

Monday, Oct. 23, 2023



Palestinians gather around the remains of a mosque destroyed in Israeli strikes, as the conflict between Israel and Palestinian resistance group Hamas continues, in the northern Gaza Strip, on October 22, 2023. REUTERS

Israel to step up bombardment

The Israeli military announced on Saturday it was stepping up its bombardment of Hamas-controlled Gaza just hours after the first aid trucks arrived from Egypt, bringing desperately needed relief to civilians in the war-torn enclave. The military said it aimed to reduce the risks its troops would face as they enter Gaza in the next phase of the war, which it launched on Palestinians after the Hamas resistance group carried out the deadliest attack in Israel's history. More than 1,400 people have been killed in Israel since the war began.

Second aid convoy enters Rafah

The Israeli regime also imposed a total blockade on Gaza in response to the Hamas attack. The Rafah crossing had been out of operation since shortly afterwards, and bombardments on the Gaza side had damaged roads and buildings. A second convoy of aid trucks entered the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing on Sunday, heading towards the Gaza Strip, according to Egyptian security and humanitarian sources at Rafah. A total of around 19 trucks carrying medical and food supplies had been inspected by UNRWA, the UN's Palestinian refugee agency, the sources said. The first convoy of 20 trucks of badly needed supplies entered Gaza on Saturday. UN officials say a higher continuous pace of at least 100 trucks a day would be required in Gaza to cover urgent needs. Before the outbreak of the most recent conflict, several hundred trucks had been arriving in the enclave daily.

'Situation is tragic'

Deprived of electricity and water under Israeli siege, Gazans in the southern town of Khan Younis said they were struggling to feed their children, forming long queues to get bread made scarcer by power blackouts and a lack of flour. "We are suffering extremely, waiting since dawn to get bread. If this continues for two more days it will be catastrophic," said Saleh Skafi, a father of four from north Gaza now sheltering in Khan Younis. "The situation is tragic." Moreover, Israel has refused to allow in fuel as part of aid shipments lest it ends up in Hamas's hands. "Without fuel, the humanitarian response will stop. There will be no water, no functioning hospitals and bakeries," said Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UNRWA. "This cannot and should not happen."

US beefing up military presence

Fears over the risk of the Israel-Hamas war mushrooming into a wider Middle East conflict rose on Sunday with the US sending more military assets to the region as Israel pummeled Gaza anew, and deadly clashes along its border with Lebanon intensified, Reuters reported. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Washington would send more military assets to the Middle East in support of Israel and strengthen the US defense posture in the region. A Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system and additional Patriot air defense missile system battalions will be sent to the region and more troops put on standby, Austin said. Washington has already deployed a significant amount of naval power to the Middle East in recent weeks, including two aircraft carriers, support ships and about 2,000 Marines.

Israel targets Syria, Lebanon

In neighboring Syria, Israeli missiles hit Damascus and Aleppo international airports early on Sunday, putting both out of service and killing two workers, Syrian state media said. Along the border with Lebanon, the Hezbollah resistance group has clashed with

Israeli forces in support of Hamas in the deadliest escalation of frontier violence since an Israel-Hezbollah war in 2006. Hezbollah said four fighters were killed in heavy exchanges of fire on Sunday, and another died of wounds sustained earlier, raising to 24 the number of its members

killed since Oct. 7. Lebanese security sources said 11 fighters in Lebanon had also been killed in the volatile border region, alongside four civilians. At least five Israeli soldiers and one civilian have been killed on Israel's side of the frontier, according to Israeli military reports.

Iran warns Mideast will 'go out of control' if Israel continues Gaza attacks



South Africa Naledi Pandor Foreign Minister (L) speaks during a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Tehran on October 22, 2023. IRNA

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister on Sunday warned Israel and its ally the United States that the Middle East risks

spiraling out of control as a result of Israel's war on Gaza. "I warn the US and its proxy (Israel)... that if they do not immediately

stop the crime against humanity and genocide in Gaza, anything is possible at any moment and the region will go out of control," Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said at a joint news conference in Tehran with his South African counterpart Naledi Pandor.

Amir-Abdollahian likened the current situation of the region to a powder keg, saying any "miscalculation" in the ongoing conflict could result in heavy and bitter consequences for the region and the warmongers. Naledi Pandor, for her part, also referred to Israel's airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, saying that the international community should take action against the injustice towards the Palestinian people. "South Africa is steadfast in supporting Palestine

until this land is free, and this support will increase," she said. Nobody should suffer from injustice, she stated, calling for stronger efforts to assist the people of Palestine. The South African diplomat emphasized that Palestinians must own their territories and the 1967 frontiers should be recognized. South Africa supports peace and believes that the lands of Palestinians have been occupied and they have been deprived of their rights, she noted.

BiBi: Israel's savior or destroyer?

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

OPINION

tough for this hawkish senior Israeli official that the Haaretz newspaper wrote, "We citizens will make sure he goes home as soon as possible."

Ever since Netanyahu and the coalition that he leads secured the election about a year ago, they were hoping to end the streak of short-lived political coalitions and unstable cabinets. Things, however, did not go the way these optimists hoped. It wasn't long until the hawkish policies of Netanyahu's cabinet pushed its dissenters into a single great entity, which resulted in the most historic show of domestic opposition to a cabinet.

Hamas's October 7 surprise attack on the occupied territories was, nevertheless, a heavy blow to BiBi's reputation and standing. It proved to many inside the occupied territories that Netanyahu and his aggressive cabinet are Israel's undoing, not its making.

Amos Gilead, former director of the Israeli Defense Ministry's Political-Military Affairs Bureau, stressed in a televised interview that the regime's intelligence services failed in predicting Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, a failure that was more dangerous than the Yom Kippur war, also known as the War of October 6, 1973.

Regarding Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, Haaretz wrote that Netanyahu is not only the one responsible for this terrible defeat but also "an existential threat to Israel". The Jewish newspaper added, "The man is done. He is unfit. He cannot lead us a single day further."

The London-based Guardian newspaper reported that Israel's military officers and former politicians consider Benjamin Netanyahu to be the one behind every failure that led to Hamas's attack. That is why they have asked him to resign. Dan Halutz, a former chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces and the commander of Hatzor Airbase, affirmed Israel's defeat by Hamas during the surprise attack on October 7.

"From my point of view, [Netanyahu] should resign now, as we speak. There are better people to handle it," he told the Guardian, adding: "He thinks that he's above God, he thinks he's the savior of Israel, and unfortunately we failed to explain that it's the other way around, that he is the destroyer of Israel."

Former Israeli intelligence official Avi Melamed also maintained that it's clear this cabinet is "dysfunctional in many aspects". "This is a sentiment expressed by many Israelis who are saying clearly this government is a disaster," he stated.

Former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, in an interview with the Observer newspaper, described the Hamas attack as "the most severe blow Israel has suffered since its establishment to date... I don't believe that the people trust Netanyahu to lead when he is under the burden of such a devastating event that just happened under his term".

Now, after days of Israel's devastating war on Gaza, Netanyahu is facing the consequences of the attacks on the Palestinian territory.

The world's public opinion, especially in the Islamic world, has become more and more against the Israeli regime and Netanyahu's policies. The normalization talks with Saudi Arabia has been abandoned and, according to Israeli reports, the economic situation of the country will collapse if the war continues for a long time.

The fighting continues to disrupt business and markets in Israel. A recent report by The New York Times said that about 360,000 Israeli reservists have left their jobs to join the war. This is a big blow to Israel. The technology industry in Israel has experienced a sudden decline. Also, the activity of Israel's Tamar gas field has been stopped due to concerns about Hamas attacks.

The continuation of war and insecurity will lead to the intensification of migration from the occupied territories.

Head of the Israeli settlement of Margaliot, in the north of the occupied territories, Eitan Davidi, has said if Israel does not change the situation, not a single person will be ready to live in the settlements.

Professor Yuval Noah Harari, a famous Israeli author and historian wrote in an article that for many years Israel has been governed by a populist strongman, Benjamin Netanyahu, who is a public-relations genius but an incompetent prime minister. He has repeatedly preferred his personal interests over the national interests, and has built his career on dividing the nation against itself. He has appointed people to key positions based on loyalty rather than qualifications, taken credit for every success while never taking responsibility for failures, and seemed to give little importance to either telling or hearing the truth.

Criticisms against Netanyahu and his policies come at a time when this regime is in a state of war, and as the flames of war subside, more voices against him will be heard from the occupied territories because people have found that he is not a savior, but the destroyer of Israel.

Ehud Olmert, the former prime minister of Israel, also said, "Netanyahu is history, he's done". Currently, he is officially serving as the prime minister, but there is very little time left until he leaves.