

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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SA committed to injecting African concerns onto agenda of UNSC

SA's term on the UN Security Council is guided by our national experience of peacefully dismantling apartheid and achieving a negotiated settlement. On Sept 24, 2018, the UN General Assembly, in its peace summit commemorating the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, adopted a declaration dedicating member states to the pursuit of global peace, security and development. In keeping with this vision, we have chosen for our term on the Security Council the theme "Continuing the legacy: working for a just and peaceful world" for our tenure.

SA has been using its time on the council over the last five and a half months to promote a more effective multilateral approach to addressing issues related to international peace and security. We are emphasising the role of women in the resolution of conflict. SA is promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all Security Council resolutions in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The 20th anniversary of this landmark resolution, initiated by our neighbour

Namibia during its time on the council will also be commemorated during our term in 2020. We will also hold an open debate on resolution 1325 during our presidency of the council in October this year. The African Union (AU) committed to ending conflicts and silencing the guns on the continent by the year 2020. Serving on the council will also afford SA an opportunity to meaningfully contribute towards this goal.

The charter of the UN gives the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Chapter VIII of the charter also recognises the complementarity between the roles of the UN and regional organisations in that respect. In this regard, SA is continuing to work towards strengthening co-operation between the Security Council and regional organisations.

SA pioneered the adoption of resolution 1809 in 2008 and resolution 2033 in January 2012 to further strengthen that relationship, particularly between the Peace and Security Council of the AU and the UN Security Council. Through these resolutions we demonstrated as a country, and as the AU, our collective political will to strengthen co-ordination and co-operation between the UN and regional organisations.

Among the challenges we are addressing are those brought about by the funding gap for UN peacekeeping missions. Recent cuts to the UN budget have a detrimental effect on peace and security, particularly on the African continent. It is vital that there be predictable funding for UN-mandated AU peacekeeping operations in Africa. During our term on the Security Council we are working towards strengthening co-ordination between the 10 elected members of the council (the E10). We believe only through improved co-ordination and co-operation can the E10 compensate for the inherent imbalances between elected and non-elected council members.

We recognise that elected members of the council face a distinct disadvantage. This is because we join an organ of the UN which comprises five permanent members that have been on the council for over 70 years and who have the right to a veto. Consequently, in November 2018, SA and Sweden hosted an unprecedented meeting of elected members of the council in Pretoria to discuss mutual cooperation and better co-ordination. This meeting recognised that in the face of growing divisions among the five permanent members, elected members have a crucial role to play to ensure that the council is able to fulfil its mandate.

We unfortunately note a rise in populism and nationalism globally. There are increased geopolitical divisions and the pursuit of narrow interests by some. This has made it more difficult to respond to transnational challenges. We must recognise that states are interdependent and even the most powerful countries cannot achieve security, nor maintain prosperity and ensure sustainable development for their people by acting unilaterally or in isolation. These challenges are clearly evident in the Security Council, especially among the permanent members. As a result, the council has not been able to act in cases where it should, such as on Palestine or in Syria.

From our perspective, collective action through multilateral engagement is all the more necessary if we are committed to address our common problems. Thus we need a multilateral system based on international law that fosters greater interdependence and mutual co-operation. Countries like SA, which have gone through turbulent histories, and which recognise the importance of multilateral action, must work together to reinforce the notion of collective action through the UN. Our time on the Security Council allows us an opportunity to do this.

NOTE: This opinion piece by Deputy Director General for Public Diplomacy Clayson Monyela was published in the Sunday Times on July 21, 2019

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Guatemalan migrants use a makeshift raft to illegally cross the Suchiate River from Tecun Uman in Guatemala to Ciudad Hidalgo in Chiapas State, Mexico on July 22, 2019. — AFP

'American Dream' of migrants becoming Mexican one

Honduran Rolando Rodrigo arrived last week in the Mexican city of Tapachula with his family, just one stop on the long route to the United States and the dream of a new life free from the poverty and gang violence that wracks their homeland. But faced with increased controls by Mexican authorities, at the behest of Washington, to stem the flow of migrants heading north from Central America, they're considering postponing their "American dream" for the time being.

Just hours after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard exchanged congratulations on "significant progress" in a deal to slow down the wave of undocumented migrants heading for US soil, Rodrigo wandered about Tapachula's central square with his three-year-old son Gadiel asking for money to feed his family.

The 29-year-old arrived in Mexico on Friday with his wife Miriam, Gadiel and a young daughter. They've taken a modest hotel room in this south Mexican town, but only have enough money for a few nights' stay. They crossed the border into Mexico over rugged, hilly terrain near Tacana, a 4,000-meter high volcano near the border where they saw no sign of Mexico's National Guard.

In June, Mexico deployed thousands of soldiers and

police officers, both near its southern border with Guatemala and its northern border with the United States to slow the migrant flow, which has come principally from impoverished and crime-ridden Central American countries. Rodrigo's family carefully avoided the heavily guarded Suchiate river that forms part of the Mexico-Guatemala border. "When you know the route well, you know how to go about" crossing the border, said Rodrigo.

Unprecedented numbers

The nine points along the river most often used by migrants crossing into Mexico are now permanently guarded by security forces. Given the difficulties in getting to the United States "with my wife, we think we'd like to stay here for a couple of years," said Rodrigo, who used to repair computers for a living. Honduran, Guatemalan and El Salvadoran migrants have been reaching southern Mexico in unprecedented numbers since October.

In late May US President Donald Trump threatened to hammer Mexico with new trade tariffs unless it acted decisively to stem the migrant wave. Ebrard said on Monday that the migrant flow had been reduced by "around 36.2 percent," and that he would meet Pompeo again in 45 days to discuss progress.

Death threats

While Rodrigo mingled amongst other migrants in Tapachula - including Cubans, Haitians, Indians and Bangladeshis - another Honduran, Jose Jimenez, was trying to relax with his wife Iris and daughter Aline. Threatened with death by drug traffickers from his neighborhood, Jimenez opted to quit a stable job and leave for somewhere safer. They crossed the Suchiate just over a month ago, crucially before the Mexican authorities stationed thousands of security forces along the river.

The family has requested asylum in Mexico, as well as a humanitarian visa that would allow them to travel to the US border. But not everyone agrees over where they should ultimately settle. "Where will I work?" Jimenez asked his six-year-old daughter. "Monterrey," she replied, referring to the prosperous northeast Mexican industrial city, where her father spent two months working in 2007. His wife, though, still has her eyes on the United States. "If it's not possible to get into the US, (Monterrey) is the other option," said the welder, who now survives by unloading trucks in the Tapachula market for up to 16 hours a day. The three family members sleep together on a couch in a room they rent on the outskirts of Tapachula. Little by little, they're adapting to the idea that their American dream might just turn out to be Mexican. — AFP

Donovan, the US special agent who pursued 'Chapo'

Seven years ago, US special agent Ray Donovan began an in-depth study of the Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman saga - and it quickly became an obsession. Now, the tall, 48-year-old New Yorker displays behind glass in his office the beige T-shirt that prisoner 3912 - Guzman, the former head of the Sinaloa cartel - wore when he was extradited from Mexico to the United States on January 19, 2017.

Guzman - considered the most powerful drug lord on the planet after Colombian Pablo Escobar was killed in a police shoot-out in 1993 - has been sentenced to life behind bars, nearly two decades after he first escaped from a Mexican jail in a cart of dirty laundry. It took a massive team and years of work that saw Donovan manage to identify Guzman's suppliers and partners, along with hitmen, lawyers and lovers - intel that led to captures in 2014 and 2016.

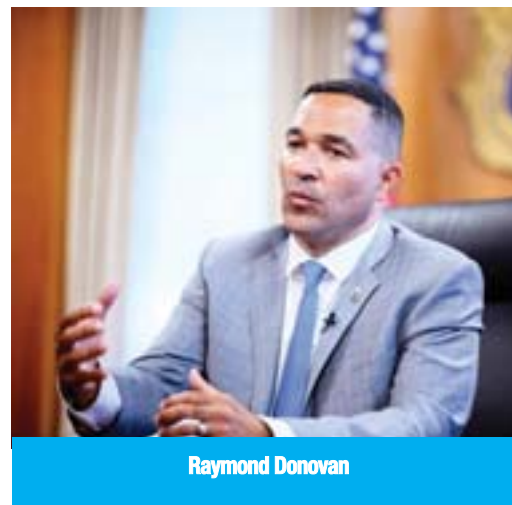
According to Donovan, the New York chief for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), he now even knows how the kingpin thinks. "To go after the highest level drug trafficker in the world is always a dream of every agent," he told AFP from his office in the Chelsea neighborhood.

'Full circle'

Guzman's confinement in a maximum-security prison located in Colorado's mountain desert brings things "full circle" for Donovan. "I don't think many people thought that we would capture him," Donovan said. "There is this myth that he was almost untouchable." But "there was a team of people that absolutely believed that if we put everything together and we pursued him relentlessly, we would capture him."

In Feb 2014 as head of the DEA special operations division in Virginia, Donovan oversaw the operation that led to Guzman's arrest in the Pacific beach resort Mazatlan, in the crime boss' home region of Sinaloa. But "El Chapo" escaped yet again that July - this time through a 1.5 km tunnel. "We felt very defeated, because we had put such a tremendous amount of effort in pursuing him," Donovan said. But Mexican marines recaptured Guzman in Jan 2016. "They're the crown jewels," he said of that force. "They are Mexican national heroes." "If it wasn't for them, and their partnership, their willingness to collaborate with us - there's no way El Chapo would be in Colorado today."

It took coordinated effort between 22 different US government agencies and Mexico, hundreds of people who Donovan said "put their egos aside" in pursuit of a common goal: arrest the drug lord accused of trafficking or attempting to move more than 1,250 tons of drugs state-side over a quarter-century. The special agent



Raymond Donovan

said that "El Chapo" was also "very influential in exposing the United States to fentanyl," lacing heroin with the potent and often fatal drug and helping to foster the current opioid crisis.

New enemy 'number one'

Donovan's next target is "RCQ" - Rafael Caro Quintero, the co-founder of the now-disbanded Guadalajara Cartel - who in 1985 ordered the murder of DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena in Mexico after performing blood-curdling torture on him. There is a \$20 million reward for information leading to Caro Quintero's capture. "Until he's apprehended, DEA will not stop. He's number one. He is our priority," Donovan said. "It's personal." He said that after Guzman - who "had a lot more resources at his disposal than RCQ" - he is confident the agency will get their hands on Caro Quintero. Donovan would not say if Caro Quintero continues to traffic drugs, but believes the wanted boss is hidden in Mexico.

Model of pursuit

Donovan said evidence of Guzman's guilt is so overwhelming that if the government presented all of it during court proceedings it would have taken eight months, versus three. Though the Sinaloa cartel is still active and controls drug distribution into the US, Donovan said Guzman's capture provides a blueprint going forward. "From that we also developed a relationship, a model to pursue every other drug trafficker, not only in Mexico but worldwide," he said.

Donovan said extraditing criminals, which the US has done for years from Colombia, is the way to go in Mexico and elsewhere: "The one thing that these drug traffickers fear more than anything else is the American judicial system." Caro Quintero, for example, was arrested in 1985, tried in Mexico and sentenced to 40 years in prison. But in 2013, a judge released him on a legal technicality, and by the time he was ordered recaptured, the drug baron had disappeared. Guzman's imprisonment is less about the so-called US "war on drugs" and more about serving justice, Donovan said. "In the DEA we don't see a war on drugs, we see federal crimes," he said. "It's satisfying to know that justice has been served." — AFP

Hair apparent: Boris locks key to political brand

At different times described as a "straw-colored mop", "eccentrically windblown" and resembling a "mediaeval Amok", Boris Johnson's talismanic haircut has helped define a political career that has now led to Downing Street. The messy mass of platinum blond locks has become an unmistakable brand in an era where celebrity and politics have combined, symbolizing the chaotic and gaffe-prone style that charms his supporters and appalls his critics.

To his backers, the haircut mirrors his unconventional thinking and personality, which they see as an antidote to a monolithic political order that they blame for economic catastrophe and an erosion of national sovereignty. To his opponents, it demonstrates a buffoonish temperament that is unsuited to public office, and which makes Britain a laughing stock on the international stage.

Obvious comparisons have been drawn between Johnson and US President Donald Trump, whose eccentric haircut also became intertwined with his political image. Johnson and Trump have both ridden the populist wave to power, with the British politician integral in the country's 2016 vote to leave the European Union. Pictures of Johnson as a child reveal the platinum blond that was a feature from a young age.

During his university years in the 1980s, Johnson favored a less raggedy side parting, largely blending in with the hirsute trends of the time. But as his political career took off, the style became ever more distinctive, long on top - swept to one side - and short at the back in what magazine Marie Claire called the "mediaeval monk" cut. US chatshow host David Letterman famously asked the then mayor how long he had been cutting his own hair.

'Weaponized hair'

Throughout his tenure as London mayor, the hay bale style became increasingly unkempt and recognizable. Historian Greg Jenner wrote on Twitter that by this time, Johnson had "weaponized his hair as iconic branding". "I've seen him deliberately mess it up before giving a speech," he wrote. Johnson famously missed out on becoming prime minister in 2016, but a neat trim in January was taken as the first sign he was girding up for another run at the top office as Theresa May's government wobbled.

Stylist Nick Mazer, who was responsible for the cut, said the result was an accident, telling The Sun that Johnson had said to him "Don't change me". "I was a little nervous and cut it shorter than I should. He's kept that shorter style ever since and it suits him far better than his usual wild mane of hair," he said. Others were less impressed, with Twitter users pointing out that his hair was thinning and any Samson-like powers on the wane. "Johnson's hair feels somehow talismanic of his ego, so I can see why people want to jeer," wrote Jenner. Johnson has also fended off suggestions he dyes his hair, claiming he was joking during a 2016 interview in which he said he did. Asked at a recent hustings if he dyed his hair, Johnson said it was an "outrageous suggestion". — AFP



Boris Johnson