

## Palestinians Face Uphill Battle Against Trump's Middle East Plan

### Agencies

JERUSALEM - When Palestinian leaders learned that the release of U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East plan was imminent, they swiftly announced a "day of rage" - a gritty, oft-used call for resistance against Israel.

But few demonstrators actually took to the streets despite Palestinians' broad rejection of Trump's proposal, a gap between rhetoric and delivery that exposes the scale of the challenge their leaders face in pressuring the United States and Israel.

As in past decades, critics are branding the Palestinians as naysayers, continually rejecting offers of a settlement in the hope, so far futile, of something better to come. And domestic frustration

future Palestinian state under near-complete Israeli security control.

Trump's endorsement of Israel keeping its settlements delighted right-wingers, who immediately urged the extension of Israeli sovereignty to nearly 30% of the occupied West Bank, which Israel captured in a 1967 war.

Palestinians say such moves would lead to apartheid. Israel rejects any comparison of its policies towards the Palestinians to South Africa's former system of legally-mandated racial segregation.

Analysts say that Palestinians face a difficult road ahead.

"They don't have good options. Responding positively to the Trump peace plan is impossible for any Palestinian leader. He would be seen as having sold out the Palestinian national cause



with the Palestinian leadership has been building for years, with an ageing Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas seeking a legacy but having dwindling scope to demonstrate progress toward his people's dream of freedom.

Contrary to expectations, Trump did propose a "two-state" solution for the conflict - but with strict conditions that would leave any

completely," said Greg Shapland, a Middle East specialist at London's Chatham House think tank.

"(This) whole exercise seems to be structured in such a way that the Palestinians would have to refuse it and then the Americans can say to Israel and to the rest of the world, 'go ahead and do it' because the Palestinians are clearly not interested in peace," Shapland said.

## Finally, Britain makes historic exit from EU

### Agencies

LONDON: Britain on Friday ended almost half a century of European Union (EU) membership, making a historic exit after years of bitter arguments to chart its own uncertain path in the world.

There were celebrations and tears across the country as the EU's often reluctant member became the first to leave an organisation set up to forge unity among nations after the horrors of World War II.

Thousands of people waving Union Jack flags packed London's Parliament Square to mark the moment of Brexit at 11 pm (2300 GMT) - midnight in Brussels.

"We did it!" declared Nigel Farage, the former member of the European Parliament who has campaigned for Brexit for years, before the crowd began singing the national anthem.

It was a largely good-natured gathering, aside from one Brexit supporter who earlier set an EU flag alight.

But Brexit has exposed deep

divisions in British society, and many fear the consequences of ending 47 years of ties with their nearest neighbours.

Some pro-Europeans, including many of the 3.6 million EU citizens who made their lives in Britain, marked the occasion with solemn candlelit vigils.

Brexit has also provoked soul-searching in the EU about its own future after losing 66 million people, a global diplomatic big-hitter and the clout of the City of London financial centre.

'Not an end, a beginning'

In an address to the nation, prime minister Boris Johnson - a figurehead in the seismic 2016 referendum vote for Brexit - acknowledged there might be "bumps in the road ahead".

But he said Britain could make it a "stunning success".

As he held a private party in his Downing Street office, a clock projected on the walls outside counted down the minutes until Brexit.

Johnson predicted a "new era of friendly cooperation" with the EU while Britain takes a greater role on the world stage.



## Trump Expands Travel Ban To Six Additional Countries

### Agencies

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump issued an expanded version of his travel ban on Friday, an official said. The move was slammed by immigrant advocates and critics who say the policy discriminates against Muslims and others.

The US will suspend the issuance of visas that can lead to permanent residency for nationals of Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Nigeria, acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf said during a call with reporters.

Nonimmigrant visas were not affected for the additional countries, Wolf said. Those visas are given to people travelling to the US for a temporary stay. They include visas for tourists, those doing business or people seeking medical treatment. During December, for example, about 650,760 nonimmigrant visas were granted worldwide.

The US government will also stop issuing "diversity visas" to nationals of Sudan and Tanzania.

Those visas - which Trump has criticised in the past - are available by lottery for applicants from countries with low rates of immigration to the US.

Wolf said the six countries failed to meet US security and information-sharing standards, which necessitated the new restrictions. The problems Wolf cited ranged from subpar passport technology to a failure to sufficiently exchange information on "terrorism" suspects and criminals.

"These countries, for the most part, want to be helpful,"

Wolf said, "but for a variety of different reasons simply failed to meet those minimum requirements that we laid out."

The presidential proclamation will take effect on February 21.

The original travel ban - issued during Trump's first week in office in January 2017 - barred nearly all immigrants and travellers from seven Muslim-majority nations. It caused widespread outrage and chaos at airports across the US. The policy was revised amid court challenges, but the US Supreme Court ultimately upheld it in June 2018.

The existing version of the ban includes the Muslim-majority nations of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. North Korea and Venezuela also face visa restrictions, but those measures affect relatively few travellers.

Those restrictions will remain in place, Wolf said.

### Disproportionately targets Muslims

Trump has made his immigration crackdown a focus of his 2020 re-election campaign and is expected to press the issue in the months ahead.

Critics contend the ban disproportionately targets Muslim-majority nations. In 2015, during Trump's campaign for president, he called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States".

Three of the nations included in the updated ban - Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria and Sudan - have majority Muslim populations. Eritrea and Tanzania have sizable Muslim minorities.

Earlier in January, a coalition of leading civil rights organisations urged House leaders to take up the No Ban Act legislation to end Trump's travel ban and prevent a new one.

On Thursday, Democratic Representative Ilhan Omar said she introduced legislation that would repeal a 1798 law that allows the US president to target groups of foreign nationals.

"It's past time to take this xenophobic law off the books," Omar tweeted, announcing the Neighbors Not Enemies Act.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said the ban should be "ended, not expanded".

"President Trump is doubling down on his signature anti-Muslim policy - and using the ban as a way to put even more of his prejudices into practice by excluding more communities of colour," Omar Jadwat, director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project, said in a statement. "Families, universities, and businesses in the United States are paying an ever-higher price for President Trump's ignorance and racism."

Of the new countries hit with visa restrictions, Nigeria sends the most immigrants to the US. The US Department of State issued approximately 7,900 immigrant visas to Nigerians in the fiscal year 2018, which began on October 1, 2017.

Congressman Joe Neguse, a Democrat from Colorado and son of Eritrean refugees, told reporters on Friday that the updated ban unfairly singled out allied African nations.

## 'Muslim ban should end, not expand': Groups slam Trump travel ban

### Agencies

WASHINGTON - Immigrant advocates and rights groups on Friday slammed the expansion of US President Donald Trump's controversial travel ban, saying it weaponises "immigration law to advance [the administration's] xenophobic agenda".

The expanded version of the travel ban targets prospective immigrants from six addi-

tional countries: Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Tanzania.

Under the proclamation, which will take effect on February 21, the United States will suspend the issuance of visas that can lead to permanent residency for nationals of Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Nigeria, acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said during a call with

reporters on Friday. The visas affected are distinct from non-immigrant visitor visas, which will not be impacted by the ban, Wolf said.

The US government will stop issuing "diversity visas" to nationals of Sudan and Tanzania, Wolf said. The visas - which Trump has criticised in the past - are available by lottery for applicants from countries with low rates of immigration to the US.

## US thanks Pak for facilitating Afghan peace process

### Agencies

WASHINGTON - US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad on Friday held meetings with Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa and expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's facilitation of the Afghan peace process.

According to a press release issued by the foreign office, Khalilzad - who arrived in Pakistan today from Qatar - met with Qureshi at the Foreign Office in Islamabad. During their exchange, the US envoy praised Pakistan's efforts for lasting peace in Afghanistan while briefing the foreign minister about the most recent talks with the Taliban.

"The finalisation of a peace treaty between the Taliban and the US will pave the way for inter-Afghan dialogue, which would not only benefit Afghanistan but the whole region," Qureshi was quoted as saying.

During the meeting, Qureshi assured the US envoy that Pakistan will continue to support efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan. Both sides agreed to carry on their respective efforts in this regard.

In a separate meeting with Gen Bajwa at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, Khalilzad discussed "matters of mutual interest including overall regional security situation and ongoing Afghanistan Reconciliation Process", a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations said.

According to the statement, the US envoy "thanked Pakistan for facilitating the process towards the mutual objective of peace in the region".

Khalilzad's visit comes after an escalation in tensions between the Taliban and the Afghan forces and as another round of talks kicked off, with the US envoy holding several meetings with the Taliban's chief negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar.

Sources aware of the developments that took place during the talks in Doha said the Taliban had agreed internally to halt attacks against US forces and "reduce" assaults against Afghan government interests, but clashes between the Taliban and Afghan forces have risen.

At least 29 members of the Afghan security forces have been killed in Taliban attacks that followed air and ground assaults by government forces on the group over the last weekend.

## China slams US travel controls as virus toll spikes further

### Agencies

Beijing - The death toll in China's virus outbreak rose to 259 on Saturday and Beijing criticized

incubation period for the virus. China's government criticized the measure, which it said contradicted the World Health Organization's appeal



Washington's tightening of travel controls to bar most foreign nationals who visited the country within the past two weeks.

South Korea and India evacuated their citizens from the locked-down Chinese city at the center of an area where some 50 million people are barred from leaving in a sweeping anti-disease effort. Indonesia was sending a plane.

The number of confirmed infections in China rose to 11,791. The United States declared a public health emergency Friday and President Donald

Trump signed an order barring entry to foreign nationals, other than immediate family of American citizens and permanent residents, who have traveled in China within the last 14 days, which scientists say is the longest

to avoid travel bans, and unfriendly comments that Beijing was failing to cooperate.

Just as the WHO recommended against travel restrictions, the U.S. rushed to go in the opposite way. Certainly not a gesture of goodwill, said foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying.

Japan's government announced similar restrictions late Friday barring entry to foreigners who visited Hubei province within the past two weeks or obtained visas issued there.

Also Saturday, the ruling Communist Party postponed the end of the Lunar New Year holiday in Hubei province, where Wuhan is located, for an unspecified appropriate extent and appealed to the public there to stay home.

## NEWSMAKERS

### Iran starts 10-day celebrations on anniversary of Islamic Revolution

Tehran: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has visited the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini to pay tribute to the founder of the Islamic Revolution as the 10-day celebrations marking the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution begin in Iran.

The Leader made the visit early on Saturday, which marks the day Imam Khomeini returned to the Iranian capital Tehran on February 1, 1979, ten days before the revolution, which ended the monarchy of the US-backed Pahlavi regime in the country.

After performing prayers in the mausoleum south of Tehran, Ayatollah Khomeini also visited the nearby Behesht Zahra cemetery, where Imam Khomeini delivered his first speech after the exile, in an address to five million people.

The leader also paid tribute to Iranian martyrs who have lost their



lives since the Islamic Revolution.

Nationwide ceremonies kicked off at 9:33 a.m. local time (0603 GMT), marking the exact time when Imam Khomeini landed in the Iranian capital.

A special public ceremony is also held at the Imam Khomeini mausoleum, with a host of senior state and military officials as well as thousands of people from all walks of life in attendance.

Imam Khomeini's return to the country ultimately resulted in the overthrow of the shah, Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi.

Despite being contrary to the wishes of Iran's rulers at the time, the Imam's return, after a 15-year exile, was made possible due to the sheer abundance of popular support for the revolutionary leader among the masses.

### Wildfire creates state of emergency in Aus capital

Canberra: The Australian capital region declared a state of emergency on Friday because of an out-of-control forest fire burning erratically to its south.

It's the first fire emergency for the Australian Capital Territory area since 2003 when wildfires killed four people and destroyed almost 500 homes in a single day.

The threat is posed by a blaze on Canberra's southern fringe that has razed more than 21,500 hectares (53,000 acres) since it was sparked by heat from a military helicopter landing light on Monday, the Emergency Services Agency said.

The state of emergency sets a clear expectation for our community that we need

you to be vigilant, Emergency Services Minister Mick Gentleman told reporters. This is the worst bushfire season in the ACT since 2003.

The fire is burning at emergency level - the highest on a three-tier scale of danger - and embers have created dangerous spot fires nearby, agency officials said.

Residents of southern Canberra suburbs and surrounding villages have been advised to prepare to either protect their homes or evacuate.

Roads were blocked to the village of Tharwa late Friday because the fire posed too much danger for residents to evacuate or return to their homes.

The fire is the most dangerous of dozens of blazes burning Australia's drought-stricken southeast.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my school leaving certificate bearing Roll No B20, Regd No: 11480140064. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Sultan Fruit Company C/o Javid Ahmad Mir S/o Haji Mohammad Sultan Mir R/o Bagh-e-Islam Nowpora Sopore Principal Higher Secondary Behnpora within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Nigeena Bano  
D/o Bashir Ahmad

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on Electricity bill bearing Consumer ID No: 15301 from Sakawat Fruit Traders C/o Abdul Majeed Mir S/o Haji Mohammad Sultan Mir R/o Bagh-e-Islam Nowpora Sopore To Sultan Fruit Company C/o Javid Ahmad Mir S/o Haji Mohammad Sultan Mir R/o Bagh-e-Islam Nowpora Sopore. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the PDD Department Sub Division 1st Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Javid Ahmad Mir  
S/o Haji Mohammad Sultan Mir  
R/o Bagh-e-Islam Nowpora Sopore

GM S