

# Islamic Jihad Angry With Egypt ‘Betrayal’ Ahead of Gaza Raids

CAIRO (Middle East Eye) – Four hours before the Zionist regime began bombing the Gaza Strip on Friday, Egyptian mediators told the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement that the occupying regime was not looking for an escalation, and would respond “positively” to a request to release two PIJ members from prison. A Zionist cabinet meeting to be held on Sunday would announce this as a breakthrough in negotiations, the movement was reportedly told.

The assurances were conveyed to a senior member of the PIJ’s political bureau by Egyptian mediator Brigadier Ahmed Abdul Khaliq at noon on Friday local time, four hours and twenty minutes before the first Zionist air strike struck the Gaza Strip, sources close to the PIJ told Middle East Eye.

In the first detailed account of the negotiations that preceded the regime’s latest offensive on Gaza, MEE can reveal there is now “considerable anger” towards Egyptian intelligence services from the PIJ over the role played by Cairo in the hours before the occupying regime launched its most recent bombing campaign.

“[The PIJ] believe they have been betrayed by the Egyptians and that



Fighters with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement parade with their weapons in the streets of Gaza City during a rally on 29 May 2021.

they were part of the game - to make them feel relaxed and secure just before the air strikes took place,” a senior Palestinian source close to the PIJ told MEE.

“There is a lot of anger and tension within Islamic Jihad because of the role of [the] Egyptian mediation, because they consider the Egyptians gave them misleading information and hints just before the air strikes. As a result of this information, the Islamic Jihad relaxed and was unprepared for the air strikes.”

Sources close to the PIJ told MEE that Abdul Khaliq incorrectly told Khaled al-Batsh, a senior member

of the PIJ’s political bureau, that there had been a “breakthrough” in indirect negotiations.

Zionist agents reportedly passed the following message to the PIJ through Egyptian intelligence: “We want to end this escalation. Give us until Sunday and we are pushing them [the occupying regime’s political leaders] to agree.”

Tensions escalated early last week when Zionist troops arrested Basam al-Saadi, a senior PIJ commander, in the occupied West Bank.

Saadi was arrested following a Zionist raid in the city of Jenin, during which a Palestinian teenager was

killed.

“When the Sheikh [Saadi] was arrested, there was some discussion in Gaza over whether to retaliate. The way he was arrested was humiliating, so that generated some anger. Immediately [the] Egyptians tried to calm the situation,” one source with knowledge of the negotiations told MEE.

“The man doing that was the brigadier. He conveyed messages that the Shin Bet [the regime’s internal spy agency] was not interested in escalation.”

According to one source close to the PIJ, the movement asked Egyptian intelligence, and later obtained, filmed assurances of Saadi’s physical wellbeing.

“This was taken as a good sign,” the PIJ source said.

The PIJ then demanded the release of both Saadi and PIJ prisoner Khalil Awawdah, who has refused food for more than 150 days in a bid to draw attention to his detention by the regime without trial or charge.

Egyptian intelligence had told the PIJ that Shin Bet was “dealing positively” with the requests, and that they were very keen to ease tensions. They also said they were pushing the Zionist cabinet for the release of the two men.

## Palestinian Hunger Striker Moved to Hospital as Health Worsens

WEST BANK (Al Jazeera) – **Palestinian prisoner Khalil Awawdeh, on hunger strike for more than 150 days in protest at his so-called administrative detention without charge or trial, was transferred to a clinic on Thursday, following a deterioration in his health.**

According to the Palestinian Prisoners’ Club, Awawdeh was transferred by Zionist regime authorities to the Shamir Medical Center, southeast of Tel Aviv, over fears he could suffer permanent neurological damage.

The head of the group, Qadura Fares, said he “could die at any moment”.

On Sunday evening, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) chief, Ziyad Al-Nakhalah, said during

a news conference that the occupying regime had accepted the release of Awawdeh as part of the ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt following the regime’s offensive against Gaza over the weekend, which killed 48 Palestinians, including 17 children.

Earlier on Thursday, Doctors Without Borders confirmed that the health of Awawdeh, 40, had seriously deteriorated through a report it submitted to the occupying regime’s military court of appeal, according to news website Arab48.

Awawdeh’s lawyer, Ahlam Hadad, said his client, who was detained in December 2021, has recently begun using a wheelchair and was showing signs of memory loss and speech difficulties, Ynet

news said.

A father of four, Awadeh is from the occupied West Bank village of Idna, near Al-Khalil. He studied economics at Al-Quds Open University but has not graduated.

The Palestinian Prisoners’ Club, which represents former and current inmates, said Awadeh faces “the danger of death due to his difficult health condition which worsens with the passage of time”. It added that dozens of other prisoners had gone on hunger strike in solidarity with his plight.

The club said Awawdeh halted his strike two months ago, when he allegedly received a promise of a release, but resumed it allegedly having suspected he was being lied to.

Awadeh’s wife, Dalal, told Ynet her husband had spent a total of six years in ‘administrative detention’ and she has been allowed to visit him only once.

There are 4,450 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, 560 of them serving ‘administrative detention’.

The highly controversial policy, used almost exclusively against Palestinians, allows for detention without charge or trial for renewable periods of three to six months, without the possibility of appeal or knowing what accusations are being leveled against the detainees.

Many Palestinian prisoners have resorted to hunger strikes to protest against the policy in the past and force their release.

## Iraq Extends Deal to Supply Fuel to Lebanon

BAGHDAD (MEMO) – **Iraq has agreed to renew a one-year deal to provide Lebanon with fuel for its power plants as Beirut battles what the World Bank has said is the world’s worst economic crisis since the 1850s. In return Baghdad will receive in-kind services which are expected to be agreed during an Iraqi ministerial delegation visit to Lebanon soon.**

“The Iraqi government, headed by Mr. Mustafa al-Kadhemi, approved in a meeting today... to extend the supply of fuel to Lebanon... for a period of one year, under the same conditions as before,” Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati’s office said in an official statement Friday.

Iraq signed an agreement in July 2021 to

give cash-strapped Lebanon one million tonnes of fuel in exchange for services including health care for Iraqi citizens, as the Mediterranean country grapples with power cuts of up to 23 hours a day during an unprecedented economic crisis.

The deal is the only thing preventing Lebanon’s beleaguered population from complete blackout. For the past year, Lebanon’s power plants have been dependent on the deal with Iraq to produce one to two hours of electricity per day. Residents in the poverty-stricken country largely rely on expensive private generators for power the rest of the time.

The deal was meant to alleviate Lebanon’s acute power shortage, which last summer

reached crisis levels when the government was unable to subsidize fuel imports. When Lebanon subsequently removed those subsidies domestic fuel prices skyrocketed. The conflict in Ukraine pushed the price even higher.

When the 2021 deal was signed it was worth \$300-\$400 million, Raymond Ghajar, the energy minister at the time, said. The deal is now worth an estimated \$570 million because of an increase in global fuel prices.

An Iraqi ministerial delegation is expected to visit Beirut shortly to agree on the in-kind services that Baghdad wants in return for the fuel, Lebanon’s Energy Minister Walid Fayad is reported saying.

to the FBI search at Mar-a-Lago.

The suspected presence of nuclear weapons documents at Mar-a-Lago could explain why Garland took such a politically charged step as ordering FBI agents into a former president’s house, as retrieving them would be seen as a national security priority.

If it turns out that Trump did take such material from the White House, it would raise the question of why a former president would need such closely guarded secrets after leaving office. The possibility that such material would be held at an unsecured facility, where guests come and go and where it would be potentially vulnerable to penetration by a foreign intelligence service, would alarm government officials.

Trump was particularly fixated on the U.S. nuclear arsenal while he was in the White House, and boasted about being privy to highly secret information.

In the summer of 2017 he told U.S. military leaders he wanted an arsenal comparable to its cold war peak, which would have involved a ten-fold increase, a demand that reportedly led the then secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, describe him as a “fucking moron”. Trump publicly threatened to obliterate both North Korea and Afghanistan.

In his book on the Trump presidency, Rage, Bob Woodward quoted the former president as telling him: “We have stuff that you haven’t even seen or heard about. We have stuff that Putin and Xi have never heard about before. There’s nobody – what we have is incredible.”

Woodward said he was later told the U.S. did indeed have an unspecified new weapons system, and officials were “surprised” that Trump had disclosed the fact.

Cheryl Rofer, a chemist who worked on nuclear weapons at the Los Alamos national laboratory said there were varying classification levels applying to different kinds of documentation.

“Information about the design of nuclear weapons is called Restricted Data and is ‘born classified’. That means it is assumed to be classified unless declassified,” Rofer, who writes a blog titled Nuclear Diner, wrote on Twitter. But she added: “There’s no reason for a president to have nuclear weapons design information that I can see.”

Among the nuclear documents that Trump would routinely have had access to would be the classified version of the Nuclear Posture Review, about U.S. capabilities and policies. A military aide is always close to the president carrying the “nuclear football”, a briefcase containing nuclear strike options, but it would be unusual for those documents to be taken out of the football.

Another possibility Rofer pointed to is that Trump could have retained his nuclear “biscuit”, a piece of plastic like a credit card with the identification codes necessary for nuclear launch. Those codes would have been changed however the moment Biden took office at noon on January 20, 2021.

### Iran...

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“Iran does not accept any chang-

es in the political geography of the region and is ready to use all its capacities to establish peace and stability in the Caucasus region and its growth and development,” the Iranian president said.

The Armenian prime minister gave a detailed report on the recent conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the telephone conversation.

Pashinyan also expressed his satisfaction with the development of Tehran-Yerevan relations and emphasized his country’s readiness to facilitate the transit of goods between the two countries and to increase cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, including road and energy.

### U.S. ...

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hope that the current negotiations will soon come to a conclusion in order to secure the rights of the Iranian nation and the common interests of all parties,” Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.

In a phone call on Monday, Amir-Abdollahian told EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell Iran “expected that all sides show determination and seriousness to reach the final text of the agreement.”

The Iranian foreign minister, in his talks with Cavosoglu, also “strongly condemned the brutal attack of the Zionist regime on Gaza, the assassination of resistance commanders and the martyrdom of a group of defenseless Palestinian people, especially the killing of innocent children”.

Cavosoglu also emphasized the unjustifiability and inhumanity of the killing of civilians, especially children by Israel.

The two top diplomats touched on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s visit to Tehran last month with a high-ranking delegation, assessing it as positive. They also exchanged views on how to follow up on the agreements and achievements of the 7th meeting of the Iran-Turkey Supreme Cooperation Council.

Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian cited President Ebrahimi Raisi’s order to diligently pursue the agreements reached during President Erdogan’s visit to Tehran, saying it is necessary to increase communication between the ministries and institutions of the two countries in order to realize the planned targets in line with the interests of the two nations.

### China...

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agreement and bring the U.S. back into compliance with the accord.

While the Biden administration has claimed to be ready to return to compliance with the deal, it has taken no practical measures to undo Washington’s past wrongs.

Throughout the course of the Vienna talks, Russia and China have supported Iran’s position on the need for the U.S. to remove all post-JCPOA sanctions and offer assurances that it will not leave the deal again.

The last round of negotiations wrapped up on Tuesday, with the parties mulling over the text submitted by the European Union.

### Criminal...

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political motives and aims and in fact amount to forward escape, creating propaganda ruse and especially escaping the responsibility of responding to numerous terrorist crimes that the American government has either directly participated in, such as the cow-

ardly assassination of General Martyr Soleimani, or like the terrorist crimes committed by the Zionist regime and terrorist groups like Daesh, they have been committed with the support of America,” the Iranian spokesman added.

Kanaani also warned Washington against any action against Iranian citizens under the pretext

of those “ridiculous” accusations, emphasizing that Tehran reserves the right to take any action within the framework of international law to defend the rights of its government and citizens.

### Trump...

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came on yet another extraordi-

nary day that reprised the chaos and recriminations of Trump’s presidency, and carved acrimonious new political divides ahead of the former President’s likely run for the White House.

Several U.S. national media outlets, including the New York Times, CBS, the Washington Post, CNN and NBC have asked the court to unseal everything related