

Around 100 killed in Israeli strikes in Rafah: *Ham*

Israel urged 'to stop and think seriously' before further action

International Desk

Predawn Israeli strikes in the southern Gaza city of Rafah killed "around 100" people on Monday, the Health Ministry in Gaza said in a statement.

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron on Monday urged Israel to "stop" its latest military action in war-torn Gaza's Rafah, after deadly overnight bombing and fears of a looming ground incursion.

"We are very concerned about the situation and we want Israel to stop and think seriously before it takes any further action," Cameron told reporters during a visit to Scotland.

"We think it is impossible to see how you can fight a war amongst these people. There's nowhere for them to go."

"But above all, what we want is an immediate pause in the fighting and we want that pause to lead to a cease-fire."

Israel's military said airstrikes had coincided with the raid to allow its forces to be extracted.

People in Rafah said two mosques and several residential buildings were hit in more than an hour of strikes by Israeli warplanes, tanks and ships, causing widespread panic among Gazans woken from their sleep.

Some feared Israel had begun a long-expected ground offensive in the city, where more than a million people displaced by Israel's war on Hamas are sheltering with nowhere else to go.

Meanwhile, Egypt has sent about 40 tanks and armored personnel carriers to northeastern Sinai within the past two weeks as part of a series of measures to bolster security on its border with Gaza, two Egyptian security sources said.

The deployment took place ahead of the expansion of Israeli military operations around Gaza's southern city of Rafah, where much of its population has sought safety, sharpening Egyptian fears that Palestinians could be forced en masse out of the enclave.

Israeli warplanes struck Rafah, which adjoins the border, on Friday.

After Israel began drawing up an evacuation plan to allow it to defeat Hamas in the area, the UN said Palestinian civilians in Rafah in the Gaza Strip need to be protected, but there should not be any forced mass displacement. "We're extremely worried about the fate of civilians in Rafah," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the country's



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a mosque in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, on February 12, 2024. **REUTERS**

military on Friday to draw up a dual plan to evacuate Palestinian civilians from Rafah in southern Gaza and to defeat the last Hamas fighters there. More than half Gaza's 2.3 million

people are sheltering in Rafah, many of them penned up against the border fence with Egypt and living in makeshift tents.

Since the Gaza war erupted on Oct. 7, Egypt constructed a con-

crete border wall that reaches six metros into the ground and is topped with barbed wire. It has also built berms and enhanced surveillance at border posts, the security sources said.

Iran aims to launch foreign satellites



National Desk

Iran plans to blast foreign satellites into space from its launch bases using indigenous carriers "within the next two years," Communications Minister Issa Zarepour said on Monday. "We are trying to enhance the country's space industry to a level where we can confidently put other nations' satellites into space from Iranian launch sites," Zarepour was quoted as saying by IRNA.

He hailed Iran's progress in the space industry over the past two years, when the country "had more launches and space-related events compared to a decade earlier".

According to the minister, Iranian launchers can ferry satellites weighing between 100kg and 200kg. Moreover, he added, Iran has ground stations for receiving satellite signals. Zarepour also said that Iran has reached self-sufficiency in manufacturing imaging and remote sensing satellites and that it is working on improving the accuracy of Iranian satellites.

"This indicates that the space industry has become indigenous in our country, as we are currently utilizing the complete cycle of space technology to improve the quality of life for our people in various sectors," the minister pointed out.

EU: NATO cannot be 'a la carte' military alliance

NATO cannot be an 'a la carte' military alliance dependent on the whims of the US president, the European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Monday, as he responded to comments made by Donald Trump regarding NATO over the weekend.

Former US president Trump had suggested the US might not protect NATO allies which don't spend enough on their own defense from a potential Russian invasion.

Asked to respond to Trump's comments, Borrell said: "NATO cannot be an 'a la carte' military alliance... depending on the humor of the president of the US."

US blurs Israel's 'total collapse': *FM*



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (r) meets with officials from different Palestinian groups in Damascus, Syria, on February 11, 2024.

The Iranian foreign minister said if it were not for the United States' all-out support, Israel would have faced "total collapse" following a historic operation by the Palestinian resistance more than four months ago.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks during a meeting with about 15 officials from different Palestinian groups in the Syrian capital Damascus on Sunday, Press TV reported.

"The Israeli regime totally collapsed after Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, and if it were not for the US's all-out meddling in the field in support of the Zionist regime and its efforts to resurrect and save it, this collapse would have been completely visible," he said.

Amir-Abdollahian said many believe that "the Israeli regime and the US government achieved none of their declared goals since the beginning of the war on Gaza, and they are now forced

to hold political talks with Hamas, whose demise Tel Aviv and Washington had called for."

The top Iranian diplomat also noted that the struggle and resilience of the resistance groups, as well as the sacrifices of people in Gaza and the West Bank, and the practical unity of the Axis of Resistance in solidarity with Palestine helped the nation defeat the occupying regime.

The Palestinian officials, for their part, hailed Iran's support for the Palestinian issue as "outstanding and distinct and practical and real."

Also, in a joint press conference on Sunday with his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mekdad, Amir-Abdollahian said the besieged Gaza Strip has turned into a graveyard for Israeli regime soldiers more than four months into the war. He also blamed the US and its supply of weapons to Israel for the continuation of hostilities in Gaza.

Pakistani envoy reaffirms 'unbreakable bonds' with Iran amid terrorism threats



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran Muhammad Mudassar Tipu describes the bonds between Iran and Pakistan as strong enough not to be broken by the threat of terrorism.

In an interview with Iran Daily, Tipu called terrorism a significant threat to the entire region and to Iran-Pakistan ties, saying, "Terrorists want to derail the relationship between Pakistan and Iran. This is their primary agenda and we have to be very careful in that regard," the Pakistani ambassador said.

Acknowledging external support for terrorism, Tipu expressed full confidence in the leadership of both countries and their societies, stating that both sides "are capable enough to understand their long-term strategic interests, and to understand that we have unbreakable bonds." Earlier last month, Iran and Pakistan experienced an escalation of cross-border tensions due to Tehran's counter-terrorism operations.

To address these tensions, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made an official visit to Pakistan, reaching constructive agreements on enhancing bilateral relations and combating terrorism.

Regarding these developments, the Pakistani ambassador expressed satisfaction with the wise and judicious leadership of both sides, saying that the efforts made "for rapprochement" are

truly remarkable.

"I am very hopeful that now Pakistan and Iran have a very strong roadmap to pursue their diplomatic, political, economic, and trade ties. We have a great deal of confidence in each other," he said.

"Our destinies are collective. So, we must both work together to fight terrorism and to build a better and stronger future," the envoy added.

On January 16, Iran launched simultaneous drone and missile attacks on two bases of Jaish al-Adl terrorist group that claimed responsibility for an attack in December 2023 on a police station in the southeastern city of Rask, killing 11 Iranian police officers. On January 10, another attack by the group on a police station in the city killed one officer.

Also, characterizing it as a response to Tehran's operation against terrorist bases inside Pakistan, nine people, including four children, were killed after Islamabad admitted attacking a village in Saravan in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan

Province. Pakistan carried out the strikes on January 18 against what it called bases of the separatist Baloch Liberation Front and Baloch Liberation Army in regions close to Iran's border.

Regarding these tensions, the ambassador reiterated that the enemies seek to create disruption between the two countries. According to the Pakistani official, preventing such disruption is crucial, considering the complexity of terrorism.

"They [enemies of the two countries] wanted to create turbulence among the two historic neighbors, who have been very peaceful, and who are deeply connected to each other. This is what we now have to guard against," he said.

There is a need to educate people, societies, and institutions for greater collaboration, Tipu said. "I think more collaboration at a political level, at a diplomatic level, and at an intelligence level. And to have a robust mechanism where we can share information in a timely manner," the ambassador concluded.



Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran Muhammad Mudassar Tipu **IRAN DAILY**