

Gaza Economy Hit Hard After Zionist Aggression



Palestinians clear debris from their shops, which were damaged in Zionist attacks, in Gaza on 22 May 2021.

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – Twenty factories have been destroyed during the latest Zionist offensive on Gaza, and 5,000 workers had lost their jobs, head of the General Federation of Trade Unions Sami al-Amasi has confirmed.

In a statement, Al-Amasi disclosed that the latest aggression by the Zionist regime inflicted a massive blow to the economic sector in the Gaza Strip. He noted that it aggravated the already weak economy, which has been suffering for more than one and a half decades, with increased adversity due to COVID-19.

Al-Amasi indicated that the economy was the main target for the occupying regime's attacks, pointing to the demolition of the offices of big companies located in the high-rise buildings destroyed during the offensive.

Meanwhile, he stated that the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 affected more than 160,000 workers during the last year.

Tel Aviv launched the bombing campaign against Gaza on May 10, after Palestinian retaliation against violent raids on worshippers at the al-Aqsa Mosque and the regime's plans to force a number of Palesti-

nian families out of their homes at Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East al-Quds.

The Gaza-based resistance groups did not sit idly by and fired 4,300 rockets towards different cities in the occupied lands during the war, which ended on May 21 after the regime announced a unilateral ceasefire that the resistance movements accepted with Egyptian mediation.

The United States vowed to reinforce the Zionist regime's so-called Iron Dome after Tel Aviv suffered a defeat in its 11-day war on the Gaza Strip, with the regime's much-pub-

licized missile system failing in the face of a massive rocket fire by Palestinian resistance movements.

Earlier this month, Zionist war minister Benny Gantz visited the United States, where he met with Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin.

During the meeting, Gantz reportedly asked Washington for \$1 billion in additional emergency military aid, arguing that the money was needed to replenish the Iron Dome battery and purchase munitions for the regime's air force.

During a Thursday congressional session, addressing the Senate Appropriations Committee, Austin said that the occupying regime's request for military assistance had been approved by the Pentagon for its 2022 budget.

However, according to a new poll in the U.S., most American voters back banning the Zionist regime from using U.S. funds to annex land or detain Palestinian children.

According to the new poll conducted by the 'Data for Progress' polling firm, most Americans believe that U.S. aid to the occupying regime should be withheld due to its refusal to meet certain conditions.

The poll conducted during the most recent Israel-Gaza conflict showed that most voters endorsed restrictions that would keep the Zionist regime from spending U.S. military assistance to detain Palestinian minors, destroy Palestinian buildings, or annex parts of the West Bank.

at the City and Village Council to fully shoulder the responsibilities assigned to them by the country's law.

Russian President Vladimir Putin became the first foreign leader to offer congratulations to Raisi on his victory.

In a message, Putin hailed friendship and good neighborly ties between Iran and Russia, expressing hope that the two nations would keep moving toward closer constructive cooperation on issues of bilateral and international significance.

For his part, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad congratulated Raisi on behalf of his nation for "winning the trust" of Iranians and wished for Iran's continued progress and welfare.

"I wish for your country to move forward on the path of progress and bring about prosperity in all fields for the people, who have withstood all the conspiracies and pressures mean to break their will," he said.

"I take this opportunity to express my eagerness for closer cooperation in promoting bilateral relations between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic and pursuing common interests," Assad said.

Iraqi President Barham Salih and Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi also felicitated Raisi on securing an overwhelming majority of the votes.

The secretary-general of Iraq's Al-Nujaba resistance movement, Sheikh Akram al-Ka'abi, sent a similar note to the president-elect, expressing hope for closer ties between the two neighboring nations during Raisi's term.

Pakistan's Prime Minister also took to Twitter to hail Raisi's "landmark" election win, saying he hoped the two nations would broaden neighborly ties under Raaesi.

"Congratulations to Excellency brother Ibrahim Raisi @raisi_com on his landmark victory in the Islamic Republic of Iran's 13th Presidential elections. Look forward to working with him for further strengthening of our fraternal ties and for regional peace, progress and prosperity," read his tweet.

In a message, Yousef al-Hasseinah, a senior member of the Gaza-based Islamic Jihad offered congratulations to the Iranian nation for marking a big win in the election and hailed its support for the Palestinian resistance.

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late Friday, the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights censured the Commonwealth member states such as the UK, Australia and New Zealand for failing to provide security for the Iranians voting in the presidential election at the embassies of their host countries.

"Today, the Iranians residents of Britain, Australia and New Zealand, who went to the polls to determine their own fate, were harassed and attacked despite police presence. These countries, along with Canada which deprived half a million Iranians from the elections, are all taking cue from the royal office," the tweet read, referring to the Buckingham Palace, where Queen Elizabeth II lives.

Canada's government also did not allow the setting up of polling stations in the country in order for Iranian expats to participate in the election, in breach of international norms.

The kingdom has carried out 26 executions so far this year, according to the European Saudi Organization for Human Rights. That's compared with 27 throughout all of 2020.

Rights organizations say that the Shia community mostly based in the oil-rich Eastern Province is marginalized and persecuted by the Wabbahi rulers and that the death penalty is used to quell dissent among Shia Muslims in the country.

There are 53 people currently on death row in Saudi Arabia, according to the European Saudi Organization for Human Rights, or ESOHR, statistics from last March. Sixteen of these are going through a final appeals process and three death sentences, including al-Darwish's, have been finalized. Of the 53 prisoners, five committed crimes when they were under 18. Almost all of those on death row come from the Qatif region, home to the country's Shia minority.

and "remedy" the "demonstrated irregularities" that took place during the vote or risk having an "illegal and illegitimate" commander in chief at the helm of the country.

Reacting to the letter, interim president Francisco Sagasti said he had ordered a thorough investigation into what he said could be "harmful conduct" against the rule of law and insisted the armed forces should remain neutral.

Peru held a second round of its presidential elections on June 6, with the electoral office's vote count showing that Castillo was ahead of conservative candidate Keiko Fujimori by a razor thin margin.

The school teacher and political novice has rattled the copper-rich Andean nation's traditionally political and business elite as he has won widespread grassroots backing for pledges to rewrite the constitution and redistribute mining wealth.

"The people have awakened," Castillo told supporters recently, calling on citizens to recover the country for all Peruvians after a divisive election race.

The winner has yet to be officially declared as the party of Fujimori, the eldest daughter of imprisoned ex-president Alberto Fujimori, has called for the annulment of some 500,000 votes over fraud allegations, without providing any evidence.

This is while independent electoral observers said the vote was carried out cleanly, and Castillo's Peru Libre party also stressed that there was no evidence of suspicious activity.

The ethics tribunal of the National Jury of Elections (JNE) of Peru, the body charged with overseeing the legality of the electoral process, announced on Thursday that throwing doubt on the results without evidence was "irresponsible."

Washington, nevertheless, said that electoral authorities in the copper-rich Andean nation should be allowed to look into any fraud allegations.

"We look forward to working with the duly elected candidate," a U.S. State Department spokesperson said.

Many Latin American leaders have already celebrated Castillo's victory despite the U.S. casting aspersions and voicing support for Fujimori's allegations.

Fujimori is plagued by accusations of accepting illegal campaign contributions when she first ran for the presidency in 2011. She spent over a year in jail pending a trial.

The U.S. administrations have a long history of interference in political and economic affairs of the Latin American region, where they describe as their own backyard.

Evo Morales, who came to power as the Bolivian president in 2006, won the country's presidential election for a fourth term in October 2019.

However, the Bolivian military and U.S.-backed opposition said that the election had been rigged, a claim that was later debunked, inciting deadly street protests against Morales and his ruling MAS party.

Amid fierce protests, the military publicly called on Morales to resign. The embattled president under pressure, particularly from former police commander Yuri Calderon, eventually stepped down in November that year and was forced to go into exile to Mexico and then to Argentina.

Morales, who returned home from forced exile last year, has described his ouster as a "coup" and said there is evidence that Washington orchestrated it.

Police: Offensive on Key Afghan District Repulsed

PUL-E-KHUMRI (Dispatches) – Taliban militants' offensive to overrun Tala-o-Barfak district in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province has been foiled and the militants have suffered casualties, police said Saturday.

"The Taliban militants launched multi-pronged attacks on Tala-o-Barfak district today morning but police in sharp reaction retaliated, forcing the militants to flee

after suffering casualties, and leaving four bodies behind and three more injured," provincial police spokesman Jawed Basharat told Xinhua.

One policeman has been killed and two others injured, the official said.

Meanwhile, dozens of tribal chiefs were arrested across Afghanistan on charges of encouraging government soldiers to surrender to the Tali-

ban, officials and lawmakers said on Friday, as the militants have stepped up attacks against Kabul forces.

Fighting in Afghanistan has intensified in the past weeks. The Taliban have advanced their strikes, raising concerns in Kabul that they might retake power either by force or by winning over government troops.

The Interior Ministry an-

nounced earlier this week that the involvement of village elders in persuading Kabul soldiers to leave their bases in return for safe passage is "direct cooperation with the enemy."

"Dozens of them have been arrested, their cases will be referred to legal and judicial authorities," the ministry's spokesman Tariq Arian told Arab News.

Lebanon Importers: Medicine Stocks Will Dry Up Within Weeks

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon's Medical Equipment & Devices Importers Syndicate have warned that stocks of medication for chronic diseases and infant formula will run out within weeks.

This came in a statement issued by Head of the syndicate Karim Jbara during a press conference in the capital, Beirut.

Jbara stated: "The stock of medications, medicines for incurable diseases and baby formula will run out after a few weeks. We will not be able to overcome this critical situation unless imports are allowed."

On Thursday, the Central Bank of Lebanon issued a statement calling on the government to approve a plan to rationalize subsidies to protect the neediest groups and put an end to exploitation and evasion.

Meanwhile, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, in interfering remarks on Saturday, said that Lebanese leaders could face sanctions un-

less they pull the country away from financial collapse and strike a deal with the IMF.

Lebanon is facing what the World Bank has described as one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s.

A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since the last one resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020.

Speaking in Beirut after talks with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of the EU".

"The crisis Lebanon is facing is a domestic crisis, is a self-imposed crisis, not a crisis coming from abroad or from external factors," he claimed.

Oman, Turkey Boost Efforts to Contain COVID-19

MUSCAT (Reuters) – Oman will reimpose a curfew and suspend all commercial activities from 8 p.m. until 4 a.m. following a spike in COVID-19 cases, the country's Supreme Committee for Combating Coronavirus said on Saturday.

The curfew, which will start on Sunday, will restrict the movement of people and vehicles, with an exception for home delivery services, the committee statement said.

Cases in Oman have trended upwards since January, with a pronounced surge

since a dip in early May.

Oman has recorded 242,723 coronavirus cases and 2,626 deaths, according to the latest health ministry figures, issued on Thursday, when it had 2,015 new cases.

Meanwhile, Turkey sharply accelerated COVID-19 vaccinations this week, delivering more than 1 million a day since Monday, raising hopes of a strong economic performance in the second half of the year.

The vaccination program has been constrained since its launch in January by

sporadic vaccine procurement, but fresh supplies arrived this month. On Friday inoculations passed the 40 million mark and 40% of adults had had at least one dose, according to a Reuters tally.

Since Monday more than 6 million had been vaccinated, Health Ministry data showed, 5 million of them receiving a first dose.

The stepped-up pace has helped raise forecasts for Turkey's economic recovery following a full lockdown in May.