

UK legal team urges police to arrest Egypt's Sisi during London visit

Agencies

London: A legal group in the UK has lodged a complaint with the London police, calling for an arrest warrant against Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi over his alleged role in the death of Mohamed Morsi, the country's first democratically elected president, at a Cairo court session last year.

The International Justice Chambers (Guernica 37) asked London's Metropolitan Police Service Counter Terrorism Command (SO15) to launch a probe

by his then-army chief and now President Sisi in July 2013.

Morsi, 67, had been serving prison terms on several charges before passing away in a Cairo court while on trial on espionage charges last year in June. He suffered from medical neglect during his imprisonment as well as poor conditions in prison.

"In particular, the complaint will request that the death of... Morsi, and the treatment suffered prior to his death, which constitutes torture, be investigated," the legal group said. "the United King-



into the "credible allegations of torture made against the Egyptian Government and its State organs" in the complaint filed ahead of Sisi's arrival in the UK on Monday for a two-day visit.

Morsi, a senior figure in Egypt's now-outlawed Muslim Brotherhood organization, was elected as Egypt's president after a 2011 revolution.

He was, however, deposed through a bloody military coup led

dom cannot be seen as a safe haven for those who consider themselves immune from prosecution."

Back in November 2019, a panel of UN experts said Morsi's detention conditions "could amount to a state-sanctioned arbitrary killing."

The panel concluded that Morsi was held under conditions that can only be described as brutal, particularly during his five-year detention in the Tora prison complex."

Myanmar security forces committed war crime: Probe

Agencies

Myanmar: An independent commission established by Myanmar's government has concluded there are reasons to believe that security forces committed war crimes in counterinsurgency operations that led more than 700,000 members of the country's Muslim Rohingya minority to flee to neighboring Bangladesh.

However, the commission, headed by a Philippine diplomat, said in a report given Monday to President Win Myint that there is no evidence supporting charges that genocide was planned or carried out against the Rohingya.

The Independent Commission of Enquiry announced its findings in a press release posted on its Facebook page. It came just ahead of a decision by the United Nations' top court, scheduled for Thursday, on a request that Myanmar be ordered to halt what has been cast as a genocidal campaign against the Rohingya.

The African nation of Gambia brought legal action last year to the International Court of Justice in the Netherlands, alleging on behalf of the 57-country Organization of Islamic Cooperation that genocide occurred and continues.

State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's top leader, strongly denied wrongdoing by

government forces at the initial hearing on the case in December.

Monday's report issued by the commission said it found no evidence of genocide. But it went further than any public statements issued by Myanmar's government in suggesting government forces were guilty of major abuses.

"Although these serious crimes and violations were committed by multiple actors, there are reasonable grounds to believe that members of Myanmar's security forces were involved" in war crimes, serious human rights violations, and violations of domestic law in 2017, it said.

"The killing of innocent villagers and destruction of their homes were committed by some members of the Myanmar's security forces through disproportionate use of force during the internal armed conflict," it said.

But the report points out that the security forces acted in response to deadly attacks organized by Rohingya guerrillas belonging to the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army — ARSA. The commission's announcement said it would hand over its 461-page report to be used for investigations and possible prosecutions by Myanmar civil and military authorities.

A U.N. team also conducted a major investigation and found grounds for bringing charges of genocide.



Iran Warns Of Leaving NPT If Nuclear Case Goes To UN

Agencies

Tehran: Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that if Britain, France, and Germany continue their unjustifiable conduct and move to send Iran's nuclear case to the United Nations Security Council, Tehran would have the option of leaving the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Last week, the three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, formally triggered the dispute mechanism within the agreement, accusing Iran of having violated the accord. Iran would now be asked to resolve the so-called dispute with the European trio, and the process could ultimately lead to the re-imposition of the Security Council's sanctions that were lifted by the accord.

"The Europeans' remarks lack legal justification," Zarif said on Monday.

The European accusations concern a set of countermeasures that Iran has been applying in reaction to the United States' withdrawal from the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (JCPOA), in 2018.

The measures also came in response to Washington's re-imposition of draconian sanctions, and the EU3's refusal to guarantee Iran's business interests under the nuclear deal.

As part of the retaliatory steps, Iran stopped recognizing the limits set by the deal on the level of its enrichment activities and the volume of its heavy water reservoir.

On January 5, the country said it would no longer observe any operational limitations on its nuclear industry, whether concerning the capacity and level of uranium enrichment, the volume of stockpiled uranium or research and development.

The abrupt decision came two days after a set of US drone strikes assassinated senior Iranian commander and the most revered anti-terror military figure in the Middle East, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad.

Tehran has unequivocally specified that its retaliatory steps fit within the nuclear accord's Paragraph 36, and are reversible

if the other parties begin minding their contractual obligations.

Zarif explained that Iran was the party to initially trigger the dispute mechanism in 2018 by sending three letters to the European Union to notify them of Tehran's dissatisfaction with Europe's non-commitment to the agreement. The Islamic Republic, he added, was then forced to resort to the nuclear countermeasures as the Europeans remained in violation of the accord.

He, however, said Tehran's measures were reversible provided Europe would begin minding its JCPOA obligations.

"But if Europeans keep up their actions based on political games, we have various options because their actions lack legal standing," he said.

Zarif noted however that before taking the final step of withdrawing from the NPT, Iran has other steps to ponder.

Britain, France, and Germany have formally triggered a dispute settlement mechanism featured in a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

Leader: Iran's Appeal As Model Of Resistance Angers US



Agencies

Tehran: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says US leaders want Iran to abandon its "new message for the world" when they say the Islamic Republic

should behave like a normal nation.

Ayatollah Khamenei told a group of Hajj officials in Tehran Monday that the Iranian nation's independence, resistance and refusal to submit to bullying angers the United States.

"The resistance of the Islamic Republic of Iran against America and the Iranian nation's refusal to undergo bullying is a fascinating fact for the world and this fascination should be used to spread the truth about Islam and the Iranian nation," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the model of "religious democracy" being practiced in Iran is unknown to the world, adding the Hajj is an opportunity to promote it and explain the reasons behind the US enmity with Iran, while "millions of propaganda instruments are operating against the Islamic Republic".

"The reason Americans are angry with the Iranian nation is the appeal which arises from the image of resistance in an independent system standing up against a highway bully," the Leader said.

Youths in Iraq intensify anti-govt demonstrations

Agencies

BAGHDAD: Iraqi youths angry at their government's glacial pace of reform ramped up their protests on Sunday, sealing streets with burning tyres and threatening further escalation unless their demands are met.

The rallies demanding an overhaul of the ruling system have rocked parts of Iraq since October, but had thinned out in recent weeks amid rising Iran-US tensions.

Protesters had feared Iraq would be caught in the middle of the geopolitical storm and last Monday gave the government one week to make progress on reform pledges.

A day before the deadline expires, hundreds of angry young people descended on the main protest camp in Baghdad's Tahrir Square as well as nearby Tayaran Square.

They burned tyres to block highways and bridges, turning back cars and causing traffic jams across the city.

At least 10 people, including police officers, were wounded when security forces tried to clear the sit-ins with tear gas and protesters responded by throwing rocks, medical and security sources said.

"This is only the first escalation," one protester with a scarf wrapped around his face said, as smoke from the tyres turned the sky behind him a charcoal grey.

"We want to send a message to the government: Stop procrastinating! The people know what you're doing," he said, adding ominously: "Tomorrow the deadline ends, and then things could get totally out of control."



Protesters are demanding early elections based on a reformed voting law, a new prime minister to replace current caretaker premier Adel Abdel Mahdi and that officials deemed corrupt be held to account. Adel Mahdi resigned nearly two months ago, but political parties have thus far failed to agree on a successor and he has continued to run the government as a caretaker.

'Sad' Prince Harry says no other option but to end royal role

Agencies

London: Britain's Prince Harry spoke on Sunday of his sadness at being forced to give up his royal duties in a deal with Queen Elizabeth and senior Windsors that will see him and his wife Meghan exit official roles to seek an independent future.

Buckingham Palace and the queen announced on Saturday that Harry and Meghan would no longer be working members of Britain's monarchy, no longer use their "Royal Highness" titles and would now pay their own way in life, freeing them to forge new careers.

The new arrangement was struck to end a crisis the couple sparked by announcing earlier this month they wanted to cut down on official engagements and spend more time in North America, while remaining active royals.

In a speech to the Sentebale charity on Sunday, a clearly upset Harry said the final outcome was not what he and his American wife, a former actress, had wanted. "Our hope was to continue

serving the queen, the Commonwealth and my military associations without public funding. Sadly that wasn't possible," the prince, the sixth-in-line to the throne, said.

"I've accepted this knowing it doesn't change who I am, or how committed I am. But I hope that helps you understand what it had come to, that I would step back from all I have ever known to take a step forward into what I hope can be a more peaceful life."

Under the arrangement, Harry will remain a prince and the couple will keep their titles of Duke and Duchess of Sussex as they begin a new life split between Britain and North America where they will spend the majority of their time. But they will not take part in any future ceremonial events or royal tours.

Royal commentators said it amounted to an "abdication" from the "firm" — as the royals are known — and showed that, under the warm words in which she said Harry and Meghan were much loved, the queen had taken a firm and decisive line by insisting on a clean break.

NEWSMAKERS

SARS-like virus spreads in China, nearly 140 new cases

A mysterious SARS-like virus has killed a third person, spread around China and reached a third Asian country, authorities said on Monday, fuelling fears of a major outbreak as millions begin travelling for the Lunar New Year in humanity's biggest migration.

The new coronavirus strain, first discovered in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, has caused alarm because of its connection to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

Wuhan has 11 million inhabitants and serves as a major transport hub, including during the annual Lunar New Year holiday which begins later this week and sees hundreds of millions of Chinese people travel across the country to visit family.



A third person was confirmed to have died and 136 new cases were found over the weekend in Wuhan, the local health commission said, taking the total number of people to have been diagnosed with the virus in China to 201.

South Korea on Monday reported its first case — a 35-year-old woman who flew in from Wuhan. Thailand and Japan have

previously confirmed a total of three cases — all of whom had visited the Chinese city.

No human-to-human transmission has been confirmed so far, but authorities have previously said the possibility "cannot be excluded".

Health authorities in Beijing's Daxing district said two people who had travelled to Wu-

han were treated for pneumonia linked to the virus and are in stable condition.

In southern Guangdong province, a 66-year-old Shenzhen man was quarantined on January 11 after contracting a fever and showing other symptoms following a trip to visit relatives in Wuhan, the provincial health commission said. He is also in stable condition.

Shenzhen officials said another eight people were under medical observation.

"Experts believe that the current epidemic situation is still preventable and controllable," the Guangdong health commission said. Five other people have been put in isolation and tested in eastern Zhejiang province.

At Beijing's crowded central railway station, some travellers wore masks as a precaution but were not too concerned about the virus.

SpaceX Launches, Destroys Rocket In Astronaut Escape Test

CAPE CANAVERAL: SpaceX completed the last big test of its crew capsule before launching astronauts in as little as two months, mimicking an emergency escape shortly after liftoff on Sunday.

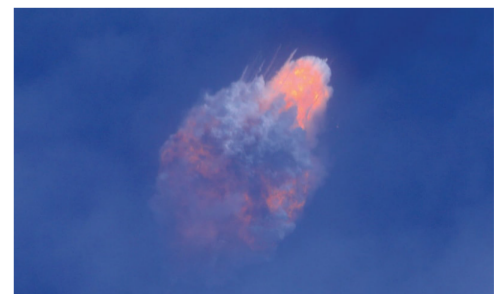
No one was aboard for the wild ride in the skies above Cape Canaveral, just two mannequins.

A Falcon 9 rocket blasted off as normal, but just over a minute into its supersonic flight, the Dragon crew capsule catapulted off the top 12 miles above the Atlantic. Powerful thrusters on the capsule propelled it up and out of harm's way, as the rocket engines deliberately shut down and the booster tumbled out of control in a giant fireball.

The capsule reached an altitude of about 27 miles before parachuting into the ocean just offshore to bring the nine-minute test flight to a close and pave the way for two NASA astronauts to climb aboard next time.

SpaceX flight controllers at the company's California headquarters cheered every milestone especially the splashdown. Everything appeared to go well despite the choppy seas and overcast skies.

Recycled from three previous launches, the SpaceX rocket was destroyed as it crashed into the sea in pieces. The company founded and led by Elon Musk normally recovers its boosters, landing them upright on a floating platform or back at the launch site.



That's the main objective of this test, is to show that we can carry the astronauts safely away from the rocket in case anything's going wrong, said SpaceX's Benji Reed, director of crew mission management.

"This test is very important to us ... a huge practice session," Reed added.

Nasa's commercial crew programme manager, Kathy Lueders, said the launch abort test was "our last open milestone" before allowing SpaceX to launch Doug Hurley and Robert Behnken to the International Space Station.

She said that could happen as soon as March. Nasa astronauts have not launched from the US since 2011 when the space shuttle programme ended.