

Israel's barbaric onslaught shifts to high gear in West Bank



An Israeli army bulldozer digs up a road in the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem with a Palestinian flag fluttering in the foreground on the second day of Israel's military operation in the north of the occupied West Bank on August 29, 2024.
● JAAFAAR ASHTIYEH/AFP

International Desk

The Israeli military claimed the lives of at least 20 Palestinians in the largest West Bank raid in two decades as the regime's atrocities continue to kill more Palestinians both in the Gaza Strip and the occupied territories. Intense gun battles have taken place between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters as the regime's raid on the occupied territories entered its fourth day on Saturday. The Israeli army maintains its goal is to target armed groups in the West Bank and to prevent future attacks. Some neighborhoods have been destroyed and people are running out of food and water. Concrete slabs and sheet metal were piled high alongside streets in central

city of Jenin on Saturday. Bulldozers rumbled through the streets on the first day of the raid, clearing the way for Israeli soldiers while tearing up the asphalt and piercing underground pipes, residents of one neighborhood in east Jenin told AFP. Three days later, with fighting elsewhere in the city continuing, "we are cut off from the world," Taher al-Saadi said. "The water is cut off. The electricity is cut off, the sewage system is no longer working. All the infrastructure is destroyed, we no longer have any services that work." He added, "The bakeries are at a standstill. We can't find milk for the children." Israeli raids are not unusual in Jenin, whose refugee camp is a bastion for resistance groups fighting Israel. The operation launched on Wednesday

was unusually large and long, hitting multiple West Bank cities at once and, in Jenin, showing no sign of letting up. An 82-year-old man was shot dead on Friday by an Israeli sniper, residents said, bringing to 20 the number of Palestinians killed in the raid so far. Hamas and its ally Islamic Jihad have said at least 13 of the dead were members of their armed wings.

'Crushing any resistance'

Mustafa Barghouti, secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative, has condemned Israel's mass raids as a strategic move to expand control over the territory and displace more Palestinians. "Israel's goal is to break down any form of resistance to their political plan," Barghouti told Al Jazeera. "And their

political plan is nothing but expansion of settlements all over the West Bank, annexation of the West Bank... and destruction of any kind of Palestinian authority."

In effect, Barghouti added, Israel is waging a war on occupied people, which is a violation of international law and represents a "fascist shift".

"Why are they [Israeli authorities] doing it now?" said Barghouti. "Because they saw the weak reaction from the international community to the atrocities, the genocide in Gaza," emboldening them to act violently in the West Bank. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called on Israel to immediately halt its operation, saying it was "fueling an already explosive situation".

Israelis besieging hospitals

Just how dark is still unclear, as Jenin governor Kamal Abu al-Rub told AFP that even he does not know exactly what is happening inside the camp, where the latest fighting appeared to be concentrated.

"The Israelis are besieging the hospitals and cutting off the city from the refugee camp, which has become a military zone with no access," he said.

"Neither the civil defense, nor the ambulances, nor the journalists can go and see what is happening there."

Violence has surged in the West Bank since Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on southern Israel triggered the war in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's onslaught on Gaza has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians so far.

Britain, France and Spain expressed concerns Friday about the Israeli operation in the West Bank, with the latter denouncing "an outbreak of violence which is clearly unacceptable".

The United Nations said on Wednesday that at least 637 Palestinians had been killed in the territory by Israeli troops or settlers since the Gaza war began.

Pezeshkian stresses ties with neighbors as priority



International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian described expansion of relations with neighboring countries, especially Uzbekistan, as a priority of his administration's foreign policy.

Pezeshkian made the remarks in a message to his Uzbek counterpart Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Saturday to congratulate him on the Central Asian country's Independence Day. He expressed confidence that the relations between Iran and Uzbekistan will further grow on the basis of mutual respect.

Mirziyoyev took power in Uzbekistan in December 2016, following the death of Islam Karimov, who had ruled the country since independence in 1991.

Kamala Harris's rise ...

In that sense, the fact that Harris is a normal politician means that she's ahead of

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Trump by default. For voters who were mainly concerned with Biden's age, Harris is a capable and mainstream politician who is "the lesser of two evils" for the voters, even those who despise both main parties in the US. Of course, this doesn't mean that Trump is finished. A normal polling error in Trump's direction would tip the election in his favor and he might also manage to beat Harris in the upcoming weeks of campaigning. That being said, undoubtedly, at the moment Harris is the slight favorite to win.

What would Harris's presidency mean for Iran? Most probably more of the same in comparison with Biden. It's been reported by Wall Street Journal that Harris is not satisfied with Biden's foreign policy team and wants to change all the key players including the Secretary of State (Anthony Blinken), Secretary of Defense (Lloyd Austin), and National Security Advisor (Jake Sullivan). However, being dissatisfied with the personnel doesn't necessarily imply being dissatisfied with policy as well. Harris will most likely pursue the same major policies. This includes prioritizing containment of China and alliances with nations in Indo-Pacific region above all other concerns, strong support for Ukraine, and supporting Israel while pursuing a ceasefire and a two-state solution (although Harris might prove incrementally tougher on Israel than Biden).

When it comes to Iran, we expect Harris's administration to prioritize a diplomatic solution with Iran and to avoid unnecessary escalation of tensions both with the US itself and with Israel. Harris certainly won't want war or instability in the Middle East. The same as Biden, Harris will not have a purely punitive approach to sanctions and would mostly consider them as tools of diplomacy and would turn a blind eye to some of Iran's dealings with China. Simultaneous with Pezeshkian's administration in Iran, I'm very hopeful that an agreement will be reached between the two nations and tensions will decrease. Both sides have a realistic approach at the moment; neither is very optimistic at the prospects of reviving the JCPOA and it seems that both in the US and Iran the goal is, as our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abbas Araghchi, has put it, to "manage but not end the enmity". That being said, this very display of sober-minded rationalism from both sides makes me optimistic about the prospects of a deal. There is much to hope for when it comes to a meeting of minds between Kamala Harris and Masoud Pezeshkian.

Iran repudiates allegation of training Russian forces

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani dismissed the allegation that an Iranian serviceman has been training Russian military forces on Ukrainian soil. Kanaani said that such baseless claims are made with specific political motives and objectives, adding that the accusations contradict Iran's principled approach to the conflict in Ukraine, according to Foreign Ministry's official website. Reiterating Iran's opposition to war, Kanaani emphasized the need to halt the conflict and resolve disputes between Russia and Ukraine peacefully. His remarks came after Ukraine's prosecutor general said a case has been opened against a general of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on suspicion of aiding Russia in war and war crimes against Ukraine. Andriy Kostin also alleged that the investigation revealed that between July and August 2022, Russian military representatives reached an agreement with Iran on the purchase of Shahed-136 and Mohajer-6 attack drones, along with related equipment. Iran has repeatedly and categorically refuted the accusation of involvement in the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Iran FM: Israel root cause of regional tensions



Abbas Araghchi

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi blasted the Israeli regime and its incessant atrocities as the main factor behind expansion of tensions and conflict across the West Asia region. The top diplomat made the remarks during a telephone conversation with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi on Friday. The remarks concerned the regime's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, escalated deadly attacks in the occupied West Bank, intensified deadly aggression against Lebanon, and assassination of senior resistance figures throughout the region, Press TV reported. As a case in point, Araghchi cited the regime's constituting the biggest obstacle to conclusion of truce agreement that could bring an end to the war on Gaza that has so far claimed the lives of upwards of 40,600 Palestinians, mostly women and children.



Ayman Safadi

In July, the Gaza-based Palestinian resistance movement Hamas agreed to a deal featuring withdrawal of the Israeli forces, return of the displaced people, an end to the siege that has been imposed by Tel Aviv on Gaza, and initiation of the territory's reconstruction process.

The regime, however, rejected the proposal before coming up with "new conditions," including its keeping its forces inside Gaza along the coastal sliver's border with Egypt.

Araghchi said, "The Islamic Republic would support a [truce] agreement that meets the approval of the Palestinian people and resistance."

The director general for International Peace and Security at the Iranian Foreign Ministry also said the occupying Israeli regime is the main obstacle to achieving stability and sustainable development in the Muslim world and the West Asia region.