

# Pakistan's Imran Khan Sentenced to Three Years in Prison, Arrested



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ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) – Police have arrested Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan in the eastern city of Lahore after a court sentenced him to three years in prison for illegally selling state gifts.

ing his premiership from 2018 to 2022 to buy and sell gifts in state possession that were received during visits abroad and worth more than 140 million Pakistani rupees (\$497,500).

Khan's lawyer Intezar Panjotha said police arrested Khan at his residence in Lahore. Pakistani media

described police surrounding his home after the verdict was released. "We are filing a petition against the decision in high court," Panjotha added.

In a video recorded before his arrest and posted on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, Khan called on his supporters to take to the streets in protest.

"I only have one request, one appeal for you. You must not sit quietly inside your homes. The struggle I am doing is not for my own self, it's for my nation, for you. For the future of your children," he said.

"If you don't stand up for your rights, you will live lives of slaves and slaves don't have a life."

In the post, Khan made reference to the "London Plan", a term he uses to refer to a plot between current army chief General Asim Munir and three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who has been in London since 2019 in self-exile, to oust him from politics.

## Saudi Arabia Kicks Off Ukraine Talks, Excludes Russia



Russia's Tass says the chemical tanker SIG received a hole in the engine room near the waterline in an attack by Ukraine.

JEDDAH (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia has kicked off a weekend summit in Jeddah, in which senior officials from some 40 countries – but not Russia – will aim to draft key principles on how to end the war on Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday welcomed the wide range of countries represented in the talks that began on Saturday, including developing countries hit hard by the surge in food prices triggered by the war.

"This is very important because, on issues such as food security, the fate of millions of people in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world directly depends on how fast the world moves to implement the peace formula," he said.

Russia last month halted its participation in a United Nations-brokered grain deal that enabled the shipment of Ukrainian produce through the Black Sea to parts of the world struggling with hunger.

Zelenskyy said he hoped the initiative will lead to a "peace summit" of world leaders this autumn.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier this week that Russia would "need to understand what goals are set and what will be discussed".

"Any attempt to promote a peaceful settlement deserves a positive evaluation," he said.

Al Jazeera's Step Vaessen, reporting from Kyiv, said the summit was important for Ukraine as it presented an opportunity to reach out to nations that have remained neutral, including India and Brazil.

Especially significant was the attendance of China, a staunch Russian ally. "What Ukraine really hopes is that

China will endorse Zelenskyy's peace plan," Vaessen added.

Furthermore, ever since the beginning of the war, Western countries, led by the United States, have been pumping Ukraine full of tens of billions of dollars worth of advanced weapons, a step that Moscow says would only prolong the hostilities.

Responding to a survey, most Americans have said that the U.S. should stop short of providing more military assistance for Ukraine, which Washington has shored up with billions of dollars since Russia launched a military operation against the ex-Soviet republic.

Results from the poll that was conducted by CNN between July 1 and 31 among 1,279 American adults, were out on Friday.

Fifty-five percent of those surveyed said the U.S. Congress should not authorize additional military aid for Ukraine, as opposed to 45 percent, who said the Capitol should approve of such funding.

Reporting last month, the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, a German research institute, revealed that the U.S. had channeled a total of \$75 billion to Ukraine since last February when Moscow launched the operation.

In the latest development on the ground, a Russian tanker was damaged in a Ukrainian drone attack in the Kerch Strait, briefly halting traffic on the strategic bridge linking Crimea to Russia on Saturday, a day after one of Moscow's warships was hit in the Black Sea.

The number of attacks in the Black Sea has increased from both sides since Moscow exited a deal last month that had allowed Ukrainian grain exports via the shipping hub during the conflict between the two countries.

## Youme Istehsal Exposes Indian Injustices in Kashmir

Every August 5, the world is reminded of Indian atrocities perpetrated on the majority Kashmiri Muslims whose lives have been rendered miserable by way of iron-handed tactics adopted by the haughty authorities and forces of India whose "illegally legalized" powers find no justification in the world's legal-cum-constitutional history.

It is no secret that Indian armed forces' personnel as well as the paramilitary troops whose combined figure stands at around one plus million, have been conferred the powers of a soldier, a mercenary, a kidnapper and a judge.

According to Kashmir Media service, since 1989, Indian forces have martyred 96,000 Kashmiris; widowed around 23,000 women; raped over 11250 women and girls and destroyed over 100,000 dwellings, including schools and houses. Besides that, the number of enforced disappearances and the concomitant issue of half widows has tended to escalate on a steady path. Mass graves is yet another concrete evidence of India's hegemonic and tyrannical system that it has imposed on Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). And, then Armed Forces Special Powers Acts (AFSPA) speaks volumes of brutal use of these "Special Powers" to crush the just and lawful struggle of Kashmiris for their right of self-determination although this right has been recognized in Article 1 of the U.N. Charter. Similarly, Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that, "All peoples have the right of self-determination which has also been upheld as a fundamental right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948".

While subjugation of Kashmiri Muslims was going on for the last seven plus decades through military means, the government of New Delhi crossed all limits on August 5, 2019 by unlawfully legitimizing its blatant acts of aggression in the Held Valley, stripping the territory of its special disputed status, guaranteed by its own constitution. Pakistan is observing this black day (August 5) as Youme Istehsal (The Day of Exploitation).

As if the aforementioned, brazen illegals were not enough, India divided the territory into two parts, declaring Ladakh and Jammu as Union territories, to be governed by New Delhi as a colonial power. The following year, New Delhi, defying its own constitution once again, introduced the Indian Domicile Law thus allowing non-Kashmiri Hindus (not Christians or Muslims) to acquire property and settle in the state, thus paving the way for a demographic apartheid in IIOJK in contravention of international law, especially Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

These illegal actions have been criticized by many international civil society and human rights organizations. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has clearly asked India to "fully respect the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir as protected under international law". The Genocide Watch issued a genocide alert for IIOJK. OIC has repeatedly condemned the Indian actions and asked New Delhi government to allow the human rights observers to visit Kashmir. And, the UNSC (UN Security Council) has held three hearings since August 5, 2019 on the injustices committed in rapid succession against Kashmiris.

Additionally, through a Resolution adopted unanimously by the 47th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC categorically rejected India's illegal and unilateral

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## Pressure Mounts on Niger Coup Leaders as Deadline Nears

NIAMEY (AFP) – Pressure on the leaders of a coup in Niger mounted Saturday on the eve of a West African bloc's deadline for the military to relinquish control or face possible armed intervention.

Former colonial power France, with which the coup leaders broke military ties shortly after taking power, said it would "firmly" back whatever course of action the ECOWAS bloc took after the expiration of the Sunday deadline.

Military chiefs from the grouping said they had agreed a plan for a possible intervention to respond to the crisis, the latest of several coups to hit Africa's Sahel region since 2020.

"All the elements that will go into any eventual intervention have been worked out," ECOWAS commissioner Abdel-Fatau Musah said after the talks finished.

These included "the resources needed, and including the how and when we are going to deploy the force", he added.

"We want diplomacy to work, and we want this message clearly transmitted to them that we are giving them every opportunity



Protesters hold an anti-France placard during a demonstration on independence day in Niamey on August 3, 2023.

to reverse what they have done," Musah said.

Anti-French sentiment in the region is on the rise, while Russian activity has grown. Russia has warned against armed intervention from outside.

The coup leader has warned it would meet force with force.

Mali and Burkina Faso, where military juntas have taken power since 2020, have warned any regional intervention would be tantamount to a "declaration of war" against them.

President Mohamed Bazoum, 63, has been held by the coup plotters with his family in his official Niamey residence since July 26.

In a column in The Washington Post on Thursday -- his first lengthy statement since his detention -- he said a successful coup would "have devastating consequences for our country, our region and the entire world".

While criticizing the U.S. over the AUKUS alliance and the Nuclear Consultative Group with South Korea, Pyongyang defended its nuclear weapons as an "exercise of sovereignty," Reuters reported.

North Korea's "nuclear force will never be a threat to those countries respecting its sovereignty and security interests," the mission added.

It reminded that the North had quit the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, and was, accordingly, not subject to the agreement's provisions.

The NPT allows its members to quit the treaty if they decided that "extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of the treaty, have jeopardized their supreme interests," Pyongyang, therefore, asserts that its withdrawal from the agreement

was "legal."

"Signatories to the NPT should not take issue with the DPRK over its legitimate exercise of sovereignty, as it had legally withdrawn from the NPT 20 years ago," the North Korean mission went on. The DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is the North's official name.

"Its nuclear force will never be a threat to those countries respecting its sovereignty and security interests," the permanent mission said.

The mission, meanwhile, took aim at the United States -- the only country that has ever deployed nuclear arms -- for ceaselessly finding fault with Pyongyang for owning them, despite its own possession of such weapons.

The critique came amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, which the North attributes to excessive militarization of the region by the U.S. and its regional allies, the South and Japan, through trilateral war games and deployment of American nuclear assets to the peninsula.

## India Authorities Raze 200 Muslim Homes

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) – Indian authorities have waged a campaign of demolishing "illegal" homes of more than 200 local Muslims in the state of Haryana, accusing their residents of involvement in an attack on a Hindu procession followed by a deadly attack on a mosque by a Hindu mob.

The campaign, slammed by critics as resembling similar practices by the apartheid Israeli regime against Palestinians, came after local media outlets reported that Indian officials razed over 200 structures in Nuh district of Haryana, neighboring India's capital, New Delhi, following the Hindu attack on the mosque that killed five Muslim worshippers earlier in the week and another attack that killed four Muslims on a passenger train.

The violence first erupted on Monday and quickly spilled over into adjoining areas, including the business hub Gurugram, which neighbors New Delhi.

The demolition drive has been met with criticism from some quarters, with many questioning the legality of the move and the lack of due process.

Nuh's state lawmaker Aftab Ahmed, a member of the opposition Congress party, questioned the action.

"This is a short (quick) trial taking place, which is not allowed under any law," he said, referring to the fact that it took place before any court convictions.

In recent years authorities in some states ruled by the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP have demolished what they allege as "illegal" houses of people accused of crimes, many of them are Muslims.

The development also came after an Indian railway constable killed three Muslim passengers and a colleague on a train on Monday, in a crime that has been denounced by Muslim and opposition politicians as a "terror attack" that specifically targeted Muslims.

Asaduddin Owaisi, the targeted of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen condemned the incident, said, "This is a terror attack that specifically targeted Muslims."

In addition, a Hindu mob set a mosque on fire and shot dead an Imam in India's Haryana state, neighboring the capital New Delhi on Tuesday.

The mosque, located in Haryana's Gurugram district, was set ablaze on Monday night by extremist Hindu elements, who opened fire there and killed an Imam identified as Maulana

## Chaos Erupts in New York as Live Streamer's Giveaway Goes Awry

NEW YORK (Reuters) – Thousands of people overran New York City's Union Square and the surrounding streets in a chaotic scene after a popular live streamer announced a "giveaway" event, with police struggling to contain fans throwing projectiles and injuring officers.

The event was promoted by Kai Cenat, best known for his live streams on the gaming site Twitch and YouTube videos. He had earlier announced a "huge giveaway" on his Instagram account for 4 p.m. ET (2000 GMT) at the Manhattan park.

Before the event began, footage from news choppers showed people flinging bottles and chairs, climbing onto the roof of a subway entrance, standing on top of cars and unloading a fire extinguisher.

Jeffrey Maddrey, the highest-ranking uniformed officer for

the New York City Police Department, told reporters that police were questioning Cenat and that charges against him were possible, including the inciting a riot.

Maddrey said the total number of arrests was not yet clear but that police had filled a city bus with people taken into custody. Several officers and attendees were injured; Maddrey said he was himself hit by objects.

"Individuals in the park began to commit acts of violence towards the police and the public," he said at a press conference. "Our officers were attacked. We were crushed, we were pushed."

Some people set off fireworks, while others wielded tools from a construction site, Maddrey said. It was not immediately clear what had sparked the chaos.