

ARAB DISPATCH

Arab Dispatch - a project by the NATO Defense College Foundation

Issue n. 16

26th June - 4th July 2019

North Africa

[#Libya](#) – Air strike kills dozens at migrant detention centre in Tripoli



At least 40 people have been killed and another 130 injured after an air raid hit a detention centre for refugees and migrants east of Tripoli early Wednesday. The internationally-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) denounced the attack as a “heinous crime” and blamed it on the “war criminal Khalifa Haftar”. GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha stressed that the crime came soon after the statements of the LNA’s air force commander, Muhammad al-Manfour, who announced on Monday that aerial bombardment would be stepped up because “traditional means” to “liberate Tripoli” had been exhausted. UN Special Envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salamé, said the attack “could clearly constitute a

war crime, as it killed by surprise innocent people whose dire conditions forced them to be in that shelter”, adding that “the absurdity of the ongoing war today has led this odious bloody carnage to its most hideous and tragic consequences”. The event was the highest publicly reported death toll from an airstrike since forces loyal to Haftar launched an offensive on Tripoli at the beginning of April.

To know more about this topic:

- *Al Jazeera*, “Libya: Air raid kills dozens at Tripoli migrant detention centre”, 07/03/19, available at: bit.ly/2xrBcZ5.
- *The Guardian*, “Libya detention centre attack is possible war crime, says UN envoy”, 07/03/19, available at: bit.ly/30ceMHh.
- *Le Monde*, “Libye: un missile s’abat sur un centre de détention de migrants, tuant 40 personnes”, 07/03/19, available at: bit.ly/327XBbK.

Levant

[#Syria](#) – Damascus accuses Israel of “state terrorism” after airstrikes



Last Sunday, Israel launched air strikes near Damascus and in Homs province, killing at least 15 people. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, the targets included the headquarters of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps of Iran in the south of the Syrian capital; a scientific research centre in the countryside around the city; and positions held by Hezbollah in the mountains near the border with Lebanon. After

the attack, the Syrian Foreign Ministry accused Israel of committing “state terrorism”, claiming that “the latest heinous Israeli aggression falls within the framework of ongoing Israeli attempts to prolong the crisis in the country”. Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad also warned that “we will change the way we will respond in the future”. According to the official SANA news agency, the Ministry filed a complaint to the UN Security Council, demanding accountability over the strikes. Last week, Jerusalem hosted an extraordinary trilateral meeting of the national security advisers of Israel, Russia, and the US, where PM Netanyahu pressed for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Syria, in particular those of Iran and Iranian proxies near the frontier with Israel.

To know more about this topic:

- *L'Orient-Le Jour*, “Frappes meurtrières en Syrie : Damas accuse Israël de ‘terrorisme d'Etat’”, 07/02/19, available at: bit.ly/2XomPnM.
- *The Jerusalem Post*, “Syria accuses Israel of ‘State terrorism’ for alleged airstrikes”, 07/03/19, available at: bit.ly/2LEaRiN.

Gulf

[#SaudiArabia](#) – Aramco to resume preparations for mega IPO plan

أرامكو السعودية
Saudi Aramco



Saudi Arabia announced that it is restarting preparations of a potential initial public offering (IPO) of oil giant Aramco, the world’s most profitable company in 2019. The IPO project was first announced in 2016 as the cornerstone of the Vision 2030 plan to modernise the kingdom’s economy, with a target of listing in the second half of 2018. The plan was formally put on hold last year, deciding instead to buy a \$69 million stake in local chemical giant Saudi Basic Industries Corp (Sabic). Riyadh want to raise

a record \$100 billion from selling a 5% stake in Aramco, which would make it the biggest IPO in history. Last Tuesday, following a meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies in Vienna, Saudi Minister of Energy, Khalid Al-Falih, said the company is aiming for a listing in 2020 to 2021. Yet, the revived project is likely to face significant difficulties, notably because demand for the share sale will probably be affected by lower oil prices as well as growing concerns among top institutional investors about pouring money into fossil-fuel companies that contribute to climate change.

To know more about this topic:

- *Gulf News*, “Saudi Aramco to restart preparations for Mega IPO”, 07/02/19, available at: bit.ly/2FPDJki.
- *Al Arabiya*, “Saudi Arabia’s al-Falih says Aramco IPO to happen in 2020-21”, 07/02/19, available at: <http://bit.ly/2RQyHZs>.

#ArabInsight

#SudanTurmoil #SaudiArabia – Sudan’s transition at a crossroads: an insight into the role of #SaudiArabia and the #UAE in shaping the country’s scenario



At the end of June, mass demonstrations calling for a civilian rule have resumed in Sudan, less than a month after a brutal military crackdown in central Khartoum that, according to protesters, saw more

than one hundred people killed and many more injured. Sudan's uprising began in December 2018, when spontaneous protests over the deteriorating economic situation morphed into a nationwide movement led by the country's labour unions. On the 11th of April, the three-decade leader Omar Al-Bashir was ousted by the army and replaced by a military council led by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, which is meant to oversee a transitional period that would last a maximum of two years. In the meanwhile, mass-demonstrations continued, with protesters demanding that the country's military ruler hand power to a civilian-led government. Negotiations between the two sides started to deteriorate in May to then collapse in the wake of the aforementioned crackdown on civilians on the 3rd of June. This week, we provide a short insight into the Sudanese context, with a particular focus on the role played by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the latest political events and present situation. To this end, we will take a cue from a recent report carried out by *Reuters* ([ENG version](#) – [AR version](#)) about the fall of Bashir, as well as from an article published by *Al Jazeera* on the 1st of July, titled "[Sudan...How to look at the political forces of the June 30th protests?](#)".

The *Reuters* report, based on interviews with several sources belonging to Bashir's inner circle, describes a President who was "skilled at manipulating and controlling rival Islamist and military factions in Sudan, but increasingly isolated in a changing Middle East". In particular, the leader seems to have mishandled two key relationships, i.e. with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Together with Riyadh, Abu Dhabi had previously transferred billion of dollars to Khartoum. In turn, Bashir sent some 14.000 Sudanese troops fighting in Yemen as part of the Saudi and UAE-led coalition against the Iranian-aligned Houthi rebels. Both King Salman and Mohammed bin Zayed also hoped for the Sudan's leader cooperation in cracking down on Islamists – notably groups affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood – which the Emirates and Saudi Arabia perceive as a direct threat to monarchic rule. Now, in Sudan, the influence of Islamists stretches back decades and is deep-rooted, as Bashir himself seized power in 1989 as the head of an Islamist junta. When the Qatar diplomatic crisis exploded in June 2017, he chose not to throw his support behind Abu Dhabi and Riyadh in the dispute, continuing instead of maintaining relationship with Doha that, like the two other states, had provided billions of dollars of financial aid to the country's impoverished economy. Moreover, he also opted not to diminish the influence of Islamists in his government. In parallel, mass protests started to spread throughout the capital and military moves against the President's rule began to accelerate.

In the weeks after Bashir's removal, his old ally, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo – known as Hemedti – was appointed deputy head of the Transitional Military Council (TMC), emerging as the most powerful figure in Sudan. On the 21st of April, Saudi Arabia and the UAE announced they would

provide the country with \$3 billion worth of aid; soon afterwards, Hemedti declared that Sudanese troops would remain in Yemen. Several international and national commentators see a correlation between the violent repression of protesters in June and previous meetings of the military junta's leaders with Gulf and Egypt representatives. Indeed, the rulers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are widely said to be acting in concert to thwart the aspirations of the reform movement – although they have repeatedly pledged to honour the “will of the Sudanese people”. Civil society activists have deplored their back-slapping and rejected the \$3bn aid, considering it as foreign meddling in the country's sovereign affairs. Not by chance, in that occasion, demonstrators were carrying out banners emblazoned with the slogans “We don't want to be like Egypt” and “United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia stop interfering in Sudan”. Many of those who took to the streets have gone as far as to demand that the TMC cut diplomatic ties with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

Last Wednesday, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), leader of the revolutionary movement in Sudan, agreed to engage in direct negotiations with the TMC, at the official invitation of the African-Ethiopian mediation. The next weeks will likely determine whether such mediation will succeed in breaking the current deadlock.

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