

1373

Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of Perpetual Alliance (world's oldest still in existence) is signed in London between King Edward III of England and King Ferdinand I of Portugal

1866

US House of Representatives passes the 14th Amendment (Civil Rights)

1956

The last British troops leave the Suez Canal Zone in Egypt

2000

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung meets North Korean dictator Kim Jong-il for the beginning of the first-ever inter-Korean summit in the northern capital of Pyongyang



US deportation flight carrying Iranians bound for CAR

Deportees from multiple countries face uncertain futures in violence-hit Central African Republic

● Flight departed from Louisiana

● Includes Iranians, Afghans, Turks

● Lawyers raise human rights concerns

AFP | Washington

A US deportation flight headed to the Central African Republic yesterday, lawyers said, carrying nationals from Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and Georgia.

Such "third-country" deportations, including of people with legal protections, have become a staple of US President Donald Trump's crackdown on immigration.

The US State Department advisory for the impoverished, violence-racked CAR reads: "Do not travel to Central African Republic for any reason."

Trump has described Iran, with whom Washington is cur-



US Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche (3L), alongside Secretary of Homeland Security Markwayne Mullin (4L), speaks during a press conference about safeguarding unaccompanied immigrant children in Washington, DC

rently at war, as a "terrorist regime" but is nonetheless deporting nationals who have fled the country, including at least two Iranian women, their lawyer said.

The Iranians had been granted "withholding of removal" -- a status that carries weaker rights than asylum but has been considered a "win" in immigration court under previous adminis-

trations. "We fear they will ultimately be forced to return to the countries they originally fled," as has repeatedly happened with other deportees sent across Africa,

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At least 2 Iranian women with withholding-of-removal status were among the deportees on the flight bound for the Central African Republic

their attorney, Emily Trostle, told AFP.

The flight took off from Alexandria, Louisiana, on Thursday evening, according to the ICE Flight Monitor, affiliated with non-profit Human Rights First.

It made a scheduled stopover in Ghana -- which is itself a hub for third-country deportations -- just after 1300 GMT yesterday, according to public flight data.

UN experts condemn crackdown on women by Afghan morality police

AFP | New York

A group of UN experts on Thursday denounced a crackdown on women in Afghanistan's western city of Herat, saying at least two people had been killed during a protest against the restrictions.

Herat's morality police started arresting dozens of women on Saturday for not wearing the body-cloaking chador or burqa.

A protest against the measures on Tuesday was broken up by force and a boy was shot dead, the UN said, while witnesses told AFP that security forces opened fire. Police have denied that any weapons were used.

In a statement Thursday, 10 independent experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council said at least two people were killed and over 20 were wounded.

"Allegations that women were detained for dress code violations are deeply concerning and may constitute arbitrary and unlawful detention, as it appears to penalise the exercise of their right to freedom of expression and right to be free from gender discrimination," the experts' statement said.

"Equality, peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and movement, and protection from arbitrary detention are fundamental rights," it added.

The dress code is governed by the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Preven-



An Afghan burqa-clad woman walks past a Taliban security personnel standing guard outside a mosque in Shahrak-e-Almahdi, Jibrail district of Herat Province

tion of Vice (PVPV), and women must be almost entirely covered when they leave home.

Many women wear a flowing abaya robe, a Muslim headscarf and a face covering, rather than a chador or burqa.

MSF medic detained

The women detained in Herat included a medical worker employed by Doctors Without Borders (MSF).

She was heading to work at Herat Regional Hospital's paediatric ward when she was stopped by the morality police on Saturday and accused of failing to comply with the dress code, the NGO said.

The medic was held for two days and released after having to sign, together with her husband and relatives, a written

commitment to wear clothing mandated by the PVPV.

MSF "is outraged by the arrest and detention of one of its employees as part of the enforcement of dress code requirements in the city", the group said.

"This incident is not isolated. Women in Afghanistan already face very severe restrictions on movement and access to public life."

The PVPV has not commented on the detention of women in Herat over dress code violations, despite requests for comment from AFP.

However, the ministry's department in Herat said new regulations had recently come into force and warned that violations could lead to detention or imprisonment.

US plans to slash fighter jets, warships to NATO in Europe: Report



Military personnel inspect US and British jets as they participate in the NATO Steadfast Defender 2021 exercise on board the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth off the coast of Portugal

AFP | Washington

The United States plans to slash the number of fighter jets and warships it provides to NATO in Europe, the New York Times reported on Thursday.

The reported cutbacks come as European nations race to bolster their defense capacities since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 sparked fears that Moscow could attack a NATO country.

US President Donald Trump has called the alliance a "paper tiger" and its members "cowards" in frustration that they have not joined the US-Israeli war against Iran.

Washington plans to reduce the number of fighter jets it supplies to Europe by one third, cut all eight aerial refueling tankers and reduce maritime reconnaissance aircraft, the New York Times reported, citing two unidentified senior European officials.

Other assets to be reallocated include a missile-launching submarine, an aircraft carrier, a group of bomber aircraft and several jets and warships.

The US European Command said this month that it would reassess Washington's contributions to NATO to "ensure Europe takes primary responsibility for its own conventional defense."



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Despite important progress, 138 million children remain in child labour worldwide, including nearly 54 million in hazardous work. Every child deserves to learn, play, grow and live a life free from violence. Let's recommit to #EndChildLabour in all its forms.

@AminaJMohammed

02



The EU is engaged to support & coordinate the global response to Ebola. I co-chaired a meeting with @WHO @AfricaCDC & African Ministers and partners to align our response. Cooperation, humanitarian access & swift action are essential to save lives & strengthen health security.

@hadjalahbib

03



Fantastic to join children on the #InternationalDayOfPlay. When children play, they connect, they learn and they imagine. By working together-governments, businesses, parents, and communities-we can and must ensure that every child, everywhere, can fulfill their right to play.

@unicefchief

04



Merci, President @EmmanuelMacron, for convening leaders to discuss economic imbalances. Global growth depends on restoring energy supply, sustaining innovation & reducing excessive imbalances. Adjustment starts at home with sound policies & succeeds when countries work together.

@KGeorgieva

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