

Jordan calls for int'l probe into Israel's war crimes in Gaza



The handout picture released by the Israeli army on May 18, 2024 shows Israeli soldiers during military operations in the Gaza Strip. AFP

International Desk

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said on Sunday that the kingdom demanded an international investigation into what it said were many war crimes committed by the Israeli regime during its genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

In remarks made during a press conference with the head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA), Safadi said those responsible for documented crimes should be brought to justice.

Safadi's tough words came after an Israeli strike killed at least 31 people and

wounded 20 more in a family house in the central Nuseirat refugee camp. The wounded included several children and rescuers were searching the rubble for missing people, said the Palestinian official news agency Wafa, while the Israeli army said it was checking the reports.

Israeli troops have moved in on Gaza's crowded far-southern city of Rafah, which they describe as the last Hamas stronghold and where the UN says 800,000 civilians have been newly displaced by the fighting. On Saturday, Palestinian relatives wailed with grief as victims including an in-

fant were rushed to Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Beit Lahia, following Israeli strikes and heavy clashes in Jabalia. Abu Nabil, a Jabalia resident, said "tanks and bulldozers approached our homes, forcing us to leave, after they struck a neighboring house, injuring us. 'I call upon all free people in the world, to anyone with a shred of humanity... there are massacres happening here. Children are being torn to pieces. What's the fault of these children and women?'"

The stranglehold on aid reaching Gaza threatens an "apocalyptic" outcome, the UN's humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said on Sunday as he warned of famine in the besieged territory.

"If fuel runs out, aid doesn't get to the people where they need it, that famine, which we have talked about for so long, and which is looming, will not be looming anymore. It will be present," Griffiths said.

"And I think our worry, as citizens of the international community, is that the

consequence is going to be really, really hard. Hard, difficult, and apocalyptic," he told AFP on the sidelines of meetings with Qatari officials in Doha.

An Israeli incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, launched in the face of international outcry, has deepened an already perilous humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

Griffiths, the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, said some 50 trucks of aid per day could reach the hardest-hit north of Gaza through the reopened Erez crossing. But battles near the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings in Gaza's south meant the vital routes were "effectively blocked", he explained.

"So, aid getting in through land routes to the south and for Rafah, and the people dislodged by Rafah is almost nil," Griffiths added. Since the beginning of Israel's war on Gaza, the regime's strikes have claimed the lives of more than 35,000 Palestinians so far.

Rift in Israel's war cabinet over postwar Gaza plan



One of Israel's most senior politicians has vowed he will resign from the war cabinet if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fails to set out a long-term vision for the future of war-ravaged Gaza.

Speaking at a press conference on Saturday night, Benny Gantz said he would step down from the war cabinet if a plan for installing a civilian administration in the Hamas-controlled territory wasn't in place by June 8. His remarks followed similar criticism from Defense Minister Yoav Gallant last week, Politico reported.

"If you put the national over personal, you will find in us partners in the struggle," Gantz warned Netanyahu. But he said if Netanyahu chooses the path of fanatics and leads the entire nation to the abyss, he will be forced to quit the cabinet.

Gantz, a former Israel Defense Forces general, has called for a six-point plan that includes demilitarization of Gaza, returning Israeli hostages and establishing multinational governance over the area, home to more than half a million Palestinians.

Netanyahu said Gantz's demands amounted to nothing more than "washed up words" that would mean "defeat for Israel." The Israeli cabinet has stepped up its military campaign in Gaza, ordering troops into the southern city of Rafah despite pleas from the US, the EU and humanitarian organizations against a ground invasion of the city.

With the Israel-Hamas conflict now in its eighth month, concerns are growing that Netanyahu has no clear end goal in sight. Defense chief Gallant on Wednesday called on the prime minister to publicly confirm that Israel will not take over rule of the Gaza Strip militarily, but says he has received no response.

Meanwhile, Palestinian resistance forces in Gaza have stepped up their attacks against the Israeli targets inside the besieged territory. On Sunday, the armed wings of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas announced on Telegram that they destroyed a unit of Israeli special forces in the north Gaza refugee camp.

They said that the attack took place on Al-Albani Street in Jabalia.

Fierce fighting has been ongoing in Jabalia for the past several days after Israeli ground forces re-entered the area earlier in the week. According to the UN, 35,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Israel launched its offensive last year following the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas that killed 1,139 Israelis.

Iran confirms indirect talks with US in Oman

International Desk

Iran confirmed that it held indirect talks with the United States in Oman on escalating tensions in the Middle East region.

On Friday, American news website Axios reported that US and Iranian officials held indirect talks in Oman "on how to avoid escalating regional attacks".

The official IRNA news



agency said late Saturday that "the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations confirmed indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States in Oman".

It quoted him as saying that "these negotiations were not the first and will not be the last", without giving the time and place of the talks.

Two top Biden administration officials held

indirect talks with Iranian officials in Oman on how to avoid escalating regional attacks, two sources with knowledge of the talks told Axios.

The talks - involving President Biden's top Middle East adviser, Brett McGurk, and Abram Paley the acting US envoy for Iran - were the first round of discussions between the US and Iran since January, when similar negotia-

tions were held in Oman. The discussions were held after Iran launched an unprecedented drone and missile attack on Israel on April 13.

The barrage came in response to an Israeli air strike on April 1 that targeted Iran's consulate in Syria's capital Damascus and killed seven members of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, two of them generals.

Global rallies call for immediate cease-fire in Gaza

International Desk

Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters once again took to the streets across the world to show their anger at the Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip and to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the Nakba Day - the mass displacement of people by Israel in 1948.

In London, pro-v protesters marched through central city on Saturday, reiterating calls for a cease-fire in Gaza. The pro-Palestinian march was the 14th such event held in London since Israel launched its devastating war on the Gaza Strip on October 7. The Israel's offensive has killed more than 35,000 people - mostly women and children.

In the US, police have beaten and arrested several demonstrators at a pro-Palestine protest in New York's Brooklyn in the latest crackdown on voices speaking against the war on Gaza in the United States. Protesters

gathered on Saturday in the Bay Ridge neighborhood in southwest Brooklyn, home to a large Muslim community, including people of Palestinian and Yemeni origins. The peaceful protest to mark the Nakba - the ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in 1948 - went on for several hours amid heavy police presence, with officers trying to prevent a march.

"Protesters began to march in the street and shortly after, the New York Police Department came in from a side street and started grabbing people at random," Katie Smith, a freelance journalist who was at the scene, told Al Jazeera.

"They were tackled to the ground and were often placed under arrest by multiple officers, who beat them, punching them on their upper bodies and around their heads. There were multiple waves of arrests during the march, which was peaceful."

On Saturday, a crowd of several hundred people, including a number of Jewish demonstrators, also protested in Washington, DC under the rain to mark the 76th anniversary of the Nakba.

"They are Palestinian Americans and they are supporters, coming to the nation's capital, chanting 'free Palestine' and accusing US President Joe Biden of being complicit in genocide".

Also, thousands of individuals across various European cities, including Berlin, Munich, Dublin, Rome, Madrid, and Vienna, rallied to denounce Israel's war on Gaza. In Munich, Germany thousands of pro-Palestine demonstrators chanted slogans such as "Free Palestine," "Free Gaza" and "End the Genocide", while waving Palestine flags and holding placards and signs of returning to homes lost in the Nakba in 1948. Despite government restric-

tions against Palestine protests, Berlin held the largest pro-Palestine march since the outbreak of the Israeli war on Gaza. In Vienna, the capital of Austria, thousands of people gathered at the Cultural Square, carrying Palestinian flags and banners with slogans such as "No to Genocide," "Israel is a Terrorist," and "Free Gaza."

In Italy, pro-Gaza protests were organized in various cities. Advocates organized a rally titled "Turin for Gaza" in Turin, as a group of protesters fired the flags of the European Union and US-led NATO during the protest.



A pro-Palestinian supporter stands with a placard showing the 'Palestinian key', a symbol of homes lost in the Nakba, at a march through central London, on May 18, 2024, to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the Nakba and call for an end to arms sales to Israel. BENJAMIN CREMEL/AFP

