

# UNRWA: Gazans have 'nowhere to go'

No 'positive signals' yet from cease-fire talks: **Hammas**



A child sits atop a donkey-pulled cart as Palestinians flee with their belongings from Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on August 16, 2024. **EYAD BABA/AFP**

**International Desk**

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said Israel's latest evacuation orders in Gaza are contributing to an "endless nightmare of death and destruction" in the war-battered territory. "Once again, fear spreads as fam-

ilies have nowhere to go," said the UNRWA in a post on X. "People remain trapped in an endless nightmare of death and destruction on a staggering scale." The Israeli army ordered people in south and central Gaza areas it had previously designated humanitarian safe zones to leave on Friday, claiming Hamas had

used the areas to fire mortars and rockets at Israel. Residents in Deir al-Balah, a last area still not entered by Israeli forces since the war began more than 10 months ago, said shelling had intensified and tanks had crossed a perimeter fence into the city. Israel said warning flyers and



**New cease-fire talks**

Hamas spokesman Osama Hamdan earlier said the resistance group, which is not directly participating in the talks, does not yet have a clear picture of where the negotiations stand, but that its officials have no reason to believe Israel is sending any positive signals. "Mediators are still talking about bridging the gaps, but it is clear that the Israeli side is adding more conditions, talking about new issues," said Hamdan. "I believe they are trying to undermine the process." Specifically, Hamdan pushed back on the prospect of Israel maintaining security control over Gaza's Philadelphi Corridor, saying Hamas continued to demand a "complete withdrawal" from the Strip, which it had previously received assurances from mediators. If Israel relays any "positive signals", Hamas would be willing to participate in the talks, but that has not happened yet, said Hamdan. Since October, Israel's strikes have killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, and wounded 92,401, according to Palestinian health authorities. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million population has been displaced multiple times since the start of the Israeli campaign in Gaza, launched

following the Hamas-led attack on Israel on Oct. 7. Even in areas designated safe zones there have been regular reports of casualties from Israeli strikes. Elsewhere in the occupied territory, a Palestinian man was shot dead as dozens of Israeli settlers attacked a village in the north of the occupied West Bank overnight, setting fire to houses and cars, Palestinian officials said. The settlers - some wearing masks - also threw rocks and Molotov cocktails in the village of Jit. It is the latest in the series of attacks by extremist settlers on Palestinian villages in the West Bank, where there has been a spike in violence since Hamas's attack on the occupied territories in October. Echoing widespread condemnation internationally of the attack, Office of the United Nations high commissioner for Human Rights spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani described the incident as "horrific". She noted that the killing "was not an isolated attack", in reference to years of violence directed at Palestinian communities by Israeli settlers, maintaining that it was "the direct consequence" of Israel's policy of occupation. Many countries, including France and the UK, also condemned the attack by settlers.

## President to defend cabinet picks at Parliament today

**National Desk**

Iran's president will attend a Parliament session today to defend his proposed ministers as lawmakers will begin work on reviewing the ministers' qualifications. According to the spokesman of the Parliament's Presiding Board Alireza Salimi, President Masoud Pezeshkian will have two and half hours to defend his cabinet. Then, five opponents and five supporters of the proposed ministers will deliver speech during the session. Pezeshkian submitted the list of his new cabinet members to the Parliament on Sunday, less than two weeks after he was sworn in before the country's legislators.

Abbas Araqchi and Abdolnaser Hemmati are the most well-known figures in his list. Pezeshkian has chosen Araqchi for the Foreign Ministry, who joined the ministry in 1989. The senior diplomat worked as the former political deputy at the Foreign Ministry from 2017 to 2021, also serving as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator in talks with world powers under former President Hassan Rouhani's government. The Iranian president has also picked Abdolnaser Hemmati for the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance. Hemmati served as the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) from 2018 to 2021. Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup has ruffled the feathers of a number



of individuals in Reformist camp. The president, however, has defended his proposed ministers and has called on critics to "wait for the cabinet to start work and criticize it based on its performance."

## Enhanced Iran-Indonesia ties to fortify global peace: **Pezeshkian**



**International Desk**

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the expansion of relations between Iran and Indonesia would help promote unity among Muslims and strengthen international peace and stability. He made the remarks in a congratulatory message to his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo on Indonesia Independence Day. Referring to the historical bonds between Iran and Indonesia and the two countries' common interests and numerous capacities for cooperation, the Iranian president expressed hope for further cooperation between the two nations. Every year on August 17th, Indonesia celebrates its Independence Day, locally known as Hari Kemerdekaan RI, with

great enthusiasm and national pride. On August 17, 1945, two days after Japan surrendered to the Allies in World War II that also brought an end to the war in Asia, Indonesia declared independence from Dutch colonial rule. The Dutch fought to prolong colonial rule, often through barbaric means, before ceding on December 27, 1949.

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**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## People expect Parliament ...

Pezeshkian backed up his words with a pledge to tap into the managerial talents of Iranians from across the political spectrum in his government. Naturally, these individuals would need to align with the president's plans and work in harmony with the government's stated policies. Now, with the proposed cabinet in the spotlight, reactions have been mixed. While some are taken aback by the inclusion of non-reformist figures and even ministers from the previous conservative administration, others applaud Pezeshkian for making good on his promise of an inclusive cabinet. The list presented to Parliament boasts reformist, moderate, and centrist conservative politicians, with an unexpected twist: three members of Ebrahim Raisi's government are also part of Pezeshkian's proposed team.

Thus far, Pezeshkian has stayed true to his word about forming an inclusive government that employs the capabilities of various political parties. This not only reflects the president's good will and sincerity in striving for a government of national accord but also lays the groundwork for much-needed national cooperation. Such cooperation entails political groups and powerhouses in Iran setting aside their differences to unite around shared goals that include reforming flawed systems, tackling economic challenges like inflation and stagnant growth, working toward lifting sanctions, and restoring public trust between citizens and the Establishment. They should work together synergistically and help each other along this path. As such, the onus is now on Parliament

to demonstrate its commitment to national cooperation, as espoused by the Leader of the Revolution, who advocates for interaction between the branches of power. Despite his reformist leanings and support base, Pezeshkian has consistently prioritized national interests over partisan politics, both in his stance and his plans, including the cabinet selection. The reformist president has taken a bold first step toward fostering internal accord and interaction, and all eyes are now on the conservative Parliament. Will they heed the Leader's repeated calls to support the government and embrace a national approach that strengthens unity and cooperation by granting a vote of confidence to the proposed cabinet, or will they opt for confrontation with the new administration from the outset?