of proceedings against nine HDP lawmakers over investigations into 2014's Kobani protests. They have been submitted to the Justice Ministry and the lawmakers will go before a court if they are stripped of their parliamentary immunity.



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Fears of crackdowns on Turkey's Kurdish parties and voters
Turkey targets jailed activist's cultural organization

[Russian air assault kills 21 Daesh militants in Syria](#)

Author:

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BEIRUT: A wave of air strikes by government ally Russia killed at least 21 Daesh militants in the Syrian desert over the past 24 hours, a monitor said Saturday.

The 21 were killed in at least 130 air strikes "carried out over the past 24 hours by the Russian air force targeting Daesh in an area on the edge of the provinces of Aleppo, Hama and Raqqa," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The raids, which continued into Saturday, follow a series of Daesh attacks

Friday on government and allied forces that killed at least eight members of a pro-Damascus militia, the Britain-based monitor said.

In recent months, the vast desert, known in Arabic as the Badia, has been the scene of increasingly frequent fighting between the extremists and government forces backed by Russian air power.

Daesh overran large parts of Syria and Iraq and proclaimed a cross-border "caliphate" in 2014, before multiple offensives in the two countries led to its territorial defeat.

The militants continue to launch attacks, mostly in the Badia desert which stretches from the central province of Homs to the border with Iraq.

More than 1,300 government troops have been killed in these clashes, as well as 145 pro-Iran militia members and more than 750 Daesh militants, according to the Observatory.

Since Syria's civil war broke out in 2011, more than 387,000 people have been killed and millions forced from their homes.



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[Middle-East](#)

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What next for children of Daesh detainees confined in Syrian camps? Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny tells Russian court to free him

Sudan slams Ethiopia over 'insulting' border crisis statement

Author:

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DUBAI: Sudan's Foreign Ministry slammed a statement issued by the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry accusing Khartoum of serving the "interests of a third party" in the border crisis, state news SUNA reported on Saturday.

The Sudanese Foreign Ministry described the Ethiopian statement as a "betrayal to the history of Ethiopia's relations with Sudan and a denial to the mutual relations between the people of the two countries," the report said.

In condemning Sudan's recent military actions, the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "the Ethiopian government strongly believes that the conflict being trumpeted by the Sudanese government's military wing could only serve the interests of a third party at the expense of the Sudanese people," the statement read."

The Sudanese National Army "violated the basic principles of international law and peaceful settlements of disputes by unceremoniously invading Ethiopia" in early November 2020, the Ethiopian statement claimed.

Ethiopia stated that Sudan had "overturned and undermined" the efforts of the joint boundary committees that have been working to finalize the re-demarcation process for the border. Ethiopia also accused the Sudanese army of looting properties, burning camps, attacking and displacing thousands of Ethiopians and controlling vacated Ethiopian Military Camps.

In response, however, Sudan referred to the statement as "unfortunate" and "insulting", and that it "betrayed the history of Ethiopia's relations with Sudan."

Sudan stated it was "keen" to continue and develop its relations with Ethiopia for the benefit of the citizens of the two countries and to "enter into future partnerships that contribute to achieving security, stability and economic growth."

Sudan's statement called on Ethiopia to take the available legal options, regionally and internationally, not to threaten the international security, affirming Sudan's sovereignty over the land that Ethiopia claims sovereignty over.

Amid the escalating tensions between the two countries, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry said last week that it had summoned its ambassador to Ethiopia for consultations as tensions between the two neighbors had escalated in recent weeks over border disputes.



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