

# بارودي: قرار بايدن لخفض أسعار النفط العالمية... ودول أخرى ستلجأ إلى احتياطيها



**المركزية-** لفت الخبير الاقتصادي في شؤون الطاقة رودي بارودي إلى أن "القرار الذي اتخذه الرئيس الأميركي جو بايدن باستخدام جزء من احتياطي النفط الأميركي، "يهدف إلى خفض التضخم والمحافظة على الاسعار العالمية بشكل اقتصادي أكثر استدامة".

وأكد بارودي في مقابلة مع "الجزيرة" - إنكليزي، "استخدام ما يعدل 7% فقط من أصل مجموع الاحتياطي الأميركي الذي يعادل ٧١٤ مليون برميل". وكشف أن "واشنطن اتخذت هذا القرار للحد من تحكم دول "أوبك بلس" وروسيا بسعر النفط العالمي".

كذلك أكد أن "الصين، الهند، كوريا الجنوبية وبريطانيا سيبدأون باستخدام احتياطي النفط المتوفر لديهم، وذلك لدعم استقرار سوق النفط"، مشدداً على أن "الرئيس الأميركي لديه أسلحة وطرق اقتصادية أخرى ومنها الطلب من منتجي الغاز الصخري في الولايات المتحدة زيادة الإنتاج، والذي من الممكن أن يؤثر بشكل كبير على الأسعار العالمية".

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# Maritime borders deal between Greece, Italy comes into effect



## ANKARA

A deal drawing maritime borders between Greece and Italy came into effect on Monday, said Italian diplomatic sources.

The two countries exchanged the tools of ratification of the deal during an official visit by Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias to Rome, said Italy's Foreign Ministry in a statement.

During the meeting with Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio, cooperation in the fields of energy and economy, and regional developments, particularly concerning Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean, were also addressed, the statement added.

According to Italian official news agency ANSA, Dendias accused Turkey of “violations in the Eastern Mediterranean” and threatening Greece.

Turkey, while seeking to defend its fair share of maritime territory in the Eastern Mediterranean, has decried recent provocative Greek moves such as the militarization of Aegean islands that are demilitarized by a treaty, navigational alerts (Navtex) that violate longstanding pacts, and illegal encroachment on Turkey’s continental shelf.

Turkey, which has the longest continental coastline in the Eastern Mediterranean, has rejected the maritime boundary claims of Greece and the Greek Cypriot administration, stressing that these excessive claims violate the sovereign rights of both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.□□□□□□

Turkish leaders have repeatedly stressed that Ankara is in favor of resolving all outstanding problems in the region -- including maritime disputes -- through international law, good neighborly relations, dialogue, and negotiations.□□□□□□

Also, the implementation of the EU’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan for handling the economic effects of the pandemic, cooperation against irregular migration, and EU’s enlargement to the Western Balkans were discussed between the two ministers.

Dendias, on Tuesday, was received by the Vatican’s Secretary of State Pietro Paroli.

In the meeting, bilateral and regional developments, ahead of Pope Francis’ scheduled visit to Greece on Dec.4-6, were discussed, said the Greek Foreign Ministry.

Greece, a predominantly Orthodox country, has a minority of over 50,000 Catholics, excluding expatriates and migrants, who are mostly concentrated in islands in the Aegean and Ionian Sea.

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# OPEC+ Softens View of Market Tightness



OPEC+ technical experts downgraded their expectations for how tight global oil markets will be this quarter, a week before ministers meet to decide production policy.

The global oil-supply deficit will be just 300,000 barrels a day on average in the fourth quarter, the coalition's Joint Technical Committee concluded on Thursday, according to delegates. That's much smaller than the 1.1 million barrel daily shortfall shown in figures initially presented to the panel, which revised its view using fresher data on demand, delegates said.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners gather on Nov. 4 to review their plans to gradually

restore some more of the production they halted during the pandemic. The revision to the supply and demand figures could give support to the cautious position espoused by cartel-leader Saudi Arabia, which has resisted calls to increase output more quickly.

While crude's rally to a seven-year high has spurred the White House to seek additional supplies, the kingdom has warned that demand remains vulnerable to ongoing outbreaks of the coronavirus. Brent futures neared \$87 a barrel on Monday, but have since eased by a few dollars.

"We're not out of the doldrums of Covid," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said in a Bloomberg television interview on Oct. 24. "One needs to be careful also of taking things for granted when the crisis has been somewhat contained, but is not necessarily over."

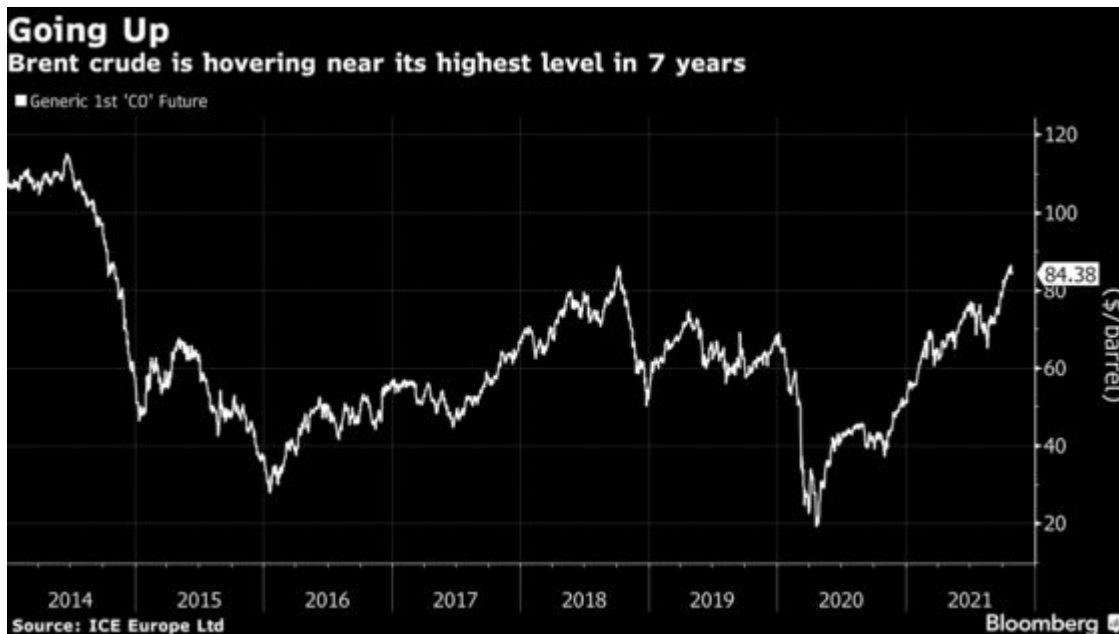
The 23-nation OPEC+ alliance, jointly led by the Saudis and Russia, is reviving shuttered supplies in modest increments of 400,000 barrels a day each month. It's expected to ratify another such hike when ministers convene on-line next week.

The JTC also adopted a more bearish outlook for 2022, because of stronger-than-expected growth in non-OPEC supply. There will be an average surplus of 1.6 million barrels a day next year, the committee concluded, compared with preliminary estimates of 1.3 million a day.

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## **As Oil Races Toward \$100,**

# Consumers Tell OPEC+ Enough Is Enough



For the past year, oil consuming countries have become increasingly anxious at crude's resurgence: first to \$50 a barrel, then \$75 and now to more than \$85. And when Vladimir Putin, one of the leaders of the OPEC+ cartel, warned that \$100 a barrel was a distinct possibility, the alarm bells really started ringing.

Now, as quickening inflation pushes some central banks towards earlier-than-expected rate of interest hikes, the U.S. India, Japan and different consuming international locations are placing the strongest diplomatic strain on the cartel in years.

Behind closed doorways, an intense marketing campaign is being waged to influence OPEC+ to hurry up its output will increase, in line with a number of diplomats and business insiders concerned within the contacts. The cartel, which meets just about on Nov. 4 to assessment coverage, is at the moment boosting output at a price of 400,000 barrels a day every month.



The personal efforts come on prime of current public appeals. The Biden administration is more and more alarmed by rising gasoline costs which have reached a 7-year excessive, and has been calling on OPEC+ for weeks to pump extra oil. Japan, the world's fourth-largest oil client, took the uncommon step of including its voice to these calls in late October – a primary for Tokyo since 2008. India, the third-largest client, has additionally requested for extra crude. China has been silent in public, however is equally vocal in personal, diplomats stated.

“We found ourselves in an energy crisis,” Amos Hochstein, the highest U.S. power diplomat, stated this week, reflecting a view broadly held view by large oil consuming nations. “Producers should ensure that oil markets and gas markets are balanced.”

U.S., Japanese and Indian officers have spoken privately amongst themselves and likewise reached out to different large customers and oil-producing international locations. The calls began round three weeks in the past, however have intensified in current days after costs handed \$85 a barrel.

The Japanese “government is currently asking oil-producing countries to increase production in the Middle East,” in line with Tsutomu Sugimori, chairman of the Petroleum Association of Japan. “As the petroleum industry, we hope oil-producing countries, including OPEC, will take appropriate steps so as not to hinder a full-fledged recovery of the world's economy.”

So far, Saudi Arabia and others have refused to go faster, arguing the month-to-month 400,000 barrel-a-day additions are sufficient to fulfill the urge for food for oil in a world financial system nonetheless nursing the injuries of the pandemic.

“We are not yet out of the woods,” Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman stated on Bloomberg Television final week. “We need to be careful. The crisis is contained but is not necessarily over.”

The prince's feedback have been echoed in personal and public by others inside the OPEC+, an alliance of nations accounting for almost two-thirds of the world's oil provide. Azerbaijan Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov stated for instance there wasn't a must rush quicker output will increase. "We have agreed on a very wise and smart program for months to come," he stated.

Saudi Arabia will most likely get its approach if it pushes to stay with a 400,000 barrel-a-day hike subsequent. For many OPEC+ officers they're being made a scapegoat for a disaster they didn't create. The downside, they argue, is just not oil however hovering pure gasoline and coal costs, which in flip have boosted electrical energy costs. Even if the cartel was to go quicker, that wouldn't resolve these shortages, they stated.

Some within the group who can be open to doing extra, nevertheless, if Saudi Arabia took the lead, a number of OPEC+ delegates stated, asking to not be named earlier than the assembly takes place.

### Shifting Mood

For most of this 12 months oil-consuming nations accepted OPEC+ was doing sufficient. But after oil costs rose from \$70 to greater than \$85 a barrel and crude inventories in industrialized international locations declined sharply over the past couple of months, the temper has shifted. Now officers from consuming international locations consider the oil market is under-supplied.

Many consuming international locations have been reluctant to name extra overtly for additional oil manufacturing simply earlier than a serious UN local weather change summit in Glasgow, Scotland, referred to as COP26. But even that notion downside is beginning to fade. Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national safety advisor, defined that Washington might combat



in opposition to local weather change and guarantee there's sufficient power to gasoline financial progress within the quick future.

"Our view is that the global recovery should not be imperiled by a mismatch between supply and demand," Sullivan stated on board Air Force One whereas en path to Rome for this week's Group of 20 summit. "And action needs to be taken," he stated, revealing that American diplomats have been in contact with "the largest consuming countries in the world to include China as well as India, Japan, Korea, the Europeans, and others."

President Joe Biden "will have those conversations at the G-20," Sullivan stated. "We will see what comes as a result of those conversations."

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**Saudi energy minister  
dismisses calls for extra  
OPEC+ barrels**



MOSCOW, Oct 14 (Reuters) – OPEC leader Saudi Arabia dismissed calls for speedier oil output increases on Thursday, saying its efforts with allies were enough and protecting the oil market from the wild price swings seen in natural gas and coal markets.

“What we see in the oil market today is an incremental (price) increase of 29%, vis-à-vis 500% increases in (natural) gas prices, 300% increases in coal prices, 200% increases in NGLs (natural gas liquids) ...,” Saudi energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman told a forum in Moscow on Thursday.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, collectively known as OPEC+, have done a “remarkable” job acting as “so-called regulator of the oil market,” he said.

“Gas markets, coal markets, other sources of energy need a regulator. This situation is telling us that people need to copy and paste what OPEC+ has done and what it has achieved.”

Asked about calls by major consumers like the United States

for OPEC+ to increase production further to cool off rising oil prices, Prince Abdulaziz said: “I keep telling people we are increasing production.”

He said OPEC+ would be adding 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) in November, and then again in the following months.

At its meeting earlier this month, OPEC+ stuck to its agreement of increasing production by 400,000 bpd a month as it unwinds production cuts.

“We want to make sure that we reduce those excess capacities that we have developed as a result of COVID,” he said, adding that OPEC+ wanted to do it “in a gradual, phased-in approach”.

Prince Abdulaziz said that while OECD oil inventories were on track to normalise at the end of this year, 2022 was looking “a bit of a challenging year”.

OPEC+ figures show the oil market is set for a surplus of about 1.4 million bpd next year.

Additional reporting by Katya Golubkova and Olesya Astakhova in Moscow, and Ahmad Ghaddar in London Editing by Jason Neely and Mark Potter

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# **China's Energy Crisis Is Hitting Everything From iPhones to Milk**



NEW DELHI: The hit from China's energy crunch is starting to ripple throughout the globe, hurting everyone from Toyota Motor Corp to Australian sheep farmers and makers of cardboard boxes.

Not only is the extreme electricity shortage in the world's largest exporter set to hurt its own growth, the knock-on impact to supply chains could crimp a global economy struggling to emerge from the pandemic.

The timing couldn't be worse, with the shipping industry already facing congested supply lines that are delaying deliveries of clothes and toys for the year-end holidays. It also comes just as China starts its harvest season, raising concerns over sharply higher grocery bills.

China's export growth unexpectedly surged in August, with port disruptions due to fresh outbreaks of the delta virus having limited impact on trade.

"If the electricity shortages and production cuts continue, they could become yet another factor causing global supply-

side problems, especially if they start to affect the production of export products,” said Louis Kuijs, senior Asia economist at Oxford Economics.

#### Slower growth

Economists have already warned of slower growth in China. At Citigroup, a vulnerability index indicates that exporters of manufactured goods and commodities are particularly at risk to a weakening Chinese economy.

Neighbors like Taiwan and Korea are sensitive, as are metal exporters such as Australia and Chile, and key trading partners such as Germany are also somewhat exposed.

As for consumers, the question is whether manufacturers will be able to absorb higher costs or will pass them along.

“This is looking like another stagflationary shock for manufacturing, not just for China but for the world,” said Craig Botham, chief China economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. “The price increases by now are pretty broad-based – a consequence of China’s deep involvement in global supply chains.”

UN index of global food costs is at the highest in a decade

Beijing has been scouring for power supplies as it tries to stabilize the situation. The impact on the global economy will depend on how quickly those efforts bear fruit.

Many Chinese factories reduced production for this week’s “Golden Week” holiday, and economists are closely watching whether power shortages will return as they ramp up again.

Already, though, some industries are under pressure, and the damage they’re seeing could quickly fan out to other sectors.

#### Paper

Consider paper. Production of cardboard boxes and packing materials was already strained by skyrocketing demand during the pandemic.

Now, temporary shutdowns in China have hit output even harder, leading to a possible 10% to 15% reduction in supply for September and October, according to Rabobank. That will add further complications to businesses already suffering from the global paper shortage.

## Food

The food supply chain is also at risk as the energy crisis makes harvest season more challenging for the world's biggest agricultural producer.

Global food prices have already jumped to a decade high, and worries are mounting that the situation will worsen as China struggles to handle crops from corn to soy to peanuts and cotton.

In recent weeks, several plants were forced to shut or reduce output to conserve electricity, such as soybean processors that crush beans to produce meal for animal feed and oil for cooking.

Prices for fertilizer, one of the most important elements of agriculture, are skyrocketing, slamming farmers already buckling under the strain of rising costs.

The processing industry is set to be more severely affected than staples such as grains and meat, Rabobank analysts wrote in a report this week. In the dairy sector, power cuts could disrupt the operation of milking machines, while pork suppliers will face pressure from tighter supply of cold storage.

## Wool

Outside of China, Australian sheep farmers are bracing for weaker demand just as they seek to sell their wool at auctions. The industry saw Chinese mills reduce production by up to 40% due to power cuts last week, Australian Broadcasting Corp reported.

## Tech

The tech world could also see a dramatic hit, given that China is the world's biggest production base for gadgets from iPhones to gaming consoles, and a major center for the packaging of semiconductors used in autos and appliances.

Several companies have already experienced downtime at their Chinese facilities to comply with local restrictions. Pegatron Corp, a key partner for Apple, said last month it began to adopt energy-saving measures, while ASE Technology Holding Co, the world's biggest chip packager, halted production for

several days.

The overall impact on the tech sector has so far been limited because of customary shutdowns around the week-long holiday. Should the energy crunch worsen, it could hit production ahead of the crucial year-end shopping season.

Industry giants including Dell Technologies Inc and Sony Group Corp can ill afford another supply shock after pandemic-induced turmoil fomented a global chip shortage that will extend well into 2022 and beyond.

Automakers

Any further deterioration of the semiconductor market would also add headaches for automakers, who have already seen production crunched by the chip shortage.

The industry, which is high on the list of protected sectors in times like these, has thus far largely been spared from the effects of the power crisis.

Still, there have been some isolated instances. Toyota, which produces more than 1 million vehicles a year in China at plants centered around Tianjin and Guangzhou, has said some of its operations have been impacted by the power shortages.

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## **Aramco warns world's spare oil supplies are falling rapidly**





Saudi Aramco said oil-output capacity across the world is dropping quickly and companies need to invest more in production.

It's a "huge concern," Chief Executive Officer Amin Nasser said in an interview in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital. "The spare capacity is shrinking."

His comments come with crude prices having soared 70% this year to around \$85 a barrel. Many major consumers, including the U.S., Japan and India, have called on producers to pump more.

The supply deficit in oil markets could worsen in 2022 if the coronavirus pandemic eases and more people fly, he said.

### **Declining rapidly**

"If there's aviation pick up next year, that spare capacity will be depleted," he said. "It's now getting to a situation where there's limited supply – whatever is left that's spare is declining rapidly."

Several oil and gas traders have criticized governments and climate activists for calling on companies to stop investing in fossil fuels, saying that will cause shortages of energy in the coming decade.

Aramco, the world's biggest oil company, is investing billions of dollars to raise its daily capacity to 13 million barrels from 12 million. It expects to complete the project by 2027.

Many Wall Street banks and OPEC+ members doubt there will be supply shortages next year. JPMorgan Chase & Co. has said oil markets will shift to a supply surplus of 1 million barrels by March from a deficit of around 1.5 million barrels now.

Saudi Arabia's energy minister told Bloomberg on Saturday there could be a "huge uplift" in crude inventories in 2022.

"We still have Covid," Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said, justifying OPEC+'s refusal to ease deep supply cuts it began last year any faster. "We still have jet fuel limited in terms of growth. If you do more now, you're accelerating the problem."

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners are increasing daily output by 400,000 barrels each month. The 23-nation group, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, next meets on Nov. 4 to decide whether to change strategy.

Written By  
Salma El Wardany and Matthew Martin

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## **Wall Street hails a new era**

# of oil prices: Higher for longer



Could the era of cheap oil supply be gone for good?

That's the conclusion of some of the biggest commodities desks on Wall Street, where banks have been lifting their long-term price forecasts, often by \$10 or more.

While the US shale boom brought about a "lower-for-longer" mantra, the market is now fixated on climate change and the dwindling appetite to invest in fossil fuels. Instead of growing supply, companies are under pressure to limit their spending, causing a structural under-investment in new production that – the argument goes – will keep oil prices higher for longer.

"My advice to clients is that you want to stay long oil until you know where that equilibrium price is" that brings new supplies online, said Jeff Currie, head of commodities research at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. "We know it's above these levels because we haven't had a big uptick in capex and investment."

The notion of a supply gap is nothing new. Since prices crashed in 2014, analysts have talked up the potential for demand to outstrip production as a result of underinvestment. But the rout in energy prices from Covid-19, combined with pressing environmental concerns, offer reason to think this time is different.

The number of oil and gas drilling rigs globally may have recovered from the lows of when oil prices turned negative last year, but they are still down more than 30% on the start of 2020. Current figures are about as low as they were in 2016, according to Baker Hughes Co., despite headline crude prices being near a seven-year high.

### **Future View**

Among the banks seeing higher prices for longer, Goldman says \$85 for 2023. Morgan Stanley bumped what it calls its long-term forecast up by \$10 to \$70 this week, while BNP Paribas sees crude at almost \$80 in 2023. Other banks including RBC Capital Markets have talked up the prospect of oil being at the start of a structural bull run.

Such estimates imply that a commodity vital to the global economy has become structurally more expensive. Oil price expectations underpin hundreds of billions of dollars of equity valuations for major international oil companies like Royal Dutch Shell Plc and BP Plc.

There's an ever-dwindling appetite to lend on the part of investors too. In the last week alone, the largest French banks said they would curb the financing of the shale oil and gas industry from early next year. Ecuador recently had to double the amount of banks that could provide it with credit guarantees as financial institutions shunned crude harvested from the Amazon.

### **Unsustainable**

Not everyone supports the idea that prices can be stay at elevated levels. Citigroup Inc. said in a report this month that crude below \$30 and above \$60 looks unsustainable in the long-term. A prolonged price above \$50 could add 7 million barrels a day of extra supply, the bank's analysts including Ed Morse wrote in a note.

"Mid-term, cost indicators keep pointing to a fair-value range between \$40-\$55 a barrel," they said.

But others see a tide that's turning, especially given changes in the U.S., which has effectively become a swing producer in recent years.

On one front, publicly listed U.S. shale companies remain constrained in growing production. When EOG Resources Inc. said in February that it planned to grow output its shares fell the most of any company on the S&P 500. There have been few, if any, similar comments from producers since.

Alongside that, the impact of field declines is growing clearer. In November, the Permian Basin was the only onshore U.S. field to show meaningful year-on-year production growth. All others were either flat or down, according to an Energy Information Administration report.

Similarly, while some of the key OPEC+ producers find themselves with spare capacity that they can dip into next year, others including Nigeria and Angola are already showing signs of struggling to lift production further.

"People have become very comfortable with the idea that shale will be there and we're not resource constrained," said David Martin, head of commodities desk strategy at BNP Paribas. "That's a question mark in my mind."

And in a world spending less money on fossil fuels, questions then turn to demand, which doesn't look like peaking any time soon.

The International Energy Agency said earlier this month that spending on fossil fuels is lower than needed if current demand growth continues. It only sees oil demand starting to decline in the 2030s under current policies. However, Morgan Stanley estimates that supply could stop expanding by 2025, leaving a sizable gap.

“We are running at net-zero type capex levels, whilst at the same time demand is not following the net-zero trajectory,” said Martijn Rats, an oil strategist at the bank. “Demand will be above 100 million barrels a day for the rest of the 2020s, but on the supply side we’re not going to produce that with current investment levels.”

*This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text.*

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## **Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia targets net zero emissions by 2060**

RIYADH, Oct 23 (Reuters) – Saudi Arabia’s crown prince said on Saturday that the world’s top oil exporter aims to reach “net zero” emissions of greenhouse gases, mostly produced by burning fossil fuels, by 2060 – 10 years later than the United States.

He also said it would double the emissions cuts it plans to achieve by 2030.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his energy minister said Saudi Arabia would tackle climate change, but also stressed the continued importance of hydrocarbons and said it would

continue to ensure oil market stability.

They were speaking at the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) ahead of COP26, the United Nations climate conference in Glasgow at the end of the month, which hopes to agree deeper global emissions cuts to tackle global warming.

The United States, the world's second-biggest emitter, is committed to achieving net zero, meaning that it emits no more greenhouse gases than it can capture or absorb, by 2050. But China and India, the world's biggest and third-biggest emitters, have not committed to this timeline.

Amin Nasser, chief executive of the state oil giant Saudi Aramco, said it was counterproductive to "demonise" hydrocarbons. He said Aramco aimed to expand its oil and gas production capacity while also achieving net zero emissions from its own operations by 2050.

Prince Mohammed said in recorded remarks that the kingdom aimed to reach net zero by 2060 under its circular carbon economy programme, "while maintaining its leading role in strengthening security and stability of global oil markets". He said Saudi Arabia would join a global initiative on slashing emissions of methane by 30% from 2020 levels by 2030, which both the United States and the EU have been pressing.

U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, in a phone call with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, welcomed the kingdom's initiatives to reduce emissions, state media said. L1N2RJ0FB

#### 'HYDROCARBONS STILL NEEDED'

The SGI aims to eliminate 278 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year by 2030, up from a previous target of 130 million tonnes. The crown prince said the SGI initiative would involve investments of over 700 billion riyals (\$190 billion) in that time period.

Saudi Arabia's economy remains heavily reliant on oil, although the crown prince is trying to promote diversification.



Energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said the world needed fossil fuels as well as renewables.

“It has to be a comprehensive solution,” he said. “We need to be inclusive, and inclusivity requires being open to accept others’ efforts as long as they are going to reduce emissions.”

He said the kingdom’s younger generation “will not wait for us to change their future”.

He said net zero might be achieved before 2060 but the kingdom needed time to do things “properly”.

The non-profit Climate Action Tracker consortium gives Saudi Arabia its lowest possible ranking, “Critically insufficient”. Saudi Arabia’s first renewable energy plant opened in April and its first wind farm began generating in August.

It does, however, have plans to build a \$5 billion plant to produce hydrogen, a clean fuel, and state-linked entities are pivoting to green fundraising.

Reporting by Yousef Saba and Saeed Azhar in Riyadh, Marwa Rashad in London and Maher Chmaytelli in Dubai; Additional reporting by Raya Jalbi in Dubai; writing by Ghaida Ghantous; Editing by Jason Neely, Kevin Liffey and William Mallard  
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**الوسيط الأميركي يلتقي مسؤولين  
لبنانيين ويبحث ملفي الطاقة  
وترسيم الحدود**



التقى الوسيط الأميركي الجديد في عملية التفاوض غير المباشر بشأن ترسيم الحدود البحرية الجنوبية بين لبنان وفلسطين المحتلة آموس هوكستين، اليوم الأربعاء، بعدد من المسؤولين اللبنانيين الكبار وبحث معهم ملفي الطاقة وترسيم الحدود. والتقى هوكستين برئيس الجمهورية ميشال عون ورئيس الوزراء نجيب ميقاتي ورئيس البرلمان نبيه بري. واستقبل عون، قبل ظهر اليوم، هوكستين، الذي يعد أيضاً كبير مستشاري وزارة الخارجية الأميركية لأمن الطاقة، بحضور السفارة الأميركية دوروثي شيا، وعرض معه مسار عملية التفاوض بشأن ترسيم الحدود البحرية مع الاحتلال الاسرائيلي والتوجهات المقبلة في هذا الملف، بحسب ما أفاد بيان الرئاسة اللبنانية.

Lebanese Presidency (@LBpresidency) October 20, 2021  
pic.twitter.com/kvsapSwwUg

Lebanese Presidency (@LBpresidency) October 20, 2021 –

وقال المستشار الإعلامي في رئاسة الجمهورية رفيق شلالا، لـ"العربي الجديد"، إن "الجانبين بحثا مسار المفاوضات والتوجهات في المرحلة المقبلة على صعيد ملف ترسيم الحدود البحرية"، مشيراً إلى أن الرئيس عون أكد على ضرورة استئناف التفاوض غير المباشر وتعويله على دور الوسيط الأميركي الذي أكد أنه سيبذل جهده ويواصل اتصالاته

بغية تكوين المعطيات الكاملة.

وعلى صعيد التغييرات التي ستطرأ على الوفد اللبناني المفاوض بعد إحالة رئيسه العميد الركن الطيار بسام ياسين إلى التقاعد، أكد شلالا أن "لا شيء رسميا بعد بخصوص هذا الموضوع".

من جهته، أشار رئيس مجلس النواب نبيه بري إلى أن لبنان أمام فرصة جديدة لاستئناف المفاوضات في الناقورة (جنوب لبنان)، مع المساعي الأميركية الجديدة التي تبذل في هذا الإطار.

وبجسب بيان المكتب الإعلامي لرئيس البرلمان، فإن بري أكد خلال لقائه الوسط الأميركي أهمية استثناء لبنان من ضوابط "قانون قيصر" في موضوعي استجرار الغاز المصري والكهرباء من الأردن، مشيراً إلى أن هوكستين عكس للرئيس بري أجواء تفاؤلية بالتقدم إيجاباً حول هذين العنوانين، كما جرى التأكيد على اتفاق الإطار الذي أعلن في أكتوبر/تشرين الأول من العام الماضي.

وفي سياق آخر، وقع بري، اليوم، القانون الرامي إلى تعديل قانون انتخاب أعضاء مجلس النواب وأحاله إلى رئاسة مجلس الوزراء مع التأكيد على ضرورة استعجال إصداره، كما دعا إلى عقد اجتماع لهيئة مكتب مجلس النواب يوم الإثنين المقبل تمهيداً لعقد جلسة تشريعية.

وعلم "العربي الجديد" من مصدر عسكري مطلع على الملف، أن "الوفد اللبناني المفاوض دخل في إجازة منذ فترة"، مشيراً إلى أن "الملف وعلى الرغم من أهميته والمكاسب الاقتصادية للبنان منه، إلا أنه ليس على رأس أولوية الاهتمامات عند المسؤولين السياسيين، وهو ما ينعكس سلباً على البلاد، ولا سيما أن العدو لا يضيع وقتاً أو فرصة لاستغلال الوضع المتوتر على الساحة اللبنانية الداخلية والصراعات المستمرة والمتجددة بينما هو يعتدي على حقوق لبنان النفطية وعلى مرأى من الجميع".

وكان الاحتلال الإسرائيلي قد منح أخيراً شركة "هالبرتون" الأميركية عقداً للتنقيب عن النفط في منطقة تقع على الحدود البحرية المتنازع عليها، ما دفع لبنان إلى الطلب من مجلس الأمن "التأكد من أن أعمال تقييم التنقيب لا تقع في منطقة متنازع عليها بين لبنان والاحتلال، بغية تجنب أي اعتداء على حقوق وسيادة لبنان، إضافة إلى منع أي أعمال تنقيب مستقبلية في المناطق المتنازع عليها تجنباً لخطوات قد تشكل تهديداً للسلم والأمن الدوليين".

ويقول الخبير في شؤون الطاقة الدولية رودي بارودي، لـ "العربي الجديد"، إن "أي بحث عبر الوسيط الأميركي في أي فكرة اقتصادية أو

تجارية غير وارد قبل ترسيم الحدود بشكل محترف ورسمي، لكن في المقابل، يمكن الاتفاق مع شركة خاصة مستقلة لتنفيذ أعمال التنقيب في حال التثبت من وجود نفط أو غاز، وذلك كما حصل في حقل الخفجي المشترك بين الكويت والسعودية، على أن يأخذ كل طرف حصته".

ويرى بارودي أنه "من المبكر الحديث عن أي خطوة طالما أن ترسيم الحدود البحرية لم ينجز"، مشيراً إلى أن "هناك حقوقاً للبنان يجب أن يحصل عليها"، مؤكداً أن "المطلوب اليوم تأمين الدعم الكامل للجيش اللبناني عند استئناف المفاوضات التي يجب أن تحكمها فقط الاتفاقيات الدولية واتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار والتي تصبّ في صالح لبنان وتعطيه حقه الكامل والعادل".

ويؤكد بارودي أن "الاجتهادات الدولية تعطي لبنان حقه، خصوصاً أن القرارات لا تقيم وزناً للجزر الصغيرة، ولا تعتبر قادرة على دفع أو إزاحة أي خط بحري واحد مقابل الخط الآخر، وبالتالي فإن الصخور والجزر الصغيرة لا تؤخذ بعين الاعتبار عند ترسيم الحدود، وهو ما يعطي لبنان مساحة هي من حقه ومعترف بها دولياً".

ويلفت الخبير الدولي إلى أن "لبنان عام 2010 اعتمد من أجل البدء بالترسيم 61 متراً في البحر بدءاً من رأس الناقورة جنوباً، أما العدو الإسرائيلي فقد اعتمد في العام الذي يليه 37 متراً في البحر"، مشيراً إلى أن الطرفين "أخطأ في البدء بالترسيم من خط بحري (أوف شور)، وعليهما اعتماد خط الناقورة البري الفاصل، وبالتالي فإن الطرفين مجبران على ترسيم الحدود وتحديد خطوط جديدة"، فيما أكد أن "الموقف الأميركي لا يمكنه إلا اقتراح خط عادل ومنصف وتبعاً لقانون الأمم المتحدة للبحار، إذ لا يمكنه الالتفاف حوله".

ويرى بارودي أن "موقف لبنان قوي بحقوقه التي تحفظها له القوانين والاتفاقيات الدولية، بيد أنه ضعيف على مستوى الداخل نتيجة الصراع والمناكفات السياسية التي تحرم اللبنانيين من فرص كثيرة وثروات هي حق لهم، وهو ما حرّمهم سابقاً من خط الغاز العربي الذي كان من شأنه أن يحلّ أزمة الكهرباء".

ويشير إلى أن "المسّ بالوفد اللبناني العسكري أو تغيير أعضائه سيكون بمثابة ضربة قوية ترتد سلباً على موقف لبنان في المفاوضات وتلحق به خسائر جمّة بالنظر إلى أهمية ترسيم الحدود اقتصادياً".

وما زال الرئيس اللبناني يرفض منذ إبريل/نيسان الماضي التوقيع على تعديل المرسوم الذي يصحح حدود لبنان البحرية ومن شأنه أن يعطي البلاد الحق بالتفاوض على نسبة من حقوقه من حقل كاريش الذي يستثمره الاحتلال الإسرائيلي.