

Hamas: Israel Deliberately Delaying Talks on Captives



Zionist troops at the entrance of a tunnel in the Gaza Strip

GAZA (Dispatches) – A senior Hamas official has dismissed claims that the ongoing genocidal Israeli war against the Gaza Strip has led to “isolation” of the resistance movement’s leader Yahya Sinwar. “Talk that Sinwar is isolated in the tunnels is nothing but an allegation,” a senior official with the group told al-Araby al-Jadeed, the news outlet reported on Wednesday. Sinwar “is carrying out his work as a leader of the movement in the field,” the official added. The source said such misleading information had

been provided “by [Zionist prime minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and his agencies to cover up his failure to achieve the goals [of the war].” The Israeli regime launched the war in October, following Al-Aqsa Storm, a retaliatory operation by Gaza’s resistance groups against the occupied territories, during which hundreds were taken captive. The war has so far claimed the lives of 34,183 Palestinians and wounded a total of 77,143 others. Despite the unabated campaign of bloodletting,

the regime has so far fallen short of realizing its “goals”, namely defeating the resistance, releasing the captives, and causing forced displacement of the coastal sliver’s entire population to neighboring Egypt. The Hamas official rejected Hebrew-language media reports that the Israeli war had resulted in the defeat of the resistance in the central and northern parts of Gaza. “The occupation’s resumption of its military campaign in the north and center, after it had previously announced its annihilation of the resistance there, is due to its awareness of the incorrectness of what it previously claimed [about the resistance’s defeat in those areas],” the Hamas figure noted. He, meanwhile, announced that the group was currently holding as many as 30 Israeli generals and officers, who were captured during the al-Aqsa storm operation. “The captured officers are in highly secured places far from the hands of the occupation,” the official said. The Israeli regime, the source said “is practicing a systematic process of misleading” the Israeli public about the captives and their situation “in order to evade the duty of liberating these prisoners.” In November, Hamas released 105 of the captives in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners as part of a four-day truce deal. The Hamas official said the only means of releasing the remaining captives was for the regime to engage in “serious negotiations followed by a full commitment to a ceasefire and [Gaza’s] reconstruction.”

Leader ...

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openings for progress will emerge from the hardships and troubles imposed by the ill-wishers, and the Iranian nation, by God’s grace, will reach the bright horizon.” Ayatollah Khamenei said sanctions damage the country’s economy and create economic problems, but they can also cause the flourishing of talents and emergence of capacities. The Leader said making opportunities out of the enemy’s hostility is a characteristic of a lively nation. “This is my constant advice to the youth, officials and zealous and pious people of the country” to turn threats into opportunities, he said. Ayatollah Khamenei cited Iran’s weapons development as an example of the country’s achievement in turning sanctions into opportunities. “This development, which showed itself somewhere, surprised all the enemies who wondered how Islamic Iran could produce so many advanced weapons under an embargo regime,” he said. “God willing, better and more advanced weapons will be produced. However, the advancements are not limited to weapons and in various medical, health and some industrial and engineering sectors, Iran is among the world leaders. “Nevertheless, we are lagging behind in some areas, which we will progress in if we work hard,” the Leader added. Ayatollah Khamenei said the sanctions are getting less effective, citing a recent international report indicating a rise in Iran’s gross national product. “This means more and better work is being done in the country, and the hope is not pinned on outside the borders for help, and that sanctions have not been able to bring Iran down. This spirit should be strengthened in the country.” Ayatollah Khamenei touched on demonstrations held across the world in support of Palestinians and flags of Palestine and Hezbollah raised in the streets in Europe and the U.S. He said those accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran of supporting terrorism because of supporting the oppressed people of Gaza disgraced themselves, because “not only Iranian nation but all nations now support Palestine.” “Is the Palestinian who stands against the oppression of the usurper settler to usurp his home a terrorist? Is the anti-oppression and zealous front of resistance terrorist or those who create disaster by bombing people?”

Sri...

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Raisi arrived in Sri Lanka from Pakistan, where the two countries agreed to strengthen economic and security cooperation. The Indian Ocean island nation declared bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than \$83 billion in debt — more than half of it to foreign creditors. Wickremesinghe’s government secured an IMF four-year bailout package to rescue the country from its worst economic crisis. President Raisi said, “We stand fully ready to further expand bilateral relations with all Asian countries, our neighboring countries, and sovereign and independent states.” Sri Lanka is a sovereign, independent country that has aligned policies with Iran, enabling cooperation to create a shining future for both nations, he added. “What is common with us we should strengthen,” President Wickremesinghe said at the event. “We are all countries that belong to the south at a time when the south wants to establish its own identity and its own independence.” He was referring to the concept of the global south, which emerged to designate developing, emerging or lower-income countries, mostly in the southern hemisphere, and replace the term “Third World” after the Cold War ended.

Pro...

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until Wednesday. Students had occupied a second campus building Tuesday. Another encampment was set up Tuesday at the University of Rochester in upstate New York, where Omar Darwesh, a Palestinian senior, said he has lost relatives to the war. “We’re not calling for the destruction of Israel; we’re never talking about threatening Jews. The focus is on us and what we need, and that’s being treated like a human. We have to find a way to coexist,” he told TV station WHEC. University of Rochester officials said in a statement that the protesters must follow ground rules, including presenting university identification if asked. The upwelling of demonstrations has left universities struggling to balance campus safety with free speech rights. Many long tolerated the protests, which largely demanded that schools condemn Israel’s assault on Gaza and divest from companies that sell weapons to the occupying regime. Now, universities are doing out more heavy-handed discipline, citing safety concerns as some Jewish students link criticism of Israel to antisemitism. Protests had been bubbling for months but kicked into a higher gear after last week’s arrests at Columbia. By late Monday at New York University, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody and all had been released with summonses to appear in court on disorderly conduct charges. In Connecticut, police arrested 60 protesters, including 47 students, at Yale after they refused to leave an encampment on a plaza at the center of campus. Yale President Peter Salovey said protesters had declined an offer to end the demonstration and meet with trustees. After several warnings, school officials determined “the situation was no longer safe,” so police cleared the encampment and made arrests. Harvard University in Massachusetts has tried to stay a step ahead of protests by locking most gates into its famous Harvard Yard and limiting access to those with school identification. Literature doctoral student Christian Deleon said there still has to be a place for students to express what they think. “We should all be able to use these kinds of spaces to protest, to make our voices heard,” he said. Ben Wizner, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union, said college leaders face extremely tough decisions because they have a responsibility to ensure people can express their views, even when others find them offensive. The New York Civil Liberties Union cautioned universities against being too quick to call in law enforcement in a statement Tuesday. “Officials should not conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism or use hate incidents as a pretext to silence political views they oppose,” said Donna Lieberman, the group’s executive director.

ICRC Expresses Concern Over West Bank Violence

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has drawn attention to the “recent escalation of violence in multiple areas” of the occupied West Bank, with hundreds of Palestinians having been killed. Since early last year, the Zionist regime has intensified raids in the West Bank, which were accelerated after the Zionist regime launched its war on Gaza on October 7. At least 482 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank by Zionist troops or

settlers since the war began. But last week, attacks by Zionist settlers on Palestinian communities ramped up significantly, and a raid by Zionist troops that lasted several days on the city of Tulkarem and its Nur Shams refugee camp killed 14 people. In its post, the ICRC said that over the weekend, two medics from the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) were harmed while trying to respond to calls for help. “One volunteer suffered a gun-

shot wound while serving as a paramedic on a PRCS ambulance in Tulkarem. Mohammed Awad Allah Musa was killed while providing medical support on a private ambulance in Nablus,” the organisation noted. “Ambulances and medical workers are not a target,” it added. In the most recent raids, Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man and wounded two people including a child in the occupied West Bank city of Ariha and adjacent refugee camps.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health has said Shadi Jalaita, 44, was killed by Zionist troops as they raided Ariha. The ministry said a child was critically injured in the raid, and a third person was wounded with a live round to the knee. Israel has intensified raids in the West Bank, which were accelerated after Israel launched hostilities in Gaza in early October. Israeli troops or settlers have killed about 500 Palestinians in the West Bank since October 7.

Egypt Detains Women Protesting Israel’s War on Gaza

CAIRO (Dispatches) – Egyptian security forces dispersed a Gaza solidarity protest outside the headquarters of UN Women in Cairo and detained several activists who took part, according to local media and activists. Police forces detained most of the protesters, including Mahienour el-Masry, Lobna Darwish, Rasha Azab, Ragya Omran, Mai el-Mahdy, Israa Yusuf and Farida al-Hifny, according to Egyptian activist Ahmed Douma. During the demonstration, the protesters read a letter addressed to the UN agency for gender equality and women’s empowerment, condemning the human rights vio-

lations and war crimes affecting women in Gaza and Sudan as a result of the conflicts there. “Dear UN Women, we are a group of Egyptian women appalled by the atrocities committed against our sisters in Gaza as a result of the Israeli genocidal war on the Palestinian people since October 7,” the letter read. “We are also appalled by the failure of the UN to protect the two peoples from the ongoing war crimes, especially sexual crimes, and in particular equivocating between the victims and culprits,” it added. The letter accused UN Women of “discriminating against women in

Gaza and Sudan” by failing to stand up for them. It also called on the UN agency to carry out investigations into alleged sexual crimes and war crimes against women in the affected areas. Middle East Eye has contacted UN Women for comment. Hossam Bahgat, the director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), said his organization has lost contact with Lobna Darwish, the director of EIPR’s women’s rights and gender program. “She [last] said she was with the other detained feminist activists on a microbus of the security agencies; they did not know where they were

going,” Bahgat told MEE. “We have asked at the police station and we have been unable to identify their location.” Bahgat said the number of those detained remains uncertain, but at least 15 women activists are believed to be in custody, since their phones are no longer reachable. The police action on Tuesday is not the first time protesters in Egypt have been detained for taking part in protests about Gaza. Egypt has effectively banned protests since President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi came to power over a decade ago, and security forces routinely suppress any anti-government activity.

Islam’s...

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against Islam, prepared the defences of Medina, whose natural fortifications were rocky heights and thick palm groves. On the suggestion of his Iranian companion, Salman, he dug a trench at the city’s edge that was vulnerable to enemy attack. When the joint Arab-Israelite army (in whose ranks was the veritable giant Amr ibn Abdudwad noted for his brute strength), arrived, it found its entry blocked by the newly dug ditch. For some two weeks, the formidable force, confident of its strength, maneuvered, shooting arrows at the Muslim defenders on the other side. On the 17th of Shawwal, Amr bin Abdudwad, along with two other horsemen found the narrowest point of the ditch and managed to spur the horses in a giant leap to the other side. He then challenged the Muslims to combat, at which most of them quaked with fear, while the hypocrites amongst them, devised plans to seize the Prophet and hand him over to the enemy. The Prophet of Peace appealed for calm and asked who will accept the infidel’s challenge. He repeated these words and on all three occasions no one rose except his cousin, son-in-law and Divinely-designated heir, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS). Some of the Muslims, instead of responding to the Prophet’s call, started to praise the strength and physical power of Amr bin Abdudwad in a bid to demoralize the ranks of the faithful – similar to what the self-styled Muslims in the service of the US do today by extolling Washington’s military might and the benefits for the Arabs to ally with the Americans and the Israelis against Palestinian liberation movements, against the Hezbollah of Lebanon, against the Ansarallah of Yemen, against President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, against Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), against Iran, and against the entire Axis of Islamic Resistance. The Prophet told the Imam to face the challenge of the Arab-Israelite warlord, saying “the embodiment of faith is all set to fight embodiment of infidelity.” The rest is history. Imam Ali (AS), after inviting Amr to Islam, and on his refusal, telling him to leave in peace rather than risk his life, engaged in combat. Then with a flashing stroke his famous twin-bladed sword Dhu’l-Feqar, the Imam dispatched Amr to the bowels of hell, but not before allowing him to renew the life-and-death combat, because the cowardly representative of the Arab-Israelite force, when hurled to the ground, had dared to spit at him. On Amr’s fall the other two infidels fled, and as fear gripped the Arab-Israelite force, God Almighty sent powerful gales to disrupt their camps. Soon the confederates broke rank and fled. No wonder, the Prophet hailed the Imam’s selfless feat which was solely for the sake of God and without personal emotions involved, as “The stroke of Ali on the Day of Khandaq is superior to the worship of the Thaqaalayn (mankind and jinn combined).”

UAE Announces \$544mn for Repairs After Record Rains

DUBAI (AFP) – The United Arab Emirates announced \$544 million to repair the homes of Emirati families on Wednesday after last week’s record rains caused widespread flooding and brought the oil-rich Persian Gulf state to a standstill. “We learned great lessons in dealing with severe rains,” said Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum after a cabinet meeting, adding that ministers approved “two billion dirhams to deal with damage to the homes of citizens”. Wednesday’s announcement comes more than a week after the unprecedented deluge

lashed the desert country, where it turned streets into rivers and hobbled Dubai airport, the world’s busiest for international passengers. “A ministerial committee was assigned to follow up on this file... and disburse compensation in cooperation with the rest of the federal and local authorities,” said Sheikh Mohammed, who is also the ruler of Dubai, which was one of the worst hit of the UAE’s seven sheikhdoms. The rainfall, the UAE’s heaviest since records began 75 years ago, killed at least four people, including three Filipino workers and

one Emirati. UAE authorities have not released an official toll. Cabinet ministers also formed a second committee to log infrastructure damage and propose solutions, Sheikh Mohammed said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. “The situation was unprecedented in its severity but we are a country that learns from every experience,” he said. The storm -- which dumped up to two years’ worth of rain on the UAE, a federal monarchy with a 90 percent expatriate population -- had subsided by last Wednesday.