

BAGHDAD (Reuters) -- Chanting crowds gathered in several Iraqi cities on Saturday, some burning Israeli and American flags, in protest against the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

Thousands of demonstrators shouted anti-Israeli slogans, held signs saying "Death to Israel, death to America" and waved Palestinian flags. The rallies, called by powerful cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and other paramilitary leaders, were held as Israel launched more airstrikes on Gaza and Palestinian militants fired rockets on Tel Aviv and other cities in the worst escalation in the region since 2014.

ATHENS, May 15 (Reuters) -- Greek police fired tear gas and water cannon on Saturday to disperse pro-Palestinian demonstrators protesting in Athens against Israeli attacks on Gaza.

Hundreds of people shouting "Freedom to Palestine" and waving Palestinian flags marched to the Israeli embassy, which was cordoned off by police buses. The demonstration in the Greek capital follows similar protests in cities around the world following days of intense conflict between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza.

VOL NO: LV 11426 TEHRAN / Est.1959

Sunday, May 16, 2021, Ordibehst 26, 1400, Shawwal 4, 1442, Price 50,000 Rials

**Viewpoint**

**Terrorists of All Hue & Colour Flock Together**

**IRGC Commander: Zionist Regime Caught Off Guard**



**Iranian Women Referees to Officiate at FIFA Futsal World Cup Qualifier**



**Zionist Escalation Shames Persian Gulf, Arab Partners**



## Resistance Pounds Zionist Targets After Massacre

TEL AVIV/GAZA CITY (Dispatches) -- Rocket sirens blared throughout Tel Aviv and central occupied territories on Friday as Palestinian factions fired dozens of rockets at Zionist targets in response to the massacre of a Palestinian family of 10, including eight children.

Israeli media said a rocket exploded in central Ramat Gan, with footage from Ramat Gan showing a car burning and damage to nearby buildings.

Sirens were heard in Tel Aviv, Rishon Lezion, Holon, Bat Yam, Ashdod, Yavne, Rehovot, Givatayim, Petha Tikva, Kiryat Ono and other settlements.

A man was killed in the rocket strike in Ramat Gan and several people were injured. Police said two rockets hit the city.

One of the rockets exploded in the Arab town of Taibe northeast of Tel Aviv, and another hit near the Zionist settlement of Karnei Shomron.

The residents of Taibe gathered to celebrate Palestinian resistance at the scene of the rocket strike.

They denounced the Zionist regime's violence against Palestinians at Al-Aqsa Mosque and shouted "With spirit, with blood, we'll redeem Al-Aqsa!"

Hamas' military wing, Qassam Brigades, said it launched dozens of rockets at the occupying regime in response to a pre-dawn airstrike by Israeli warplanes against Al-Shati refugee camp, which martyred eight children and two women from the Abu Hatab family and injured 15 others.

The Israeli military destroyed the Al Jalaa tower in Gaza after sending a "roof-knocking" missile as a final warning to leave. The building housed media outlets such as Al Jazeera, the Associated Press, along with Arab and local press.

Al Jazeera aired a phone call between the building's owner and a Zionist intelligence officer asking to be given time to evacuate equipment from the offices, but the officer declined the request.

Cities in southern Israel faced an intense barrage of rockets overnight Friday and Saturday, with several heavy waves of projectile fire targeting Ashkelon, Ashdod, Beersheva, Sderot and the surrounding areas.

A huge fire broke out in an industrial zone and several buildings were damaged after a

barrage of missiles was fired at Ashdod in response to the massacre of the Palestinian family.

Qassam Brigade said it had fired several rockets at Hazerim Airbase in the Negev Desert on the outskirts of Beersheva. Al-Quds Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Jihad movement, also said it targeted Tel Aviv with several rockets.

"The massacre in Al-Shati camp showed the extent of the Zionist regime's helplessness and defeat," Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh said.

"This massacre represents the extent of the stalemate that the occupiers are experiencing in the face of the greatness of the resistance and the surprising deeds of the men loyal to it," he added.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said the extermination of the entire family in the Al-Shati camp "shows the volume of the Zionist regime's savage terrorism against our nation".

"This crime shows that the occupiers are incapable in the face of the resistance in Jerusalem Al-Quds and the West Bank and Gaza," he added.

At least 139 Palestinians, including 39 children and 22 women, have been martyred and about 1,000 others injured in Gaza in the Zionist regime's latest round of aggression that began on Monday.

Lebanon's Al-Mayadeen television channel network said boats belonging to the Israeli army targeted the port of Gaza early Saturday.

According to the Israeli military, some 200 rockets were launched at Occupied Palestine from Gaza between 7 p.m. Friday and 7 a.m. Saturday.

The occupying regime says at least nine settlers, including an officer, have been killed and more than 566 others injured in the Palestinian resistance's shelling of settlements, military sites, and occupied cities as part of Operation Al-Quds' Sword that started on May 10.

Shipping sources said Friday that at least two tanker owners delivering crude oil to Occupied Palestine had been asked to divert from Ashkelon to the port of Haifa because of the fighting.

The sources said the tankers were carrying oil from the Black Sea. Major airlines have already stopped flights to Israeli airports.

Principlists Prevail as Registration Ends

## Elections for a Stronger Iran



From left to right, Judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi, former parliament speaker Ali Larijani and Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri arrive at the interior ministry in Tehran May 15, 2021 to register for the June 18 presidential election.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- **Top candidates to become Iran's next president signed up on the last day of registration on Saturday and the overwhelming majority were Principlists amid widespread discontent with the Reformist government.**

Ebrahim Raisi, the current head of the judiciary, is considered by analysts most likely to become Iran's eighth president in the June 18 elections.

In a statement hours before coming to the interior ministry to sign up, 60-year-old Raisi said he wants to form a "peo-

ple's government for a strong Iran" that would fight corruption and improve the country's economy.

"God, you are witness that I have never been after position or power, and even at this stage I have entered the field despite personal will and interests, and only to serve my duty to answer the people and elites and create hope," he wrote.

Raisi, a former attorney general and custodian of the Astan Quds Razavi in Mashhad who was sanctioned by the U.S. in 2019, enjoys strong backing

from a wide range of Iranians.

"With all due respect for all the candidates and political groups, I have entered the scene... as an independent in order to bring about change in the country's executive management and put up a relentless fight against poverty and corruption, humiliation and discrimination," Raisi said.

Parliament speaker Muhammad Baqer Qalibaf and former foreign minister Saeed Jalili also registered on a Principlist ticket. More than 59 million Iranians are eligible to vote this

year.

On Saturday, former parliament speaker Ali Larijani became the latest key candidate to sign up.

He said the country needs more than "populistic and Superman-like" promises in its current difficult juncture, and expressed hope ongoing negotiations in Vienna would lead to the removal of unilateral U.S. sanctions.

First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri registered and reformist Mohsen Hashemi, the current chairman of the Tehran City Council and the eldest son of the late president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, also signed up.

Jahangiri is the Reformists' new wild ticket, after Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif announced on Wednesday that he would not be running.

"I did not intend to run, and I had hoped there would be no need for me to. But, given the decision of my dear brother Dr. Javad Zarif not to run, and the inability of a number of others... to register, and with the Iranian reform front, Reformist leaders, and sympathetic figures, as well as many young people and political and civil activists recognizing that I should come to the scene... I refuse to shy away from accepting the responsibility," Jahangiri said.

He was followed by lawmaker Masoud Pezeshkian, former transport minister Abbas Akhoundi

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## Zarif Cancels Visit to Austria Over Zionist Flag Pro-Palestinian Protesters March Across World

PARIS/ZURICH (Dispatches) -- **Thousands of protesters in London and Madrid marched in support of Palestinians on Saturday as the worst violence in years by the occupying regime of Israel raged in Gaza.**

In London, several thousand protesters carrying placards reading "Stop Bombing Gaza" and chanting "Free Palestine" converged on Marble Arch, near the British capital's Hyde Park, to march towards the Israeli embassy.

In Madrid, some 2,500 people, many of them young people wrapped in Palestinian flags, marched to the Puerta del Sol plaza in the city centre. "This is not a war, it's genocide," they chanted.

"They are massacring us," said Amira Sheikh-Ali, a 37-year-old of Palestinian origin.

"We're in a situation when the Nakba is continuing in the middle of the 21st century," she

said, referring to the "catastrophe" word used by Palestinians to describe Israel's illegal creation in 1948, when hundreds of thousands fled or were driven out.

"We want to ask Spain and the European authorities not to collaborate with Israel, because with their silence, they are collaborating," said Ikhlass Abousousiane, a 25-year-old nurse of Moroccan origin.

The marches came amid the worst Israeli violence since a 2014 war in Gaza.

The bombardment began Monday, after Hamas fired rockets towards Jerusalem Al-Quds.

That was in response to bloody the Zionist regime's police action at the flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Al-Quds, as well as a crackdown on protests against the planned Israeli expulsion of Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in occupied East

Al-Quds.

Iran's foreign minister canceled a visit with his Austrian counterpart to show displeasure that Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's government had flown the Israeli flag in Vienna in a show of solidarity, the Austrian foreign ministry said on Saturday.

Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif was supposed to meet Alexander Schallenberg but had called off the trip, a spokeswoman for Schallenberg said, confirming a report in newspaper Die Presse.

In Tehran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told ISNA news agency: "Mr Zarif did not consider the trip beneficial in these circumstances, and therefore the travel arrangements were not finalized."

The dispute comes during talks in Vienna to try to revive a 2015 accord with western powers. Former U.S. President Don-

ald Trump abandoned the deal in 2018, prompting Iran to scale back its compliance.

Kurz, who is firmly pro-Israel, had called flying the Zionist flag over the federal chancellery on Friday a mark of solidarity with the occupying regime. But Abbas Araqchi, who heads the Iranian delegation at the Vienna talks, criticized the move.

"Vienna is the seat of (nuclear watchdog) IAEA & UN, and (Austria) so far been a great host for negotiations," Araqchi wrote on Twitter. "Shocking & painful to see flag of the occupying regime, that brutally killed tens of innocent civilians, inc many children in just few days, over govt offices in Vienna. We stand with Palestine."

On Friday, a French court upheld a police ban on pro-Palestinian demonstrations in the country as well as in the capital, Paris, with lawyers for the organizers

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