

# Expansion of Gaza war 'inevitable': *Iran*

## International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian warned on Thursday that expansion of the Israel-Hamas conflict has become "inevitable" due to the expansion of the intensity of Israel's war against Gaza's civilians.

"Due to the expansion of the intensity of the war against Gaza's civilian residents, expansion of the scope of the war has become inevitable," Amir-Abdollahian said in a telephone conversation with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. He had earlier warned about the spread of the war in the region.

On October 13, Amir-Abdollahian warned that opening other fronts in the Israel-Hamas war was a "real possibility".

There are widespread concerns in the region and beyond that the conflict could spread in the region. Since the beginning of the conflict on October 7, there have been deadly clashes in the northern part of the occupied territories at the border with Lebanon between Israel forces and Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance fighters. Meanwhile, Yemen's Armed Forces have also conducted several rounds of drone and ballistic missile attacks against targets lying inside the occupied territories in response to the Israeli regime's unbridled aggression against Gaza.



## Attacks on US bases

At the same time, the strikes on US military positions in Iraq and Syria have increased amid rising anti-US sentiment in the region over Washington's all-out support for the Israeli onslaught against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. Pentagon said US fighter jets conducted an airstrike on what it called a weapons storage facility in eastern Syria used by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and affiliated groups on November 8. A senior US defense official claimed that the Nov. 8 strikes in eastern Syria were in response to ongoing threats and attacks directed at US bases in

both Syria and Iraq by the IRGC and Iran-aligned groups.

But, Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations in an interview aired on Thursday evening rejected the allegations that the country has been involved in the recent series of strikes on US military troops. "We have said very clearly that Iran is not involving in any attack against the United States forces in the region," Amir Saeid Iravani said. Iran supports resistance groups in the region but does not direct any of those operations, he said, likening Iran's role to that of the US in assisting the Israeli regime. In a letter addressed to UN



A damaged car and fallen tree are pictured the day after a rocket attack from southern Lebanon on the Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona on November 6, 2023.

● JALAA MAREY/AFP

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday, Iravani said that Tehran "has never been involved in any attack or action against US forces in Syria and Iraq."

Pentagon deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh said on Thursday that the US forces have been attacked 46 times since October 17. That includes 24 attacks in Iraq and 22 in Syria, she added.

# Raisi to attend OIC summit over Israeli onslaught



● president.ir

## International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi is scheduled to leave for Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Saturday to attend a summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the Israeli onslaught on Gaza. On the early days of the conflict in Gaza, Iran repeatedly called for an emergency meeting of the OIC.

The OIC summit on Sunday will focus on ways to stop Israel's savage war machine against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Raisi on Thursday warned that the conflict would expand in the region if the emergency meeting of the OIC failed to help and save Palestinians, as "the region's nations will realize that their governments are unable to help the

Palestinian people."

He made the remarks during a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of an Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit in Uzbekistan. The Iranian president urged the Muslim nations to cut diplomatic and economic ties with Tel Aviv, describing such action as "an effective and deterrent measure to stop Israel's crimes against the oppressed people of Palestine."

He also slammed "the deadly silence" of international organizations and self-proclaimed advocates of human rights on Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

"Now, Muslim nations, including Iran, Turkey, and Egypt are facing a divine test to confront this unprecedented crime through their timely actions."

## 'Deadly Israeli strikes hit Gaza hospitals'

# WHO: Twenty hospitals out of action entirely

## International Desk

Palestinians said Friday Israel's deadly strike hit Gaza's largest hospital compound as heavy fighting between Hamas and Israel has sent tens of thousands of civilians fleeing their homes.

Gaza's Hamas government, which reported a toll of 13, and the director of the Shifa hospital, blamed Israeli troops for the strike at the facility sheltering people trying to flee the fighting.

"Thirteen martyrs and dozens wounded in an Israeli strike on Al-Shifa compound today" in central Gaza City, a statement said. While journalists have not yet been able to verify the claim, an AFP journalist reported seeing at least seven covered bod-

ies outside the hospital. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization said that the biggest hospital in the besieged strip and another with children on life support was coming under bombardment.

Twenty hospitals in Gaza were now out of action entirely, it said.

Asked about the Gaza Health Ministry's blaming of an Israeli strike on the courtyard of Shifa hospital, WHO spokesperson Margaret Harris said, "I haven't got the detail on Al-Shifa but we do know they are coming under bombardment."

Also, Palestinian officials said other strikes had damaged parts of the Indonesian Hospital and reportedly set fire to the Rantissi paediatric and cancer hospital in the

northern part of the strip, where Israel claims Hamas fighters, who attacked it on October 7, are concentrated.

Israeli tanks, which have been advancing through northern Gaza for almost two weeks, have taken up positions around the Rantissi, Al-Quds and Nasser Children's hospitals, raising concern for patients, doctors and evacuees there, medical staff said.

"Israel is now launching a war on Gaza City hospitals," Mohammad Abu Selmeiyah, director of Shifa hospital, told Reuters. Israel did not immediately comment but claims it does not target civilians and goes to great lengths to avoid hitting them. It claims Hamas fighters have hidden command centers and tunnels beneath Shifa and other hospitals, allegations which Hamas denies.

With Palestinian officials reporting more than 11,000 dead, including 4,506 children, Israel has faced growing calls for restraint in its month-old

war on Hamas.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday gave one of his most direct condemnations of the civilian death toll in Gaza.

"Far too many Palestinians have been killed. Far too many have suffered these past weeks," Blinken said at a press availability in the Indian capital of New Delhi. He added that more needs to be done to "minimize harm to Palestinian civilians."

## No safe place in Gaza

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces announced a six-hour long window Friday for an evacuation corridor along Salah Eddin Street for people to flee south from northern Gaza. The top UN human rights official on Friday raised doubts over Israel's unilateral establishment of "safe zones" in Gaza, saying that nowhere within the territory was safe for civilians. "Demands for civilians to relocate to an Israeli Defense Force(s)-designated 'safe zone' are also very alarming," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said. As the Palestinian territory remained under bombardment, France hosted a conference Thursday on humanitarian aid for Gaza with President Emmanuel

Macron saying, "In the immediate term, we need to work on protecting civilians. To do that, we need a humanitarian pause very quickly and we must work towards a cease-fire".

## 'Stop arming Israel'

Also in southeast England, dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters blocked the entrances to a BAE Systems factory on Friday, targeting Britain's biggest military supplier to call for an end to arms sales to Israel.

Holding up a sign saying, "Stop Arming Israel," and waving Palestinian flags, about 50 people stood in front of one entrance at the Rochester, Kent, site, where BAE tests and assembles electronic equipment used on military aircraft and in surveillance systems. BAE said it does not directly export any equipment to Israel, but the group is a tier-one supplier on the US-made F-35 fighter jets which are flown by Israel.

## 'The New York War Crimes'

Also in the US, pro-Palestinian demonstrators occupied the lobby of The New York Times on Thursday, demanding an immediate cease-fire in Gaza while accusing the media of showing a bias toward Israel in its coverage of the war.



Injured people wait for medical treatment at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

● MUSTAFA HASSONA/ANADOLU

The latest in a series of near-nightly demonstrations since the start of the war saw thousands march through Midtown Manhattan to protest Israel's attacks on Gaza.

They remained for over an hour, reading off the names of thousands of Palestinians killed in Gaza, including at least 36 journalists whose deaths have been confirmed since the war began. They scattered editions of a mock newspaper - "The New York War Crimes" - that charged the media with "complicity in laundering genocide" and called on The Times' editorial board to publicly back a cease-fire.

AFP, AP, Reuters, and CNN contributed to this report.



Children injured in an Israeli strike are rushed to the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City on October 15, 2023.

● DAWOOD NEMER/AFP