

US conducts 1st evacuation of its citizens from Sudan war

By ZEKE MILLER, COLLEEN LONG, MATTHEW LEE and ELLEN KNICKMEYER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of Americans fleeing two weeks of deadly fighting in Sudan reached the east African nation's port Saturday in the first U.S.-run evacuation, completing a dangerous land journey under escort of armed drones.

American unmanned aircraft, which have been keeping an eye on overland evacuation routes for days, provided armed overwatch for a bus convoy carrying 200 to 300 Americans over 500 miles, or 800 kilometers, to Port Sudan, a place of relative safety, U.S. officials said.

The U.S., which had none of its officials on the ground for the evacuation, has been criticized by families of trapped Americans in Sudan for initially ruling out any U.S.-run evacuation for Americans who wanted out, calling it too dangerous. U.S. special operations troops briefly flew to the capital, Khartoum, on April 22 to airlift out American staffers at the embassy and other American government personnel. Several thousand U.S. citizens were left behind, many of them dual-nationals.

More than a dozen other nations had already been carrying out evacuations for their citizens, using a mix of military planes, navy vessels and on the ground personnel.

A wide-ranging group of international mediators — including African and Arab nations, the United Nations and the United States — has only managed to achieve a series of fragile temporary cease-fires that failed to stop clashes but created enough of a lull for tens of thousands of Sudanese to flee to safer areas and for foreign nations to evacuate thousands of their citizens by land, air and sea.



Associated Press

In this handout photo made from video, a firefighter speaks on a walkie talkie as smoke and flames rise from a burning fuel tank Saturday in Sevastopol, Crimea. A massive fire erupted at an oil reservoir there after it was hit by a drone, a Russian-appointed official there reported on Saturday.

Official: Ukrainian drones strike oil depot in Crimea

By DAVID RISING
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A massive fire erupted at an oil depot in Crimea after it was hit by two of Ukraine's drones, a Russia-appointed official there reported Saturday, the latest in a series of attacks on the annexed peninsula as Russia braces for an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Moscow-installed governor of Sevastopol, a port city in Crimea, posted videos and photos of the blaze on his Telegram channel.

Razvozhayev said the fire at the city's harbor was assigned the highest ranking in terms of how complicated it will be to extinguish. However, he reported that the open blaze had been contained.

Razvozhayev said the oil depot was attacked by "two enemy drones," and four oil tanks burned down.

A third drone was shot down from the sky, and one more was deactivated through radio-electronic means, according to Crimea's Moscow-appointed governor, Sergei Aksyonov.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, a move that most of the world considered illegal. Ukrainian President

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Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in an interview this week that his country will seek to reclaim the peninsula in the upcoming counteroffensive.

Russian President Vladimir Putin traveled to Crimea last month to mark the ninth anniversary of the Black Sea peninsula's annexation from Ukraine.

Putin's visit took place the day after the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for the Russian leader accusing him of war crimes.

The attack reported in Sevastopol comes a day after Russia fired more than 20 cruise missiles and two drones at Ukraine, killing at least 23 people.

Almost all of the victims died when two missiles slammed into an apartment building in the city of Uman, located in central Ukraine.

Six children were among the dead, Ukrainian Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said Saturday, adding that 22 of the 23 bodies recovered have been identified.

Two women remained missing, Klymenko said.

Russian forces launched more drones at Ukraine overnight. Ukraine's Air Force Command said two Iranian-made self-exploding Shahed drones were intercepted, and a reconnaissance drone was shot down on Saturday morning.

Razvozhayev said the oil depot fire did not cause any casualties and would not hinder fuel supplies in Sevastopol.


The city has been subject to regular attack attempts with drones, especially in recent weeks.

Earlier this week, Razvozhayev reported that the Russian military destroyed a Ukrainian sea drone that attempted to attack the harbor and another one blew up, shattering windows in several apartment buildings, but not inflicting any other damage.

Ukraine's military intelligence spokesperson, Andriy Yusov, told the RBC Ukraine news site on Saturday that the oil depot fire was "God's punishment" for "the murdered civilians in Uman, including five children."

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Marijuana job lands Oregon secretary of state in trouble

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan is in hot water, with Republican lawmakers calling for her resignation and the Democratic governor seeking investigations because Fagan took a consulting job with a marijuana firm.

Fagan released a statement late Friday saying she welcomed the governor's inquiry.

"I am relieved that the Governor has asked DOJ and the Government Ethics Commission to engage in fact finding because the facts will restore trust in our audits division and in me as your Secretary of State," Fagan said.

The matter came to a head Friday after Fagan's office released an audit of the state's marijuana regulators, the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission. The audit called for the OLCC to "reform" some rules for marijuana businesses, saying they are "burdens" when combined with federal restrictions on interstate commerce, banking and taxation.

Fagan, a Democrat, recused herself from the audit because she is a paid consultant of an affiliate of marijuana retail chain La Mota, Fagan's spokesman Ben Morris said at a virtual news conference about the audit's release.

La Mota's co-owner has hosted fundraisers for top Democratic Oregon politicians, including Fagan, while the co-owner, her partner and their business allegedly owe \$1.7 million in unpaid bills and more in state and federal taxes, according to Willamette Week, a Portland newspaper.



FAGAN

