

# Hamas vows 'full force' fight after Israel widens attacks

International Desk

*Hamas pledged to confront Israeli attacks with "full force" after the regime's military widened its air and ground attacks on the Palestinian enclave. Despite international warnings over the humanitarian catastrophe, Israel's military suggested on Saturday that a long-promised ground offensive had begun.*

This is while an overwhelming majority of nations – 120 countries – voted on Friday for a United Nations resolution calling for a "sustained humanitarian truce" in Gaza. Also, in a phone conversation on Saturday, heads of the states of Iran and Qatar urged stronger support for Palestinians against the Israeli onslaught that, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry, has killed at least 7,703 people, including 3,500 children.

## Israeli incursion foiled

On Saturday, the Palestinian resistance group that runs Gaza said its fighters were clashing with Israeli troops in areas near the border. Hamas confirmed that the Palestinian resistance group foiled the Israeli ground offensive attempting to invade the Gaza Strip

on three axes of the strip. The movement revealed that it lured intruding forces into several ambushes, leading to casualties among enemy lines. Israel said on Saturday morning its troops, sent in on Friday night, were still in the field, without elaborating. The regime had earlier made only brief sorties into Gaza during three weeks of bombardment to root out Hamas fighters, who it said had killed more than 1,400 Israelis.

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## The most intense airstrike

On Friday evening, Israel intensified its bombardment of the Gaza Strip, the army said, striking dozens of Hamas targets, especially underground tunnels. The blistering air and artillery assault destroyed hundreds of buildings and thousands of houses

across the strip, the civil defense service in the Palestinian territory said. Gaza residents told CNN that the evening's airstrikes were the most intense they have experienced since Israel began to retaliate against Hamas's October 7 attack.

## A dire situation

Gaza was under an almost complete blackout, with internet and phone services cut for more than 12 hours by Saturday morning. Telecom firms and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said it was the result of Israeli bombardments.

Other countries, United Nations officials and aid agencies described a dire situation on the ground in Gaza as ambulances left without cellphone or radio service resorted to chasing the sound of artillery fire to local people

wounded. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk warned on Saturday there was the potential for thousands more civilians to die if Israel presses a major ground offensive in Gaza.

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said the blackout was "making it impossible" for ambulances to reach the injured in Gaza.

## Nations' vote

In New York, UN member nations voted for a "sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities" in the war between Israel and Hamas, so that humanitarian aid can reach civilians in Gaza. The vote outcome prompted a burst of loud applause in the assembly hall where delegates had gathered to vote and debate. The US, like Israel, has sharply criticized the effort and was one of 14 countries that voted against it on Friday, CNN reported.

Jordan brought the resolution to the General Assembly after successive attempts to call for cease-fires and humanitarian pauses failed in the more powerful Security Council.

While a UN General Assembly vote is politically significant, it is not binding, and comes amid a lack of global consensus on how to resolve the crisis. Ahead of the vote, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi urged others to support the resolution, warn-

ing on social media that Israel's expanding ground operations "will be a humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions for years to come." "Millions will be watching every vote. History will judge," he said.

## Iran, Qatar for closer Muslim unity

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani weighed plans for closer Muslim unity to stop the Israeli regime's "war machine".

In a phone conversation on Saturday, Raisi stressed that Palestine is in urgent need of effective and serious support from the world, particularly Muslim nations, to end genocidal Israel's war machine and crimes. The support provided by Western states, especially the US, has given the Zionist regime the green light to commit atrocities against Gaza, Raisi deplored.

The emir of Qatar said the crimes being committed against the people of Gaza attest to the Western countries' double standards, which have already been discredited.

Reaffirming Qatar's support for the legitimate rights of Palestinians to defense and self-determination, Al Thani said regional and Muslim nations can join hands to halt Israel's war machine.

Also, in an interview with Bloomberg Television from Iran's mission to the UN in New York, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian warned

that a ground invasion would have dire consequences for Israel. "Opening of new fronts will be unavoidable and that will put Israel in a new situation that will make it regret its actions," he said.

"This has reached the point of explosion. Anything is possible and any front can be opened up." Criticizing the West's support of Israel, he said, "The US is advising others to show self-restraint, but it has sided with Israel totally".

He also said groups attacking US forces in Syria and Iraq are acting independently, and haven't received direction from Tehran.

## 'Main culprit' behind Gaza 'massacre'

Addressing a massive pro-Palestinian rally – a crowd of 1.5 million – in Istanbul on Saturday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called Western powers "the main culprit" behind the Israeli army's "massacre" of Palestinians in Gaza.

"If we leave aside some conscientious voices... the massacre in Gaza is entirely the work of the West," Erdogan told the Turkish and Palestinian flag-waving crowd.

Erdogan added that Israel was behaving like a "war criminal". He accused Western powers of "shedding tears" over the death of civilians in Ukraine and turning a blind eye on the death of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

And he accused Israel's al-

lies of creating a "crusade war atmosphere," pitting Christians against Muslims.

"Listen to our call for dialogue," Erdogan said. "No one loses from a just peace."

The US and other Western countries have offered strong support to Israel but had urged it to hold off on a ground offensive for fear that high casualties among Palestinians would fuel wider conflict.

## Moscow's most critical of Israel yet

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Israel's bombardment of Gaza runs counter to international law and risks creating a catastrophe that could last decades.

Lavrov made the comments, some of Moscow's most critical of Israel yet, in an interview with the Belarusian state news agency Belta.

## Global rallies

Millions of demonstrators rallied in cities in Europe, the Middle East and Asia on Saturday to show support for the Palestinians. In one of the biggest marches, in London, aerial footage showed large crowds marching through the center of the capital to demand the government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak call for a cease-fire.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

