

eclipsed.

"Our gravest fears about the reported numbers of children killed becoming dozens, then hundreds, and ultimately thousands were realized in just a fortnight," UNICEF spokesman James Elder said.

"The numbers are appalling; reportedly more than 3,450 children killed; staggeringly this rises significantly every day.

"Gaza has become a graveyard for thousands of children. It's a living hell for everyone else."

Without greater humanitarian access into Gaza, "the deaths from the attacks, they could absolutely be the tip of the iceberg," Elder

mass displacement and damage to infrastructure, the World Health Organization spokesperson, Christian Lindmeier, warned of the risk of civilian deaths not directly linked to Israeli bombardment.

"It's an imminent public health catastrophe that looms with the mass displacement, the overcrowding, the damage to water and sanitation infrastructure," Lindmeier told reporters. "We have 130 premature infants that are dependent on incubators, of which 61 percent approximately are in the north," he said.

phone networks were down across the strip on Wednesday, in the second such blackout in the besieged territory in less than a week.

"To our good people in the beloved country, we are sorry to announce that communications and internet services have been completely cut off in Gaza," the Palestine Telecommunications Company (Paltel) said on X.

Global network monitor Netblocks confirmed that Gaza "is in the midst of a new internet blackout, with high impact to the last remaining major operator, Paltel."

Israel Tuesday for the overnight bombing of its cultural center in Gaza and condemned the "direct and unjustified attack".

Iran's warning

In the latest in a series of warnings from Iran, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian warned Israel and the United States that the continuation of the war against the besieged Gaza Strip could result in "another surprise" by the resistance forces.

"In my meeting yesterday, political officials of Hamas noted that in case the war is not stopped, the region would be closer to the level

This picture shows buildings in the Gaza Strip that have been destroyed by Israeli bombardment on October 31, 2023.

● YURI CORTEZ/AFP



told reporters in Geneva, via video-link.

He said more than one million children living in the Gaza Strip were also suffering from a lack of clean water. Elder said that according to figures from health faculties in Gaza, 940 children were missing.

UNICEF is calling for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire, with all access crossings into Gaza opened for the safe, sustained and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid, including water, food, medical supplies, and fuel. Also, UN humanitarian agency spokesman Jens Laerke said, "It's almost unbearable to think about children buried under rubble, but (with) very little opportunity or possibility for getting them out."

'Public health catastrophe'

Amid overcrowding,



People enter the Rafah border crossing in the southern Gaza Strip before crossing into Egypt on November 1, 2023.

● MOHAMMED ABED/AFP

Communications 'completely' shut off

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron called for "civilians in Gaza to be protected first". He said Wednesday he "hates the debate" over the value of "Jewish lives" and "Palestinian lives" and called for "civilians in Gaza to be protected first".

"All lives matter in this world," he stressed. Also, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Al-Quds blamed

'All lives matter'

of taking a bigger decision," Amir-Abdollahian told a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan.

"If an immediate cease-fire doesn't take place in the Gaza Strip and the rapid attacks by US and the Zionist regime continue, then the consequences would be harsh," he said.

Amir-Abdollahian said Iran continues to follow up on political talks to end the Israeli bombing as soon as possible. The country says it supports Hamas but did not play any role in the resistance group's attack on Israel last month. Both Iran and Turkey have condemned Israel's subsequent bombardment of Gaza.

Fidan, for his part, said Turkey doesn't want the conflict in Gaza to spiral into a regional war. "It is not difficult to predict that this spiral of violence will grow," without a permanent solution to the war, he warned.

AP, AFP, Reuters, and Press TV contributed to this report.

AP, AFP, Reuters, and Press TV contributed to this report.

This picture taken on October 31, 2023, from a position near Sderot along the border with the Gaza Strip in southern Israel shows an Israeli tank rolling amid ongoing battles between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas movement.

● YURI CORTEZ/AFP

Al-Aqsa Storm debunks Zionist myths

By Mohsen Solgi
Guest contributor

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

One of the myths surrounding Israel was its deterrent power. This myth was debunked by Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, which was carried out by around 200 Hamas fighters alone. Although, during the 33-day war and other operations of the resistance front, these myths were challenged, it was during the recent war that we witnessed the final shattering of this myth.

The apartheid regime of Israel, which classifies even its own Jewish residents into first and second-class citizens, has another symbol known as the Holocaust. But even that symbol has been tainted by the recent war crimes of Israel, especially its targeting of children in Gaza.

A symbolic religion of fear

Zionist Judaism is a phobic religion built on the fear of the other. It is a new, artificial, and counterfeit religion and therefore, inherently incapable of producing symbols on its own. So, myths and symbols such as deterrence must be created for it. Deterrence refers to the Arab-Israeli war and especially the capabilities of the regime to use nuclear weapons. The function of this myth is to allay the natural fears of Jewish residents who live in occupied lands.

Today, however, it has become clear that the regime has limited capability to use its deterring power such as its vast arsenal of nuclear weapons against Hamas. This is mainly because the land is so small that any nuclear radiation will affect Israeli residents too. Iran is not a great target for the nukes as well given the country's vast expanse of land and incomparable population.

Another mass exodus in sight

Operation Al-Aqsa Storm has heightened the phobia of Israeli Jews in a way never seen before. The community, still suffering from the traumatic fear of the Holocaust — whether it be real or delusional — once fled from Europe swiftly. It is predicted that this time, too, the community will witness a mass exodus as the residents of the occupied territories, many of whom hold dual citizenship, probably immigrate to other countries.

If the United States' atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shattered the myth that the Japanese never surrenders, Operation Al-Aqsa Storm shattered Israel's myths of deterrence, security, invincibility, and, more importantly, permanence. But the crucial difference lies in the fact that the Japanese are no longer afraid of atomic attacks, while the fears of the Zionists will never be eased unless they abandon the occupied land of Palestine.

Palestinians oppressed yet empowered

Another point to note is that Hamas carried out a historic and defensive act for its besieged people, and in the process, some non-combatant individuals, including an American tourist, have been killed. This prompted the enemies of the Islamic resistance to once again seek to promote and solidify the idea that the Palestinians are not victims. Hamas should know that national and ethnic myths are never shattered by a single act. This is especially true for genuine and deeply rooted national myths. While the victimhood of Palestine is a historical, authentic symbol supported by evidence, the myths of Zionism are artificial, which makes their collapse easier.

Moreover, in the recent war, Palestine — which has so far gained nothing from its victimhood, not even a negotiation or compromise — shattered both its own myth of being submissive and Israel's myth of invincibility. Palestine emerged from this war as a more flourishing, wiser, resilient, and glorious entity. The resistance challenged the so-called "realist" logic of most Western governments. Western realism is primitive, warmongering, and based on aggression and expansionism, whereas the realism governing Hamas is a natural, rights-based one that believes in the face of blockade, invasion, humiliation, and terror, resorting to force and taking arms is necessary.

In a time when the UN has repeatedly warned in vain about the daily killing of Palestinians in the occupied territories by Israel and Jewish settlers, the resistance movement will have no choice but to adopt an offensive stance, a stance that will render Israel even more unstable and restless and bring its integrity closer to total collapse. This stance will empower Palestine and compel the world to take a more serious look at the Palestinian cause and make a more historically informed and accurate judgment about it.