

Security Council to Vote on Palestinian State UN Membership

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – The United Nations Security Council will vote Thursday on the Palestinians' application to become a full UN member state, several diplomatic sources have told AFP.

Amid Israel's military aggression in Gaza, the Palestinians in early April revived a membership application first made to the world body in 2011, though the veto-wielding United States has repeatedly expressed opposition to the proposal.

The General Assembly can admit a new member state with a two-thirds majority vote, but only after the Security Council gives its recommendation.

Regional bloc the Arab Group issued a statement Tuesday affirming its "unwavering support" for the Palestinians' application.

"Membership in the United Nations is a crucial step in the right direction toward a just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question in line with international law and relevant UN resolutions," the statement said.



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Algeria, a non-permanent Security Council member, has drafted the resolution that "recommends" to the General Assembly "the State of Palestine be admitted to membership of the United Nations."

The vote on Thursday will coincide with a Security Council meeting scheduled several weeks ago to discuss the situation in Gaza,

which ministers from several Arab countries are expected to attend.

The Palestinians — who have had observer status at the United Nations since 2012 — have lobbied for years to gain full membership.

"We are seeking admission. That is our natural and legal right," Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian am-

bassador to the United Nations, said in April.

According to the Palestinian side, 137 of the 193 UN member states already recognize a Palestinian state, raising hope that their request would be supported in the General Assembly.

But the Palestinian push for UN membership faces a major hurdle, as the United States — the Zionist regime's closest ally — could use its veto power to block the Security Council recommendation.

"We call on all members of the Security Council to vote in favor of the draft resolution... At the very least, we implore Council members not to obstruct this critical initiative," the Arab Group said Tuesday.

The United States has voiced its opposition to full Palestinian membership, saying it backed statehood but only after negotiations with Israel, while pointing to U.S. laws that would require cuts to UN funding if such a move took place without a bilateral agreement.

Google Workers Arrested After Protesting Company's Giant Deal With Israel

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Police have arrested nine Google employees at the tech giant's offices in New York City and Sunnyvale, California, after they staged an hours-long sit-in in protest against the company's recent billion-dollar deal with the Israeli regime.

The protesters entered the offices, demanding that Google drop the \$1.2 billion contract that provides Israel with cloud and machine learning services, known as Project Nimbus.

The employees who participated in the sit-ins wore shirts that said "Drop Project Nimbus", as they held a banner reading "No tech for genocide."

No Tech for Apartheid group which organized the protest said the protesters sat in the office of Google Cloud Chief Executive Thomas Kurian in Sunnyvale and remained there for about 10 hours.

The New York protest occupied a common area on the tenth floor of Google's Chelsea location.

A video taken by one of the protesters and shared with The Washington Post showed they were given the opportunity to leave voluntarily, and then arrested by police after refusing to do so.

Bailey Tomson, a Google spokesperson, said, "Physically impeding other employees' work and preventing them from access-

ing our facilities is a clear violation of our policies, and we will investigate and take action."

"These employees were put on administrative leave, and their access to our systems was cut. After refusing multiple requests to leave the premises, law enforcement was engaged to remove them to ensure office safety," she added.

Google workers had previously staged rallies in front of the company's offices in various cities, demanding an end to its cooperation with the Israeli regime.

Back in March, Google fired an employee who staged a protest against the tech giant's cooperation with Israel in its war against

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The employee, who has identified himself as a cloud software engineer, stood up during an event in New York City, disrupting the speech of the managing director of Google Israel, Barak Regev.

He denounced Google for being complicit in the apartheid regime's months-long war against the Palestinians in Gaza.

Under the \$1.2-billion Nimbus contract, Google (Google Cloud Platform) and Amazon (Amazon Web Services) were selected to provide Israeli agencies with cloud computing services, including artificial intelligence tools and machine learning.

Palestinian Journalists Call on U.S. Press to Boycott White House Correspondents' Dinner

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – More than two dozen Palestinian journalists working inside and outside of Gaza published a letter calling on American journalists to boycott the annual White House correspondents' dinner, citing the U.S. military support for the Zionist regime's war in Gaza that has killed scores of Palestinian journalists.

"As Palestinian journalists, we urgently appeal to you, our colleagues globally, with a demand for immediate and unwavering action against the Biden administration's ongoing complicity in the system-

atic slaughter and persecution of journalists in Gaza," the letter said. "For Palestinian journalists in Gaza, the blue press vest does not offer us protection, but rather functions as a red target," the signatories write in their letter.

Many of the letter's signatories chose to remain anonymous, out of fear their public signing of the letter could lead them to be targeted or killed by Israel's military.

However, it includes several prominent journalists who have been covering the Zionist regime's assault on Gaza from inside the en-

clave. Those names include Bisan Owda; Ali Jadallah; Hosam Salem; Mohammed Zaanoun; Ahmed El-Madhoun; and Mohamed Almasri.

The letter also includes signatures from renowned journalists working outside of Gaza, such as Mariam Barghouti, Mohammed El Kurd, and Said Arikat, the Washington bureau chief for Al-Quds newspaper.

Meanwhile, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) criticized the ongoing approval from the U.S. government towards the Zionist regime's genocidal war

in Gaza, denouncing it as "Israeli crimes against humanity".

Ibrahim Hooper, the communications director for CAIR, stated in a release, "These Israeli crimes against humanity are being committed daily – even hourly – with the active support of the Biden administration."

He emphasized the urgent need for tangible steps to halt the genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced starvation occurring in Gaza, warning that failure to do so would severely tarnish the US nation's reputation internationally.

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near the towns of Baalbek, Alma Al-Shaab, and Al-Dhahira, among others. Wednesday's incident marked the third day in a row that Hezbollah strikes wounded Zionists, with tensions high after Iran launched a direct attack on the regime over the weekend in retaliation for a deadly strike on Iran's diplomatic mission in Damascus.

On Tuesday, Israeli authorities said three people were wounded in a strike from Lebanon. The day before, Hezbollah targeted Israeli troops with explosive devices, wounding four of them who crossed into Lebanese territory, the first such attack in six months of clashes.

Israel and Hezbollah have been exchanging near-daily cross-border fire since the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas launched its historic Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the regime on October 7.

The fighting has forced the evacuation of tens of thousands from the northern part of the occupied territories, amid rocket fire and shelling carried out by Hezbollah and allied Palestinian groups.

Hezbollah has already fought off two Israeli wars against Lebanon in 2000 and 2006. The resistance forced the regime to retreat in both conflicts.

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home. But yesterday morning, they fired some kind of explosive bombs with shrapnel that spreads everywhere on our neighborhood, leaving many residents injured."

Quadcopters are remote-controlled drones that have been used extensively against Palestinian fighters and civilians in the Gaza Strip since October 7.

This technology is gradually replacing ground troops, aiding in target identification, individual targeting, and securing areas where Zionist soldiers are stationed.

Additionally, quadcopters can scout forward positions, target individuals within residences, and disperse crowds in public spaces.

A significant event involving the use of quadcopters occurred during the "flour massacre" on January 11, on Al-Rasheed street near the Gaza City coastline. Numerous witnesses recounted quadcopters firing upon hundreds of individuals awaiting the arrival of aid trucks.

Muhammad Abu Youssef, 19, told MEE that at around 2 a.m. on Monday he heard the cries of babies. However, since people were posting on social media to raise awareness of the source of these sounds, he chose not to venture outside.

"There were different sounds coming from the quadcopters. They were making noises; some recordings were comprehensible and some were not. They lasted for around 30 to 60 minutes, then the quadcopters started opening fire and firing bombs in the neighborhood," he said.

"We did not go out, because we learned that these were only recordings played by the quadcopters to lure us to go out."

A video recorded by a resident of Nuseirat refugee camp, and circulating on social media, showcased sounds of crying infants, while the resident explained that these were pre-recorded sounds played by Israeli quadcopters.

"Over the past three days, there have been at least 12 injuries due to quadcopter fire. This morning alone, we rescued six people who were wounded in the neighborhood. The injuries were serious: some were shot directly in the head."

According to the residents, the audio recordings also included songs in both Hebrew and Arabic, including children's songs, sounds of clashes and moving tanks, voices of Palestinian armed men, and voices of local roaming vendors of cleaning products familiar to residents of Gaza.

For over a week, the Zionist military has been carrying out an intense military attack on the northwestern part of Nuseirat, targeting individuals, homes and neighborhoods with artillery, aerial and naval shelling, as well as quadcopter gunfire.

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"If they fulfill their commitments, the Islamic Republic will also live up to its end of the bargain in the JCPOA regarding the clauses on certain restrictions."

The law, dubbed the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, was adopted by Iranian lawmakers in December 2020 to counter sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States and its Western allies, and to promote the country's peaceful nuclear program.

Under the parliament's law, the Iranian administration is required to restrict the IAEA's inspections and accelerate the development of the country's nuclear program beyond the limits set under the JCPOA.

Iran and the IAEA are in a dispute triggered by the agency's Israeli-influenced accusations, which were leveled against Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities. The UN atomic agency insisted on investigating what it claims to be "uranium traces" found at "undeclared nuclear sites" in Iran.

The row turned into a sticking point in the talks aimed at reviving the US-abandoned nuclear agreement, known as the JCPOA.

In 2019, Iran started to roll back the limits it had accepted under the landmark nuclear deal with world powers that had been signed in 2015. The decision came a year after the U.S. withdrew from the agreement and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran.

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widening conflict in the region.

She stressed the significance of providing humanitarian aid to Gaza and maintaining ongoing multilateral and bilateral discussions to promptly halt the war and restore peace and stability to the region, the Iranian Foreign Ministry reported.

Recalling Japan's unequivocal condemnation of the attack on the embassy of Iran in Damascus, Kamikawa stated, "Japan firmly believes that attacks on diplomatic facilities are unacceptable."

She also emphasized the importance of preventing escalation and the spread of tension and conflict in the region. "We have drawn the attention of all parties to the consequences of escalating tension and conflict on the stability and security of the region, as well as the threat to maritime security."

The two ministers expressed hope for the further development of bilateral relations between Tehran and Tokyo. They underscored the importance of ongoing consultations and dialogue to ensure calm, peace, and stability in the region.

Heavy Flooding Hits Persian Gulf States, Casualties Reported

DUBAI (Dispatches) – The death toll from severe flooding that hit the United Arab Emirates, Oman and other Persian Gulf countries rose to almost 20, with homes and businesses across the Persian Gulf damaged by the heavy rains, and flights delayed or cancelled.

In Al Ain, an Emirati oasis city on the border with Oman, 254mm of rain was recorded in less than 24 hours, according to the national meteorology center. That marked the highest level since records began in 1949.

An Emirati man in his 70s died after his vehicle was caught in the flooding in Ras al-Khaimah, one of the country's seven

emirates, according to police.

The storms also hit Bahrain and parts of Qatar, days after flooding devastated neighboring Oman.

Across Sunday and Monday, 18 people died in Oman as a result of heavy rain. Among the dead were at least nine schoolchildren, according to Oman News Agency.

Videos on social media showed collapsed roads and homes in the UAE, as well as vehicles completely submerged. One clip appeared to show planes taxiing across a flooded runway at Dubai International Airport.

The airport, the world's busiest for inter-

national traffic, saw significant disruption after passengers and crews struggled to arrive and depart on time. Several flights were cancelled or delayed on Tuesday.

"We are working hard to recover operations as quickly as possible in very challenging conditions," the airport wrote on X.

Though the heavy rains eased, delays continued into Wednesday, as the Emirates airline suspended check-ins for departing passengers until midnight.

Skies were clearer on Wednesday morning, though Emirati authorities ordered all government workers and schools to continue working remotely for a second day.