

Hamas Supports Escalating Resistance Against Occupation

GAZA (Dispatches) – The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has announced that it advocates escalating resistance against the Zionist regime's occupation, which has intensified its crimes against Palestinians, Al-Resalah newspaper reported.

This came in press remarks delivered by senior Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouq, who stressed that the Sharm El-Sheikh meeting plans to rein in Palestinian resistance.

Regarding European and U.S. efforts to de-escalate Zionist violations against Palestinians, Abu Marzouq said, "The Europeans do not take practical measures to pressure the Israeli occupation to stop its crimes."

He commented on the security coordination between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Zionist regime, saying, "The security coordination is based on passing information about the Palestinian resistance to the occupation. The



Members of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement, take part in a rally in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on May 28, 2021.

Palestinian Authority should know that coordination with the Palestinians is more important than security coordination with the Israeli occupation."

Abu Marzouq indicated that his movement supports hunger striker Khader Adnan, who has been under

illegal so-called administrative detention inside Zionist regime jails.

Regarding his visit to Moscow, Abu Marzouq said the two sides discussed the latest developments concerning Palestine and the Zionist troops, as well as the escalating crimes of colonial settlers in the

occupied West Bank under the cover of the extremist Zionist cabinet.

The gathering in Cairo, under the U.S. auspices, comes amid escalating violence in the occupied West Bank and Al-Quds, which has left growing numbers of Palestinian people, including women and children, dead and many others injured.

Egypt, a U.S. ally, has in the past brokered negotiations aimed at ending hostilities between the Zionist regime and Hamas, including the May 2021 war. Cairo has also been mediating between rival Palestinian factions while tirelessly calling for the resumption of Zionist-Palestinian talks, which stalled years ago.

The summit in the Egyptian city comes only two weeks after the Aqaba security summit with the aim of de-escalating the surging violence in the Palestinian territories ahead of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Protesters... (Continued From Page One)

garnered some of the largest crowds in decades.

The capital's municipal rubbish collectors have kept up a rolling strike, leaving an estimated 10,000 tonnes of trash festering in the streets, putting off tourists and worrying restaurant owners.

Unions from national train operator SNCF urged workers to continue another continuous strike that has caused major disruption on the network.

In the energy sector, the CGT union has said strikers would halt production at two refineries by this weekend or Monday at the latest.

Macron's move to force through his deeply unpopular pension reform, without a vote in parliament, could rekindle social unrest reminiscent of the Yellow Vest movement, union leaders and analysts have warned.

The grassroots movement started in 2018 as a protest against rising fuel prices and snowballed into the biggest social action against Macron in his first term.

"It's a social law of physics," said Jean-Marie Pernot, a political scientist specializing in trade unions.

"If you don't respect any of the channels meant for the expression of dissent, it will find a way to express itself directly," he told AFP.

Early Yellow Vest action was marked by strikes, weekly demonstrations, the blocking of roads and fuel depots, and the worst clashes with riot police in decades.

It was only with the imposition of restrictions on movement brought about by the Covid crisis that the movement's actions were brought to a halt.

The Yellow Vests prided themselves on having no designated leaders. They resisted attempts by left-wing politicians and unions to harness the movement's energy for their own ends.

One of their more prominent spokesmen was Jerome Rodrigues, who lost an eye to a police rubber bullet during clashes at one demo.

Within hours of Macron's pensions move on Thursday, Rodrigues told an angry, cheering crowd outside the National Assembly that the objective was now nothing less than "the defeat" of the president.

Iran...

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The Russian frigate Admiral Gorshkov and the Chinese destroyer Nanjing were involved in the drills that took place on Thursday and Friday, the defense ministry said.

The Gorshkov, which is equipped with Russia's latest-generation Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles, also took part in joint naval exercises last month with China and South Africa.

Putin arrived in Crimea on Saturday on an unannounced visit to mark the ninth anniversary of Russia's annexation of the peninsula from Ukraine.

Putin was greeted by the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, and taken to see a new children's centre and art school on what the official said was a surprise visit.

Credit...

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bank to reduce risk and improve returns.

Earlier this week, UBS Chief Executive Ralph Hamers said he was focused on organic growth rather than M&A.

Last year, he backtracked on a deal to buy Wealthfront, a \$1.4 billion transaction that would have fast-tracked UBS's growth in the U.S. market. Also last year, Hamers said he expected to see more local mergers and acquisitions than cross-border consolidation in the European bank-

ing industry.

The bank this year has said the outlook is uncertain as the war in Ukraine and the surge in interest rates drags down client confidence.

The turmoil at Credit Suisse has put another dent in the Swiss reputation for financial stability on which UBS depends.

Any tie-up would be one of the biggest since the global financial crisis.

A string of scandals over many years, top management changes, multi-billion dollar losses and an uninspiring strategy can be blamed for the mess that the 167-year-old Swiss lender now finds itself in.

The sell-off in Credit Suisse's shares began in 2021, triggered by losses associated with the collapse of investment fund Archegos and Greensill Capital.

In January 2022, Antonio Horta-Osorio resigned as chairman for breaching COVID-19 rules, just eight months after he was hired to fix the ailing bank.

In July, new CEO and restructuring expert Ulrich Koerner unveiled a strategic review - but failed to win over investors.

A rumor on an impending failure of the bank in the autumn sent customers fleeing.

Credit Suisse confirmed last month that clients had pulled 110 billion Swiss francs of funds in the fourth quarter while the bank suffered its biggest annual loss of 7.29 billion Swiss francs since the financial crisis. In December, Credit Suisse had tapped investors for 4 billion Swiss francs.

On Wednesday, Saudi National Bank, the bank's top backer, told reporters it could not give more money to the bank as it was constrained by regulatory hurdles, while saying it was happy with the bank's turnaround plan.

Credit Suisse has said it would borrow up to \$54 billion to shore up liquidity and investor confidence but some analysts believe that is unlikely to be enough to soothe investors.

In the early days of the global financial crisis in 2008, UBS took on Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC as an investor but the stake sell-down ultimately resulted in a loss for GIC.

Divesting stakes in various assets is an option as Credit Suisse owns an asset management business and a stake in SIX Group, which runs the Zurich stock exchange.

Credit Suisse has pivoted to a strategy to cater to rich clients while cutting back on its volatile investment banking business and has already announced plans to spin it off.

The bank ranks among the world's largest wealth managers and crucially it is one of 30 global systemically important banks, whose failure would cause ripples through the entire financial system.

Credit Suisse has a local Swiss bank, wealth management, investment banking and asset management operations. It has just over 50,000 employees and 1.6 trillion Swiss francs in assets under management at the end of 2021.

With more than 150 offices in around 50 countries, Credit Suisse is the private bank for a large number of entrepreneurs, rich and ultra rich individuals and companies.

Turkey...

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if it wanted to keep "pressure on Iran," Kissinger added.

The deal also amounted to a major step by Beijing in its efforts to have a say in shaping the "world order."

"China has in recent years declared that it needs to be a participant in the creation of the world order. It has now made a significant move in that direction" by mediating the agreement, Kissinger said.

The Washington Post said the U.S. is no longer the "indispensable power" in the Middle East.

Hezbollah: U.S. Sanctions Responsible for Lebanon Crises

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – The head of the religious council of Hezbollah resistance movement has censured the illegal sanctions imposed by the United States on Lebanon, stating that the coercive measure are primarily responsible for the financial meltdown and political stalemate in the Arab country.

"Is there any reason for the country's calamities other than the US and its blockade? The purpose of such bids is to force the Lebanese nation into capitulation," Sheikh Mohammad Yazbek said.

"The honorable people of Lebanon will neither be deceived nor surrender. They exercise so much patience, and God willing, will pull off a historic victory at last," he

added. Lebanon's presidency has seen stalemate several times since the 1975-1990 civil war. The country has also had only a caretaker government since May.

The Arab country has been mired in an economic crisis that the World Bank has dubbed one of the worst in recent history, which comes amid crippling sanctions imposed by the U.S. and its allies.

The Lebanese pound has lost more than 95 percent of its value on the black market since 2019.

According to the United Nations, the ongoing financial crisis in Lebanon has caused poverty rates to reach more than 80 percent of the population, and food prices have

risen by an astonishing 2,000 percent.

Creditors under the U.S. influence such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have conditioned the release of billions of dollars in emergency loans to specific reforms which many observers would make the country dependent on the West.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sheikh Yezbek pointed to the uptick in Israeli violence and atrocities against Palestinians in light of the international community's silence and apathy of the so-called advocates of human rights.

"Why doesn't the civilized world condemn the Israeli enemy for its brutal killings of Palestinians? This silence comes as the Zionist enemy

has violated all principles, charters and international treaties," he said.

Over the past months, the Zionist regime has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these attacks, dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives and many others have been arrested.

Most of the raids have focused on Nablus and Jenin, where Zionist troops have been trying to stifle a growing Palestinian resistance in the occupied cities.

Local and international rights groups have condemned the Zionist regime's excessive use of force and "shoot-to-kill policy" against Palestinians.

Mortar Mine Blast Kills 2 Children, Injures 2 in Afghanistan

PUL-E-ALAM (Xinhua) – Two children were killed and two others injured as a mortar mine left over from past wars went off in Afghanistan's eastern Logar province, the state-run Bakhtar news agency reported on Saturday.

A group of children found a toy-like device in the Altamor area of Pul-e-Alam city, the capital of Logar province, on Friday evening and began playing with it when the

device suddenly exploded, killing the two children on the spot and injuring two more, the news agency reported.

A similar blast injured four children in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar province last week.

Afghanistan is reportedly one of the most mine-contaminated countries in the world as dozens of people mostly children are killed and maimed annually in blasts of

unexploded devices left over from the past four decades of wars and civil conflicts.

In another development, Afghan security forces raided hideouts of the Daesh terror group in northern Balkh province Friday night, killing several militants, chief spokesman of the Afghan caretaker administration Zabihullah Mujahid said Saturday.

The raid was conducted in Po-

lice Districts 5, 6 and 8 of Mazar-i-sharif city, the provincial capital of Afghanistan's northern Balkh province, according to the official.

Mujahid didn't specify the number of Daesh militants killed in the operations. He said one security personnel was injured during the operations.

The security forces have also seized arms and ammunition during the operations.

Fear of Big Quake Grips Istanbul

ANKARA (AFP) – The helmet-topped engineer drove his pointy instrument into the concrete to test whether Durmus Uygun's building will crumble when the feared big quake finally strikes Istanbul.

"I'm pretty confident but my children aren't convinced, so we're having this test done," said Uygun, who lives in one of the Turkish megalopolis' poorer and more densely packed neighborhoods.

"If the result is good, we will live in peace. But who knows where we will be when the earthquake hits? We may be at the supermarket or at work — that's what scares us."

In his fifties and wearing a black beret, Uygun is far from the only one living in fear in Istanbul.

Turkey's cultural and economic capital is home to up to 20 million people, many still haunted by memories of the last "Big One" that struck just east of the city in 1999. More than 17,000 people died, including 1,000 in Istanbul.

The city has grown substantially since then, becoming a magnet for people attracted by its booming economy — and oblivious to the active fault line running along its southern edge.

That changed on Feb. 6, when a 7.8-magnitude

earthquake killed more than 48,000 in southeastern Turkey and nearly 6,000 over the border in Syria, leaving entire cities in ruins.

A state of collective psychosis has since gripped Istanbulites, who have requested more than 140,000 checks of the type being conducted on Uygun's apartment building.

By the municipality's own admission, nearly 100,000 buildings will collapse or be seriously damaged in the event of a 7.5-magnitude quake.

Fifty teams of engineers have been roaming the city since last month's disaster, measuring the quality of concrete and the width of steel reinforcement bars.

If the risk to the building is deemed "very high," it could be condemned to demolition and occupants forced to move out.

Some of Istanbul's southern districts lie just 15 km from the North Anatolian Fault, which is distinct from the equally active East Anatolian Fault on which last month's quake struck.

Seismologists have calculated a 47-percent chance of an earthquake with a magnitude above 7.3 hitting Istanbul within 30 years.

Two blocks from Uygun's building, hardware store

owner Ali Nezir has started selling whistles to locals who fear getting trapped under tons of concrete.

"People are scared," said Nezir, whose small shop is on the ground floor of a 12-story tower.

Some residents say they have started storing biscuits and water bottles at the foot of their beds in case the quake comes in the middle of the night, leaving them trapped.

Uygun has prepared some emergency bags for his family containing enough to survive on while waiting for help.

Ugur Erisoglu, an Istanbul wholesaler, offers earthquake survival bags for 200 lira (\$10) containing torches, blankets, medical kits and neck braces.

"We used to sell 1,000 a month," Erisoglu said. "We have received 15,000 orders since the earthquake, including 8,000 from Istanbul."

The sudden reminder of the threat hanging over Turkey's main city is forcing some to seriously contemplate moving home.

"There is strong demand for northern districts of Istanbul, further from the fault line, and for individual houses," said Mehmet Erkek, the general manager of Zingat, a real estate listings platform.