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# Decade of violations caused huge human suffering in Syria: Kuwait FM

## \$6.4 billion pledged at Brussels Syria conference

KUWAIT/BRUSSELS: Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah headed Kuwait's delegation participating in the fifth edition of the Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' held online Tuesday. During the meeting, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah delivered a speech saying that through the past 10 years, Syrian people suffered many violations and practices against human rights and international laws causing huge human suffering. The Syrian refugee crisis is considered the largest crisis in the world, as there are about 5.6 million registered Syrian refugees in the region and about 6.2 million displaced inside Syria, he said.

Kuwait believes that the situation in Syria has become more complicated due to the interference of external parties and difficulties facing the peace talks sponsored by the UN, the Foreign Minister added. Sheikh Al-Sabah expressed hope of conference outcomes, which will contribute in alleviating the suffering of Syrian people, especially since the absence of a political solution calls to find a peaceful one that ends the Syrian conflict. In this regard, the State of Kuwait reiterates that military solution is not a resolve to the Syrian crisis, where the only effective solution is a comprehensive political one in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and Declaration of Geneva 1/2012.

The pledge announced at 2019 Brussels Conference, amounting \$300 million for a period of

three years (2019, 2020, 2021), is being implemented, and committed to fulfilling stated commitments for 2021, he stressed. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah concluded with hope on current conference outcomes that will provide noticeable results that will contribute in achieving sustainable peace and true reconciliation between Syrian people.



Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah

### \$6.4 billion

The fifth Brussels virtual Conference on Syria chaired by the European Union and the United Nations concluded Tuesday evening with total pledges of 5.3 billion euro (\$6.4 billion) for 2021, including 3.6 billion euro (\$4.4 billion) in grants. Of this amount, 3.7 billion euro (\$4.3 billion) were announced by the EU; 1.12 billion euro (\$1.31 billion) coming from the European Commission and 2.6 billion euro (\$3 billion) from EU Member States.

For the years 2022 and beyond, 1.7 billion euro (\$2 billion) will be in grants. Janez Lenarcic, EU Commissioner for Crisis Management announced at the end of the meeting. In addition to grants, international financial institutions and donors have announced loans in concessional terms in the

amount of 5.9 billion euro (\$7 billion), he added. "The international community must not lose sight of the plight of the affected civilians. The EU is stepping up its humanitarian assistance to save lives on the ground. We are renewing our commitment to helping the Syrian people and the hosting communities," said Lenarcic.

Earlier, EU High Representative Josep Borrell speaking at the conference said "Today, we reaffirm the support of the international community for United Nations Security Resolution 2254. Over 85 delegates from more than 55 countries and over 25 international organizations gathered virtually, reaffirming the resolution's core message: Syrians must decide the future of Syria."

"European Union has made clear, we cannot and we will not normalize anything while violence and repression continues. Nor can we accept that elections as currently planned by the regime should lead to any measures of international normalization, no," stressed Borrell Mark Lowcock, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator - represented the UN at the event. In his video message Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary General Session stressed on the need for a political solution after ten years of conflict in Syria. Meanwhile, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sophie Wilmes and Minister of Development Cooperation Meryame Kitir announced today 18 million euro (\$21 million) in additional humanitarian aid for the Syrian people. — KUNA

### News in brief

#### 620,000 people vaccinated

KUWAIT: The number of people who have received the COVID-19 vaccine in Kuwait reached around 620,000, Al-Rai Arabic daily reported yesterday. This means that Kuwait has already vaccinated around 22.3 percent of the targeted group which is estimated at around 2.775 million, bearing in mind that reaching social immunity requires around 60 to 70 percent of the population to receive the vaccine, which is between 1.665 million and 1.942 million. The vaccination process is expected to speed up after the Cabinet recently approved opening a new drive-thru vaccination center the southern island of the Jaber Causeway, said sources quoted in the report.

#### Kuwait backs Egypt, Sudan

KUWAIT: Kuwait expressed its backing of Egypt and Sudan amid the Renaissance Dam dispute, saying their security was an integral part of the Arab region's national security. Kuwait stands in "solidarity" with both countries in their "tireless efforts" to ensure regional stability and resolve the dispute, "in a manner that preserves the water and economic rights of the Nile River countries," read a Foreign Ministry statement. This should be in accordance with international law and in a manner that enables all sides to achieve their ambitions for development, the ministry added.

## Kuwait fully behind OPEC+ measures to curb oil output

KUWAIT: Kuwait reiterated its full support of OPEC+ efforts measures to ensure global oil supply and demand balance through its commitment to reduce output levels, as agreed, the oil minister said yesterday. Kuwait's Oil Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Fares made the comments prior to his virtual attendance of OPEC+ Joint Ministerial Committee for Production Control

(JMCMC) talks yesterday and OPEC+ ministerial talks today. Minister Fares, also Minister of Higher Education, said OPEC+ takes a "vigilant approach," decided on a monthly basis, to keep pace with ever-changing market developments. He commended the ongoing efforts and cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC partners to support the stability of oil markets and promote a global economic recovery by maintaining stable



Dr Mohammad Al-Fares

global energy flows. He also praised the collective decision, taken during the previous meeting, to extend current production cuts for an additional month - until the end of April 2021 - and Saudi Arabia's initiative to continually reduce output during this period. This will support stability in oil markets, he emphasized, applauding the efforts and consultations that Saudi Arabia has led intensively with Russia and the rest of the countries participating in the OPEC+ agreement. On a recovery on global oil market indicators, the minister said he was "cautiously optimistic" about a gradual recovery and return to normal life, especially in light of the roll-out of coronavirus vaccines worldwide. — KUNA

## ABK encourages staff to take COVID-19 vaccines

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) reinforced its ongoing support of the COVID-19 vaccination drive in line with the Ministry of Health's agenda which includes prioritizing vaccinations of frontline employees. The bank launched an awareness campaign on the importance of taking the COVID-19 vaccination, in addition to highlighting guidelines in compliance with CBK Workplace Return Protocol. The bank also had medical experts, Dr Khaled Al-Saeed, a member of the vaccinations committee and Dr Ghada Ebrahim the Director of Public Relations and Media at the Ministry of Health, talking to staff through a recorded message on the importance of being vaccinated, and how the vaccine will ensure a safer community by mitigating the chances of spreading or carrying the virus.

To further encourage staff to register for the vaccine, and to foster a healthier work environment,

ABK offered one-day paid special leave for each scheduled COVID-19 vaccination appointment to all employees, giving them a day of rest to recover from the vaccine symptoms. The bank simplified the leave registration mechanism by automating the process and ensuring ease of access and application through mobiles and electronic devices. The bank has also added a 'lucky draw' into the 'Get Vaccinated' campaign for those who have been vaccinated, with chance to win prizes.

Afrah Al-Arbash, Acting GM - Human Resources Division at ABK, commented, "We are encouraging employees to register and take the vaccine as soon as possible, as this is the first step towards a healthier lifestyle for employees, the society, and the business. By getting vaccinated, we can rapidly work towards reviving the economy and accelerate its recovery while advocating the health and wellbeing of our community."



Afrah Al-Arbash

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## NAFO inaugurates online Kalolsavam

KUWAIT: National Forum (NAFO) Kuwait, a leading non-profit, socio-cultural organization in the country, recently held the inauguration ceremony for its online Kalolsavam 2021. The ceremony commenced with a prayer by Nivedita Anil Kumar. The inauguration of the online cultural competition schematized by the association was presided over by NAFO President CP Rajiv Menon. Renowned Mohiniyattam dancer Gopika Varma, a member of the Travancore Royal family in the Indian state of Kerala, inaugurated the function by lighting the traditional ceremonial lamp from her residence in Kowdiar Palace in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala State.

The main attraction was the online interactive session with Varma in which she shared her inspirational thoughts and gave advice to upcoming young dancers of NAFO about Mohiniyattam, lifestyle in Royal Palace of Travancore and shared a few beautiful personal

moments with NAFO members. Another highlight of the inaugural ceremony was congratulatory messages from Padmabhushan singer K S Chitra and silver-screen actress Anjali Nair, who congratulated NAFO for the efforts taken in holding an online Kalolsavam amidst the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and the related health and safety restrictions. They conveyed their best wishes to all participants in the kalolsavam.

NAFO General Secretary Vijayakumar Menon welcomed the guests to the online inauguration of the Kalolsavam program and then handed the floor to Bhavana Menon, the compere for the evening. Advisory Board member Rajeev G Pillai delivered the felicitation address and wished all participants the best of luck in the competitions. Cultural program convener Unnikrishna Kurup presented the highlights of NAFO Kalolsavam 2021, and summarized the guidelines for all competitions. NAFO Kids Nila Ajay, Nandakishore Girish entertained the online spectators with their melodious songs, which were scripted by the NAFO Ladies Wing officials. Around 100 NAFO families participated in the online inauguration, and the program concluded with the formal vote of thanks by Joint Treasurer Rajeev Nair.

