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## Hamas commitment to civilian prisoners

Regarding his discussions with high-ranking officials of the Hamas movement in Beirut and Doha, the top Iranian diplomat said that these officials emphasized their commitment to addressing the issue of civilian prisoners with an Islamic and humanitarian perspective.

They also expressed their readiness to take the necessary actions in this regard if the field conditions permit, Amir-Abdollahian added.

During the meeting, the Emir of Qatar expressed con-

cern about the humanitarian conditions in Gaza and stated that Doha's priority is to halt the crimes in Gaza, and their position regarding Palestine remains unchanged. He pointed out that the occupying forces are responsible for the crimes they commit.

Prior to visiting Qatar, the Iranian foreign minister demonstrated solidarity with countries resisting the recent crimes of the Zionist regime through visits to Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria and declared that the resistance is prepared for any scenario.

## Pro-Palestinian rallies

Pro-Palestinian rallies continued Sunday across various countries and regions of the world including the US, Europe, Middle East, and Asia.

However, Germany and France banned demonstrations supporting Palestine, and several countries stepped up security, fearing protests could lead to outbreaks of violence.

Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in the US capital on Saturday, marching past the White House to chants of "Free Palestine" as the death toll continued to climb in the conflict between Israel and

Hamas.

"What is happening today is just beyond the pale. It's so upsetting, we are watching people being killed by an army that this country supports," demonstrator Linda Houghton told AFP.

About 1.1 million people in the north of Gaza have been told by Israel's military to move to the south, with Israel saying it will allow a safe route for a limited time.

The World Health Organization has criticized the order to move hospital patients from the north, saying it is tantamount to a death sentence.

Medics in Gaza warned Sunday that thousands could die as hospitals packed with wounded people ran desperately low on fuel and basic supplies.

Palestinians in the besieged coastal enclave struggled to find food, water, and safety ahead of the expected Israeli ground offensive in the war, AP reported. Israeli forces, supported by a growing deployment of US warships in the region, positioned themselves along Gaza's border and drilled for what Israel said would be a broad campaign to dismantle the Hamas group.

## Deadliest of five Gaza wars

The Gaza Health Ministry said 2,329 Palestinians have been killed since the fighting erupted, more than in the 2014 Gaza war, which lasted over six weeks. That makes this the deadliest of the five Gaza wars for both sides.

Western countries who support Israel have warned against a regional spillover of the conflict. The United States has deployed a second aircraft carrier to the region in an effort to "deter hostile actions against Israel", Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said.

## Israel 'gone beyond self-defence'

China on Sunday condemned the continued Israeli retaliation to the shock attack, saying Israel should stop its "collective punishment" of Gaza's civilians with actions that are beyond self-defence.

In a call with his Saudi Arabian counterpart, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned Israel's attacks would worsen regional tensions

and lead to humanitarian disaster, South China Morning Post reported.

"Israel's actions have gone beyond self-defence," Wang told Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry readout released early on Sunday.

The Israeli army is awaiting a "political decision" on the timing of the major ground offen-

sive on the Gaza Strip, military spokesmen said Sunday as civilians stepped up desperate efforts to flee northern Gaza, AFP reported.

The regime has faced pressure from the United Nations and its allies to hold back on any invasion until civilians have been given every chance to leave. The military has not said when the safe passage windows will close.

# Will great war lead to great peace?

By Emad Abshenass  
Middle East affairs expert

## EXCLUSIVE OPINION

Over the past three decades, Israel and the United States have tried to portray Iran as an enemy and a threat to the Middle East, often overshadowing the perceived threat posed by Israel. Unfortunately, this Iranophobic policy has undermined Muslim unity and deepened divisions in the Islamic world in recent years. As a result, the Palestinian issue, which had traditionally been a central focus in the Islamic world, began to fade away.

However, Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the subsequent Israeli crimes against Gaza have redirected the Islamic world's attention back toward the Palestinian cause. A broad consensus has emerged among Muslim nations that firmly supports the Palestinian people and opposes Israel. In fact, the historical injustices against Palestine and the ongoing Israeli atrocities have been recalled to the forefront of the global consciousness. Massive demonstrations have been organized in Islamic and non-Islamic countries against Israel and in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

The United States tried hard to put an end to the Palestinian issue by normalizing relations between Arab nations and Israel, offering no concessions to the Palestinians. However, in recent days, these plans have been called into question, with some nations that had previously signed peace deals with Israel now hinting at a possible withdrawal from those agreements.

For instance, an audio recording of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's former president, went viral in which he warned Israel against attempting to displace Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt, saying such an act could lead to Egypt withdrawing from the peace treaty and even breaking out of a war. This audio release serves as a clear warning from Egypt to Israel.

Furthermore, even Queen Rania of Jordan, a country with political ties to Israel, responded to the American stance that Israel has the right to legitimate defense by reminding them that Israel is an occupying regime and that "the occupier has no right to self-defense."

Therefore, the political climate in Muslim countries is currently in favor of the Palestinian cause, and it is unlikely that any Muslim leader would dare to establish political relations with Israel under the prevailing circumstances.

The key problem lies in Israel's refusal to recognize any rights or privileges for Palestinians, which has virtually rendered unsuccessful any peace plans proposed so far — be it a two-state solution or a UN-sponsored referendum. Israel continues its actions and expansionist policies with the backing of Western nations. However, the time has come for Western countries to clarify their role, deciding whether to persist in their unwavering support for Israel and overlook its acts, or to come up with a comprehensive solution to this decades-old conflict.

In recent years, even Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who initially did not recognize Yemen's Ansarullah and waged a war against them, changed their stance. Following a brazen strike on Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi stood down and moderated their tone, with Riyadh now hosting a dialogue with Ansarullah.

Israel and the United States have apparently come to the understanding that they must recognize the historical and legal rights of Palestinians for a lasting peace to be achieved. A potential solution is the idea of United Nations-supervised elections that lead to the formation of a two-nation state.

It is often said that a great war precedes great peace. The Palestinians may have expected a firm Israeli response to their strike in the occupied territories, but they had no alternative and were willing to bear the high costs in order for their voices to be heard globally. Israel and the US now face a decision: to press on with their current policies and take the consequences, or to change course and embrace a path of peace that recognizes the rights of Palestinians.

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