

# Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Oman to Introduce New COVID Restrictions



**Egyptian Quarantine Authority employees prepare to scan body temperatures of incoming travelers at Cairo International Airport on February 1, 2020.**

VID-19 test upon arrival, its health ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

The statement did not specify the countries from which passengers would take the 15-minute DNA test, called ID NOW.

Egypt's new coronavirus cases have been steadily rising in recent weeks. On Saturday it reported 1,125 new cases and 65 deaths, although experts say that reflects only a fraction of total cases.

In a statement on Saturday, Egypt's tourism ministry clarified that restaurants and coffee shops attached to hotels were exempt from a recent decree that such outlets as well as malls and stores would close at 9 p.m. local time (GMT +2) in order to not affect tourism.

Meanwhile, the Philippines and Egypt were the latest inclusion in Oman's list where travelers from the said countries are banned from entering Oman.

The decision was issued by the Supreme Committee, which takes lead in the country's fight against the coronavirus pandemic, and took effect on Friday, May 7.

Travelers from Egypt and the Philippines, and those who transited in any of the said countries during the 14 days, are particularly affected by the travel restriction a report from Times of Oman said.

Omani citizens, diplomats, health workers and their families are excluded from the latest rule but are subject to the procedures adopted upon entering the Sultanate, the report added.

Human Resources and Social Development said on Twitter.

It urged workplaces to start preparations to ensure all employees receive a vaccination.

"The ministry will soon clarify the mechanisms of the decision and its implementation date," it said.

Meanwhile, Egypt will require all visitors arriving from "countries where variants of the virus have appeared" to take a rapid CO-

RIYADH (Dispatches) – All public and private sector workers wishing to attend a workplace in Saudi Arabia will be required to have taken a COVID-19 vaccination, the human resources ministry said on Friday, without specifying when this would be implemented.

"Receiving a coronavirus vaccine will be a mandatory condition for male and female workers to attend workplaces in all sectors (public, private, non-profit)," the Ministry of

## Turkey Reopens Consulate in Northern Iraq

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey has reopened its consulate in Mosul, in northern Iraq. The consulate has been closed for the past seven years, since Daesh seized control of the city.

At that time, Daesh held 49 consulate staff — including then-Consul General Ozturk Yilmaz — hostage for over three months. Ankara has announced several times in recent years that it intended to reopen its consulate in Mosul.

Turkey recently appointed a new ambassador to Iraq as part of its efforts to boost its relations with its neighbor.

The relations between the countries have been rocky at times as Baghdad has slammed Turkey's military offensives in northern Iraq as a violation of Baghdad's sovereignty.

Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu recently announced

plans to set up a military base in Iraq's northern Dohuk region, in addition to a number of military outposts that Turkey has held in the region.

Turkey says the new base is to restrict the movement of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants and their military operations against Turkey.

Last month, the Turkish army launched a new offensive against PKK bases in northern Iraq, and Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar visited a military base in the Kurdistan region.

The operation and Akar's visit — which took place "without coordination or prior approval from authorities" — sparked anger from Baghdad. The Iraqi government sent a formal letter of protest to Turkey's ambassador on May 3.

## Watchdog Sues U.S. Over Lifting Sanctions on Zionist Mining Tycoon

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – A U.S. ethics and accountability watchdog has filed a lawsuit against the State and Treasury departments to force them to disclose records detailing the former administration's decision to lift sanctions against Zionist mining tycoon Dan Gertler.

The lawsuit, filed by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (Crew), comes months after the group filed two freedom of information act (FOIA) requests seeking records related to Gertler's designations.

Crew says the lifting of the sanctions by then-Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin may be connected with Mnuchin's reported plans to create an investment fund backed by sovereign wealth funds in the Middle East.

"The end of the Trump administration saw a flurry of last-minute grants of clemency to Trump allies and people with connections to them, and provided a clear view of the

revolving door where appointees found opportunities to turn their political experience into private benefit," Crew said in a statement.

"In the case of Steve Mnuchin, the public deserves to know to what extent he followed the president's habit of exploiting his position of power to enrich himself."

The State Department declined to comment when contacted by Middle East Eye, citing a policy against discussing pending litigation.

Sanctions were originally levied against Gertler in December 2017 and June 2018, as the Zionist billionaire was accused of using his connections to the former president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Joseph Kabila, to arrange "opaque and corrupt mining and oil deals".

The deals were reported to have cost the citizens of the DRC more than \$1.36bn in

lost revenue between 2010 and 2012 alone, according to the Treasury Department.

Days before the Trump administration left office, the Treasury Department quietly eased sanctions against Gertler.

The decision was not announced until four days after Trump left office, and an investigation by the New York Times alleged multiple irregularities in the process.

In March, the Biden administration reinstated the sanctions, claiming that exempting the mining tycoon was "inconsistent with America's strong foreign policy interests in combating corruption around the world".

The decision came after a coalition of 30 civil society organizations in both the U.S. and Congo sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, urging her to revoke the sanctions relief granted to Gertler. Several U.S. lawmakers also called on Biden to reinstate the sanctions.

## Putin Outwits Occupying Regime

# Russia Uses Zionist Regime Technology to Help Assad

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Russia has made the Zionist regime look like a fool by utilizing the regime's drone technology over the past decade, significantly enabling it to help defend the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad against foreign-backed terrorists, an article by the Israeli news outlet Haaretz has reported.

According to the article by the U.S.-based journalist Patrick Hilsman, Russia decided to bolster its presence in the

growing UAV industry after discovering its inadequacy in its conflict with Georgia in 2008, when it lost a number of aircraft to the Zionist regime's drones which its opponents possessed.

In 2010, the regime signed a \$400 million deal to sell its Searcher II drones to Russia, which adapted the technology and license-produced it to result in its own 'Forpost' UAV. Russian air force operatives also subsequently took joint

training and instruction in the occupied territories in order to learn how to adequately operate the technology.

Despite the increasing perception of drones being armed and weaponized, most of them remain in use for reconnaissance purposes rather than defense, posing as tools to scout the battlefield from above and stalk opponents. That is exactly what the Forposts have been used for throughout Moscow's military presence in Syria, with

them being classed as Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance – or ISR – drones.

They are not entirely detached from battle, though, as they pass on information and geolocation data to manned fighter jets which then efficiently and accurately drop explosive munitions onto the targets.

Russia has taken advantage of the technology to target terrorists and mercenaries who seek to topple the Syrian president.

## Al-Aqsa ... (Continued From Page One)

highest seat of Sunni Muslim learning, condemned the "brutal Zionist terrorism in the light of shameful international silence" toward what is going on in Jerusalem Al-Quds.

The Islamic Union for Muslim Scholars (IUMS) hailed the steadfastness of Palestinians in Al-Quds in the face of Israeli aggression and plans to displace them from their homes.

IUMS Secretary-General Ali Qaradaghi encouraged the Muslim world to support the Palestinian cause materially and morally, calling it a religious duty and necessity.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry refused to condemn the attack, only saying Israel's unilateral measures undermine chances to resume "peace" talks. "We reject Israel's plans and measures to evict Palestinians from their homes in Al-Quds and to impose Israel's sovereignty on them," it said.

Tensions have been rising across Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza for the past several weeks.

Earlier Friday, three Palestinian gunmen opened fire on Zionist troops in the northern West Bank. Two of them were killed in the firefight and a third was critically injured. Israeli military officials said the three were en route to carry out a "major" attack inside Israel, with reports saying they were heading for Al-Quds.

A Zionist was shot in a Palestinian reprisal attack in the West Bank on Sunday before he died of his wounds on Wednesday night.

Alert Ahead of Laylat al-Qadr In recent days, Palestinians have held demonstrations in East Al-Quds' Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Over 70 Palestinian residents are threatened with eviction and could be replaced by right-wing Zionists.

A Zionist court has ordered the families to leave. Palestinians and their supporters have protested the pending evictions every night for the past week. Police have sought to disperse the protests with sound grenades and water cannons, leading to injuries and arrests.

Additionally, at the beginning of Ramadan, Palestinians repeatedly clashed with Zionist forces in Al-Quds in protest of restrictions at the Damascus Gate area.

Hundreds of Zionist extremists marched through Al-Quds' downtown, chanting "Death to Arabs." Others randomly attacked Palestinians across the city. This then led to several clashes between Zionists and Arabs in the city.

There were also growing fears that tensions in Al-Quds could come to a head on Sunday night, Laylat al-Qadr, the most sacred night in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Worshipers will gather for nighttime prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Sunday night is also the start of a holiday for Zionists in which religious extremists hold parades and other celebrations in the city.

## Hangar... (Continued From Page One)

housing U.S. troops on Sunday night, and another against Balad airbase, which hosts U.S. contractors, north of the capital on Monday night.

Around 30 rocket or bomb attacks have targeted American interests in Iraq — including troops, the embassy or Iraqi supply convoys to foreign forces — since U.S. President Joe Biden took office in January.

Two foreign contractors, one Iraqi contractor and eight Iraqis have reportedly been killed in the attacks. Dozens of other attacks were carried out in Iraq from autumn 2019 during the Trump administration.

The operations are sometimes claimed by obscure groups. The attacks come amid growing resentment against the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq where lawmakers have approved a bill requiring the government to end the presence of all foreign forces.

Last month, Badr al-Ziyadi, a member of the defense and security committee at the Iraqi parliament, called for the eviction of American troops. He told Al-Maalomah news agency that the U.S. seeks to keep its forces in Iraq with no intention of ever withdrawing.

Two lawmakers with the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance in the Iraqi parliament also warned of U.S. plans for a permanent military presence in Iraq.

The MPs stressed that the Iraqi security forces are capable of protecting the country, and that U.S. combat forces have no role in fighting terrorism in Iraq.

Iraqi resistance groups have warned that they will treat the American troops as occupying forces and take up arms against them if they refuse to leave their country.

## U.S.... (Continued From Page 2)

to the JCPOA and they have so far expressed readiness to lift a large part of the sanctions," Araqchi said after a session of talks in Vienna.

"That is why the talks will continue until all our demands in this regard are met," he added.

U.S. President Joe Biden, who has admitted that Trump's maximum pressure policy has failed, told reporters at the White House on Friday that he believed Iran was approaching the Vienna talks seriously.

"But how serious and what they're prepared to do is a different story," Biden said. "We're still talking."

American delegates are present in Vienna, but they are not allowed to directly participate in the talks since the U.S. is no longer a signatory to the nuclear deal.

Biden has said he wants to rejoin the nuclear deal, but that Iran needs to return to "full compliance" first. Tehran says, as the party that reneged on its international obligations, the U.S. must first show good faith by removing all the sanctions — imposed, re-imposed or relabeled since 2015 — in a verifiable manner.

## Iranian... (Continued From Page 2)

"For this reason, the brutal behaviors and crimes of the Zionist regime were not and are not accepted by religious Jews at all."

The Iranian Jewish leader noted that confronting the Zionists is "a religious and human duty" that should be honored today just as Prophet Moses stood up against the Pharaoh's oppression and succeeded in saving the Israelites by the grace of God.

"There are various strategies to put pressure on the Zionist regime, including political, economic, etc. An example in the economic field is boycotting goods produced by the Zionist regime," he said.

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement was initiated in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian organizations and later turned international. The campaign is meant to initiate "various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law" and end its decades-long occupation of Palestinian lands.

## Arab ... (Continued From Page One)

(MESA) and the "Arab NATO", was accompanied by his milking of the Arab countries while going on with implementing the so-called maximum pressure policy against Iran, the report said.

The report also revealed that Saudi Arabia was very enthusiastic about and had faith in Trump's strategy and put all its eggs in his basket while raising its hopes to unrealistic levels.

According to a confidential Saudi document dated July 4, 2019, the U.S. demanded that all parties must "accelerate arms deals" with the United States, the Lebanese paper reported, hinting at Trump's famous phrase that "they need to pay" for Washington's support.

It added that the document exempts the U.S. from taking "any military action" in the event of attacks against those countries, making the Saudis realize that such deals give "important benefits to the U.S." without imposing any burdens on it, while giving "very limited benefits to other countries, including the Kingdom."

Al-Akhar argued that Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain's insistence on the necessity of confronting Iran and its "regional wings" as the main focus of the alliance shows that they were skeptical about the intentions of the U.S. for the creation of the so-called Arab NATO.

According to the leaked documents, minutes of a coordination meeting between the Persian Gulf states at the headquarters of the Saudi military attaché in Washington show that the Saudis were concerned about a lack of commitment on the American side and also about the fact that it did not offer any benefits to the member states.

"We want the coalition to be limited to the military-security aspect only, and to include sources of threats, in addition to the possibility of establishing strategic partnerships with other allied countries," the head of the Saudi delegation said at the meeting.

At that meeting, Bahrain wanted the U.S. to be more severe with regard to confronting "Iranian threats," while worrying that Washington might not remain committed to the alliance.

"After the first proposal submitted by the White House clearly referred to confronting Iranian threats, the second proposal that came from the U.S. Defense and State Ministries was less severe," the head of the Bahrain delegation regretted, adding, "We want to obtain guarantees that the United States will not abandon this alliance as it did by withdrawing from the nuclear agreement with Iran."

Citing the leaked documents, Al-Akhar said the main objective of the United States' proposal was said to be "building institutions to create power against the Iranian aggression, terrorism and extremism, and promoting economic growth and diversity."

## Iran... (Continued From Page 2)

Mosque and defending the rights of Palestinians," Khatibzadeh said.

Morocco and the occupying regime of Israel normalized relations under a U.S. campaign which began in August.

The normalization agreements between the Zionist regime and four Arab countries have sparked outrage among the Palestinians who view them as a stab in their back and a betrayal of their cause. The Moroccan government recalled on Thursday its ambassador to Berlin for consultation, amid tensions with Germany regarding Morocco's Western Sahara regional conflict with the pro-independence Polisario Front.

"Germany has accumulated hostile stances that violate the high interests of the Kingdom," the Moroccan Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Morocco annexed the vast Western Sahara region, a former Spanish colony, in 1975 and has ever since been in conflict with the Algeria-backed Polisario Front, a movement that seeks to establish an independent state in the territory and end Morocco's presence there.

The West African country is currently in control of 80 percent of the region, including its phosphate deposits and fishing waters.