

## International

# Zionist entity buries three soldiers killed near Egypt border

## Netanyahu promises a 'full investigation' into the deaths

JERUSALEM: Zionist entity on Sunday buried three soldiers killed in a firefight at its usually secure border with Egypt and announced an "exhaustive and thorough" investigation into the deaths. Egypt has blamed the fatal clash in the Negev desert on a member of its security forces who was also killed, saying he had crossed the border in pursuit of drug traffickers when he encountered the Zionist troops.

The Zionist army said an Egyptian "assailant" shot dead two soldiers at a post on the border. The discovery of their bodies triggered a manhunt during which the third soldier was killed as well as the suspected attacker. Zionist entity's border area with Egypt has not often been marred by violence since Egypt became the first Arab country to make peace with Zionist entity following the Camp David accords of 1978.

As Zionist entity mourned those killed the previous day, Prime Minister Netanyahu said it had sent Egypt a "clear message", speaking at the opening of a cabinet meeting on Sunday. "We expect that the joint investigation will be exhaustive and thorough," he said. "This is part of the important security cooperation between us, which has benefited both countries over the years." Egypt's army said a member of its security forces had crossed the border "chasing drug traffickers" before he was killed in an "exchange of fire which left three dead on the Zionist side".

The two Zionist soldiers whose bodies were found early Saturday at a guard post close to the Harif military base were identified as Lia Ben Nun, 19, and Ori Izhak Iluz, 20. Ohad Dahan, also 20, was killed during the manhunt later on Saturday, the army said.

A fourth Zionist soldier, a non-commissioned officer, was lightly wounded, it added. Ben Nun was laid to rest on Sunday in the central Zionist city of Rishon LeZion. "I love you and miss you already," her sister Ofir said in her eulogy. "I don't know what I'll do now." Iluz's funeral was held in the northern city Safed, and Dahan was being buried in southern town of Ofakim.



OFAKIM: The mother (R) of Ohad Dahan, one of three Zionist soldiers killed in the cross-border incident with Egypt, is comforted as she mourns during the funeral at the military cemetery in the city of Ofakim. — AFP

### 'Full investigation'

Zionist media have raised questions over the shootings, particularly on how the assailant - who has not been identified - managed to cross the high barrier running along the border. Netanyahu on Saturday promised a "full investigation" into the deaths, and Zionist senior government figures stressed the importance of cooperation with Egypt. The Zionist army was conducting "a thorough investigation... in collaboration with the Egyptian Armed Forces", said the military chief of staff Herzli Halevi.

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant highlighted "the importance of the ties between the two countries"

following a telephone call with his Egyptian counterpart Mohamed Ahmed Zaki.

Zaki meanwhile underlined "the joint coordination to take the necessary measures to avoid the repetition of incidents of this kind in the future", according to a spokesman for the Egyptian army.

The border between the two countries is generally calm but has been the scene of regular smuggling attempts. In recent years, there have been exchanges of fire between smugglers and Zionist soldiers stationed along the border. In 2014, two Zionist soldiers on patrol were wounded by unidentified men who fired an anti-tank weapon from the Sinai during an attempt to smuggle drugs. — AFP

## Greece to rescue asylum seekers on border river: Police

ATHENS: Greece on Sunday said it would rescue dozens of asylum seekers claiming to be stranded on the country's river border with Turkey for days. "We will rescue them as there is no response from the Turkish authorities to our calls to take them back," a source in the ministry of citizen's police protection told AFP.

A video sent to media, allegedly from the Evros River region, said the group of about 80 were Yazidis, a mostly Iraq-based Kurdish-speaking religious minority. A man speaking Kurdish on the video said the group had been stuck on one of the river islets for about six days and that several of its members required medical assistance.

Thousands of migrants, mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan, have in recent years crossed into Greece from Turkey in the hope of making it to western Europe. With the stepping up of patrols in the Aegean Sea making it harder for migrants to reach Greek islands, more are taking their chances by crossing the river, Greece's natural border with Turkey, and having traffickers take them from there by road. Greece is currently under a caretaker government ahead of June 25 national elections. The office of interim prime minister Ioannis Sarmas, a senior judge, earlier Sunday noted that it had appealed to the Turkish government "to coordinate with border authorities and prevent illegal crossings." "In recent days, the low water level of the river Evros favors the illegal crossing of migrants, using islets that constitute both Greek and Turkish territory," the interim prime minister's statement said. — AFP



WARSAW: Donald Tusk, leader of the Polish Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska (PO) party (C) gestures as he marches during an anti-government demonstration organized by the opposition in Warsaw on June 4, 2023. — AFP

## Polish opposition stages major anti-govt protest

WARSAW: Half a million protesters packed the streets of central Warsaw on Sunday. Poland's opposition organizers said, claiming one of the biggest anti-government demonstrations in the 30 years since the end of communism. Lech Walesa, a former Polish president, Nobel Peace Prize winner and leader of the fight against communism, joined opposition figures at the head of the march ahead of legislative elections in the autumn.

People travelled from across the country after former prime minister Donald Tusk, head of the centrist opposition party Civic Platform (PO), called for the protest against "the high cost of living, swindling and lying, and for democracy, free elections and the EU".

The leaders of most opposition parties encouraged their supporters to join the march against the nationalist Law and Justice party (PiS) led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski, which has been in power for almost eight years. Smaller gatherings also took place in other cities and towns across Poland.

"City Hall estimates (the number of protesters) at 500,000 now," the organizers' spokesman Jan Grabiec told AFP. Decked out in the red and white colors of the nation, demonstrators carried EU flags and placards proclaiming "Enough's enough", "No to authoritarian Poland" and blaming the ruling PiS party for exorbitant prices.

Once the head of the European Council, Tusk addressed the crowds in Warsaw's historic old town, saying the opposition's role was "of comparable importance" to that in the 1980s and the fight against communism. "Democracy dies in silence. From today, there will be no more silence... despite the daily attacks by Kaczynski's PiS against its very foundations," Tusk said. Walesa, who led the Solidarity union in a successful battle against communism, has long been absent from politics.

He told the marchers he had been "patiently" waiting for the day when the nationalist party and Kaczynski will be forced out. "Mr. Kaczynski, we have come to get you. The day has finally arrived," Walesa said. Piotr Mroz, a 62-year-old construction worker, feared "if it doesn't change now, we will have

Hungary and Turkey here", referring to countries frequently accused of flouting democratic standards. "Our government is authoritarian. They want to make Poland a country that resembles Russia," Karolina Sieminska, a 22-year-old French student, told AFP.

### 'Circus'

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki compared the protests to a "circus". "It makes me laugh a little when the old foxes who have been in politics for years organize an anti-government march and present it as a spontaneous civic protest," he was quoted as saying by news agency PAP.

Most polling suggests the PiS party will win the upcoming elections with around 30 percent of the vote but without obtaining a majority. That could open the way for the opposition parties to take power if they maintain their current support levels and manage to agree among themselves.

The June 4 protest march day is the 34th anniversary of the first partly free elections held in Poland which were followed by the defeat of communism in Europe. Walesa became the nation's first democratically elected president in 1990, after becoming the leader of the communist world's first free trade union in the 1980s. — AFP

## Syria FM talks aid on visit to key...

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"We received about 250,000 refugees," said Hussein, who added that the majority of them live in camps in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region.

He said the next step would be getting humanitarian aid into Syria, which has been devastated by the war and by a February 6 earthquake that also hit Turkey and killed tens of thousands in both countries. The quake triggered a flurry of aid efforts and diplomatic moves that help spur Syria's reintegration back into the wider Arab region.

Mekdad on Sunday thanked Iraq for its "solidarity" after the quake, also hailing the "progression" of bilateral relations. "We will continue to cooperate to combat terrorism and eliminate the danger posed by drugs," he added in a reference to the illegal trade in the stimulant Captagon.

The Arab League voted on May 7 to readmit

Syria after its suspension in 2011 over Assad's brutal repression of pro-democracy protests that later devolved into an all-out war. At the time, Iraq had abstained from the vote that resulted in Damascus' suspension. The two countries share a 600-km porous desert border that has continued to see militant activity even years after the defeat of IS.

The militant group took over large swathes of both countries in 2014, declaring its "caliphate" before it was defeated in 2017 in Iraq and in 2019 in Syria. Drug trafficking has also proliferated in past years, with the trade of the amphetamine-like drug Captagon exploding in the region, much of it across the Syria-Iraq border. Iraqi guards in March seized over three million Captagon pills at the border with Syria.

In addition to security coordination, Baghdad and Damascus continue to coordinate on other key issues including water as both countries face dangerous shortages. Dam-building in neighboring countries and climate change impacts have dramatically reduced water flows in both countries, disrupting agriculture and threatening livelihoods amid persistent economic challenges. — AFP

ing the matter "for a long time". Russia is dependent on oil revenues with its war in Ukraine dragging on and Western sanctions hitting its economy.

Novak "sees no need for OPEC+ to change course" because it would hardly benefit from higher prices. Commerzbank commodity analysts said in a research note ahead of the meeting. Since Western sanctions hit Moscow over Ukraine, Russia has been shipping oil to India and China as the Asian giants soak up the cheap crude. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, "does need higher prices to balance its budget", Commerzbank analysts said, adding that the kingdom's break-even price is currently "at a good 80 dollars per barrel".

Despite the tensions, both of the top OPEC+ producers "will no doubt be keen to keep the cartel together, as it has more power thanks to the united front it is showing", they said. In March 2020 the alliance was pushed to the brink of collapse when Moscow refused to cut oil production even as the Covid pandemic sent prices into freefall. After negotiations broke down, Riyadh flooded the market by boosting exports to record levels before the two countries came to an agreement. Asked if there were disagreement with Saudi Arabia this weekend, Novak said "No, we had no disagreements, it is a common decision." OPEC+ countries produce about 60 percent of the world's oil. — AFP

## Sudan battles rage as US, Saudi...

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erupting from it. Other witnesses spoke of air strikes on RSF positions in the east of the city, with some civilian casualties reported.

The fighting erupted on April 15 in the Sudanese capital between the army led by de facto leader Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the RSF commanded by his deputy-turned-rival Mohamed Hamdan Daglo. Deadly battles have since gripped Khartoum and the war-scarred Darfur region in the west, forcing residents to flee or camp out for weeks as supplies of food and other vital goods have been depleted.

The governor of West Darfur, Khamis Abakar, said Sunday there was "complete lawlessness" in the state. "Armed men have taken over everything, and the situation is completely out of control," he said. Darfur governor Mini Minawi, a former rebel leader now close to the army, on Twitter denounced "looting" by armed groups, declared Darfur a "disaster zone" and

appealed for help from the community international.

Sunday's Saudi statement comes two days before US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is due to arrive in the Gulf kingdom, with discussions on Sudan expected to be on the agenda. The last truce was agreed to allow desperately needed humanitarian aid into areas of Sudan ravaged by the fighting, but like all those that preceded, the accord was routinely violated by both sides. The Sudanese army on Wednesday withdrew from the talks in Jeddah.

A day later, the US-Saudi mediators declared the talks officially suspended, with Washington saying it was ready to resume the talks once the parties were "serious" about a ceasefire. Both Burhan and Daglo have pledged repeatedly to protect civilians and secure humanitarian corridors.

But civilians reported escalated fighting after the army quit the Jeddah talks, including one army bombardment Thursday that a committee of human rights lawyers said killed 18 civilians in a Khartoum market. Some 25 million people — more than half of Sudan's population — are now in need of aid and protection in what was already one of the world's poorest countries before the conflict, according to the UN. — AFP



KHARTOUM: Smoke billows behind buildings on June 4, 2023 as fighting between Sudan's warring generals intensified. — AFP

## Saudi announces fresh output cut...

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African members threatened to derail the gathering. While the United Arab Emirates was pushing for a change to the way its output cuts are measured, African countries were reluctant to give up some of their unused quotas — a politically unpalatable option, it said, citing delegates.

Several OPEC+ nations — including Angola and Nigeria, already seeming to be at maximum capacity — have struggled to meet their quotas. Oil producers are grappling with falling prices and high market volatility amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has upended economies worldwide. Oil prices have plummeted about 10 percent since the April cuts were announced, with Brent crude falling close to \$70 a barrel, a level it has not traded below since December 2021.

Traders worry that demand will slump, with concerns about the health of the global economy as the United States battles inflation and higher interest rates while China's post-COVID rebound stutters. Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said the current output cuts were being extended until the end of 2024 after examin-