

## Sudan capital hit by multiple airstrikes after cease-fire fails

Multiple airstrikes and heavy fighting rocked Sudan's capital after a proposed cease-fire to halt days of clashes between the army and a paramilitary group failed to hold. The attacks posed a fresh obstacle to regional leaders who've attempted to travel to Khartoum this week to help negotiate a truce between military head Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Rapid Support Forces leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. Clashes that erupted in the North African nation on April 15 have left more than 270 people dead and at least 2,600 others injured, according to the World Health Organization, Bloomberg reported. The army headquarters, the RSF's offices and the densely populated Amarat area in Khartoum were targeted on Wednesday morning, with shelling continuing for several hours, residents said.

The African Union and Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a regional bloc, have been trying to dispatch officials to Khartoum since Monday to mediate an end to the conflict that has shattered hopes of a return to civilian rule after a 2021 coup, and sparked fears of a full-blown civil war. Foreign diplomats have also tried to intervene, the latest efforts including talks between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan. "There are more and more people trying to leave Khartoum, but it's difficult, it's dangerous and there are many checkpoints," said Germain Mwehu, a spokesperson for the International Committee of the Red Cross. Many parts of the city had been left without water and hospitals were short-staffed and had limited supplies because the

intense fighting made it difficult to move around, he said.

Japan's government is preparing to evacuate about 60 of its nationals, including embassy staff, who are currently in Sudan, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters in Tokyo.

With neither side appearing willing to back down, the conflict is likely to be protracted and runs the risk of drawing in neighboring countries, Verisk Maplecroft said in a research note this week.

The renewed fighting on Wednesday came in spite of attempts to introduce a 24-hour truce starting from 6 p.m. Sudan-time Tuesday. The army had given mixed signals over whether it would observe the truce, with one official accusing the RSF of mobilizing while requesting the pause.

In a Twitter posting, the RSF accused the army of



violating the cease-fire, moving more troops and armed militia toward Khartoum and bombing heavily populated areas, hospitals, markets and power supply lines. South Sudan's acting Foreign Minister Deng Dau Deng said his nation's oil exports, which flow

through pipelines that traverse Sudan, haven't been affected by the violence. Any cessation of hostilities will almost certainly need to be driven by regional Arab powers, because of their interests in the country, said Jonas Horner, an independent analyst following Sudan.



Damaged Rapid Support Forces vehicles after clashes in Khartoum on April 18.  
● OMER ERDEM/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

## Israeli forces clash with Palestinian resistance fighters in Jenin



Palestinian resistance fighters have encountered Israeli army forces in the Jenin region of the occupied West Bank, in light of a rise in the spate of Israeli violence against Palestinians across the occupied territories.

A video circulating online showed fighting and shooting between the Palestinian fighters and the soldiers of the Israeli regime, who attacked the town of Qabatia in the south of Jenin city on Wednesday morning, Press TV reported.

At the same time, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Battalions, the military wing of the Fatah movement, announced that fierce clashes had taken place between them and Israeli forces in Qabatia.

In recent months, the rulers of the Israeli regime have made great efforts to control the situation in this region.

Israel has repeatedly raided various areas of the

West Bank, especially the Jenin camp and Nablus, to arrest "wanted" Palestinian fighters and youths, but their raids were met with strong resistance from Palestinian fighters. Earlier on Tuesday, Palestinian media outlets reported that Israeli troops, accompanied by bulldozers, stormed the camp, triggering violent confrontations with local residents.

The regime's forces deployed several snipers on the rooftops and surrounded a house in the camp.

Also, Israeli forces prevented medics from the Palestinian Red Crescent to enter the camp and even opened fire at an ambulance.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said eight Palestinians were wounded during the raid, adding that they were transferred to the hospital after sustaining injuries in the limbs.

## Kim orders launch of North Korea's first spy satellite

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the country has finished building its first military spy satellite and gave the green light for its launch, state media said Wednesday.

The report of its completion comes about a week after Pyongyang launched a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, AFP reported.

Kim gave instructions on Tuesday to "make sure that the military reconnaissance satellite No. 1 completed as of April will be launched at the planned date," the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. During a visit to North Korea's National Aerospace Development Administration on Tuesday, he also called on staff to "firmly establish the satellite intelligence-gathering capability by deploying several reconnaissance satellites on different orbits in succession".

State media images

showed Kim touring the space agency with his daughter. The items he was inspecting, as well as charts and other wall displays in some of the images were blurred out. The development of a military reconnaissance satellite was one of the key defence projects outlined by Kim in 2021.

On Tuesday, he said gaining this reconnaissance technology was a "primary task to be indispensably fulfilled" because of threats and aggression from the United States and South Korea.

In December 2022, North Korea said it had carried out an "important final-stage test" for the development of a spy satellite, which it said it would complete by April this year.

Pyongyang has not provided a launch date, though on Tuesday, Kim said the satellite would be sent up "at the planned date".



A TV screen shows an image of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (R), and his daughter during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, on April 19, 2023.  
● AHN YOUNG-JOON/AP

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### UN: India to be world's most populous nation by mid-2023



AP - India is on track to surpass China by mid-2023 as the world's most populous nation, United Nations data said Wednesday, raising questions about whether a booming, young Indian population will fuel economic growth for years to come or become a liability.

The demographic data from the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA) "State of World Population Report, 2023" estimates India's population at 1,428.6m or 1.4286b against 1.4257b.

#### Europe's strikes could spell more flights havoc into summer



REUTERS - Strikes across Europe have led to a spike in flight cancellations, delays and driven down bookings to cities like Paris, data from travel firms show, despite efforts by airlines to avoid a repeat of last year's disruptions. Flight cancellations and delays of over three hours in Europe were up over 2022 and 2019 over the Easter holiday weekend from April 5-11, most markedly in France and Britain, according to data from flight claim management firm AirHelp.

## Arabs distance themselves from Israel



Hassan Hantzadeh  
Regional affairs expert

EXCLUSIVE

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan's visit to Syria and his meeting with President Bashar al-Assad were among the positive outcomes of the recent deal between Tehran and Riyadh in Beijing. The agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia has changed the attitude of Arab states toward regional issues and developments. One of the achievements of the agreement is the resumption of political rela-

tions between Saudi Arabia and Syria after 12 years.

The normalization of Riyadh-Damascus relations, as well as the Saudi King's invitation to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to participate in the upcoming meeting among Arab leaders in Riyadh, indicate that both Saudi Arabia and some other Arab states have undertaken a reassessment on their positions against the resistance front oriented on Iran and Syria. The Hamas high-ranking delegation's historic visit to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday is also a sign of the change in attitudes. In the past, Riyadh has suffered a lot of damage due to

its aggressive positions and behavior against Iran and the axis of resistance, a clear example of which was getting involved in the costly war in Yemen, which has created political, military, and economic challenges for the kingdom. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman needs to create a safe margin for his government to implement his ambitious plans, which are to modernize Saudi Arabia; therefore, he prefers improving relations with Iran and resistance groups to confronting them.

Unlike Israel, which has been facing a lot of security and military challenges, the resistance

front, comprising the countries and groups supporting the freedom of Palestine and opposing Israel, has reached a stable stage.

Farhan's visit to Syria and his meeting with the Syrian president could pave the way for Assad's participation in the meeting of the heads of Arab countries, which is itself a prelude to Syria's return to the Arab League.

These visits and meetings can be interpreted in such a way that, from the point of view of the Arab countries, Syria can still play a strategic role in confronting Israel, as in the past, because the situation in Israel and the chaos of Net-

anyahu's hardline government have caused Arab countries to hesitate in promoting the normalization of ties with Tel Aviv. In fact, Arab countries are revising their policies towards Israel and distancing themselves from it. The series of recent developments such as the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, peace in Yemen, reestablishing relations between Syria and Saudi Arabia, and the trip of the Hamas delegation to Saudi Arabia are signs that Arab countries are reconsidering their positions towards Israel and the axis of resistance. Syria's return to the Arab League is an auspicious event.

#### Macron booed on first trip since pension reform

AFP - French President Emmanuel Macron was loudly booed by crowds in eastern France Wednesday as he embarked on his first trip to a French region since signing his unpopular pensions reform into law.

Locals in Selestat in the Alsace region chanted slogans including "Macron resign!" while he was personally heckled by several people present, including one man who accused him of having a "corrupt government".