

# Palestinian Children Flee as Zionist Troops Demolish Elementary School

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Zionist troops demolished a Palestinian elementary school near the city of Al-Khalil in the southern occupied West Bank on Wednesday.

Asafat, a boys' and girls' school, was demolished in Asafat al-Fawqa, one of the villages that make up the area of Masafer Yatta, whose Palestinian residents have long been threatened with eviction and demolition orders by Zionist regime authorities.

Footage taken by Israeli activist Itai Feitelson before the demolition show teachers helping young Palestinian students out of a classroom window, with Zionist troops standing outside.

Dozens of Zionist troops then cordoned off the area around the school, which stood on a hill, while a bulldozer flattened it. A photo published afterwards by Israeli rights group B'Tselem showed a pile of debris where the school once stood.

The Asafat school serves the Palestinian residents of Asafat al-Fawqa, Asafat al-Tahta, Maghay-



Zionist troops forces cordoned off the Asafat school in Masafer Yatta, in the south of the occupied West Bank, before demolishing it, on 23 November 2022.

er al-Ubaid and Tuba.

The Palestinian Ministry of Education said the demolition was "a heinous crime".

"These practices have become a flagrant violation of students' right to safe and free education," the ministry said, according to Wafa news agency.

The ministry said that dozens of Palestinian students in Masafer Yatta now had no school to attend.

The European Union delegation to the Palestinians tweeted that it was "appalled" by the school demolition and affirmed that Palestinian educational rights must be respected.

"Greatly alarmed by Israeli measures targeting humanitarian structures. Continued coercive measures threaten the existence of the Palestinian communities" in Masafer Yatta, the delegation

wrote.

Wafa reported that Zionist troops confiscated the school's stationery, tables and chairs before flattening the building.

The regime's demolition of the Asafat school comes after a visit on Tuesday to Masafer Yatta by Palestinian officials and representatives of international and human rights groups, in solidarity with its Palestinian residents.

In August, the occupying regime's so-called supreme court rejected an appeal from Palestinian residents of the area against the demolition of clinics, two schools and other buildings in the area.

The regime declared the 30-square-kilometre territory a restricted military area in the early 1980s, claiming it was uninhabited.

Masafer Yatta residents say many of the Palestinian families have been permanently residing in the area since before the regime illegally occupied the West Bank in the 1967 war.

## Opposition Blasts Bahrain Over 'Lingering Death' of Jailed Activist

MANAMA (Dispatches) – A Bahraini opposition movement has blasted the Al Khalifah regime over its harsh measures against jailed human rights activists and pro-democracy campaigners in the country, warning of prominent opposition leader Hasan Mushaima's "lingering death".

"It is no secret that the Al Khalifah regime is exercising flagrant and deliberate medical neglect against distinguished opposition figure and Secretary-General of Haq Movement for Civil Liberties and Democracy, Hasan Mushaima, who has been incarcerated in prison since 2011," said the February 14 Youth Coalition.

February 14 Youth Coalition, also known as The Coalition, is a Bahraini youth movement led by anonymous individuals, taking its name from the date when the popular uprising against the ruling Manama regime began.

It added that the 74-year-old vet-

eran political dissident has not received proper medication and treatment even though he suffers from chronic diseases.

"Prison officials have been intentionally delaying provision of necessary medicine to Mushaima, and adamantly refused to take him to hospital for examinations and required treatments, until his health condition deteriorated sharply," the group said in the statement.

"Under pressure from him and his family, he was finally transferred to Hamad Kanoo Health Center in the city of Riffa, but his situation did not improve much. His relatives were repeatedly prevented from visiting him, prompting them to stage a sit-in protest in front of the medical center for two straight days."

It further noted that Bahraini regime forces raided the sit-in, arbitrarily arrested the protesters and took them to Hooraa Police Station in

the capital Manama.

"We call upon our noble people to express firm solidarity with Mushaima, and other political prisoners. We hold the Al Khalifah regime fully responsible for his life, especially as he is suffering from a terminal illness, and is languishing in prisons with a life sentence.

"Since his arrest in March 2011, prison authorities have neglected his healthcare and his right to receive required treatment. They have also prevented his family from visiting him. Such measures are indicative of the extent of repression that the regime is practicing against opposition figures which could be best described as slow death as a result of deliberate medical negligence," the February 14 Youth Coalition stated.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's leading Shia cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim has reaffirmed his support for all Bahraini political prisoners and human rights

defenders, and urged people not to forget them.

"Political prisoners should not be forgotten, as such an approach amounts to a downfall of national, religious, moral and patriotic values. They were imprisoned only because of their struggle for the rights and dignity of the Bahraini nation," he wrote in a tweet.

Sheikh Qassim stressed that the imprisonment of political activists is a tragedy for the entire Bahraini nation.

Anti-regime demonstrations have been regularly held in Bahrain since the popular uprising began in mid-February 2011.

People demand that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a fair system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama, however, has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent.

## Ambassador Calls for Aid Distribution in Syria to Encourage Refugees' Return

BEIRUT (Xinhua) – Syrian ambassador to Lebanon Ali Abdel Karim Ali on Wednesday called on the international community to provide financial assistance to Syrian refugees after they return to their home country in order to encourage more Syrians to follow suit.

"If the funds provided by the international community are given to refugees after they enter Syria, their situation will improve along with the Syrian state's aid to its citizens," the Elnashra news website quoted Ali as saying during his meeting with former Lebanese President Emile Lahoud.

While expressing Syria's willingness to receive all citizens back in the country to contribute to its reconstruction after years of war and destruction, the ambassador said Syrian refugees in Lebanon would likely remain where they were if funds were distributed to them in Lebanon.

The ambassador praised the position of the Lebanese government officials, including the ministers of social affairs and the displaced, who aim to ensure the safe return of Syrian refugees to their home country.

Earlier this year, Lebanon launched a plan to return 15,000 Syrian refugees monthly to their homeland.

Abbas Ibrahim, chief of the Lebanese General Security, said last month that around 500,000 Syrian refugees have registered for their voluntary return from Lebanon to their homeland and the number is expected to rise in the near future.

Lebanon is hosting the largest number of refugees per capita, with the government estimating that 2 million Syrian refugees are currently living in the country.

## Taliban Lash 12 People Before Stadium Crowd in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (AP) – The Taliban lashed three women and nine men in front of hundreds of spectators in a provincial sports stadium Wednesday, signaling the group's resumption of a form of punishment that was a hallmark of their rule in the 1990s.

The office of the governor of Logar province, south of the capital of Kabul, invited "honorable scholars, mujahideen, elders, tribal leaders and local people" to the stadium in the town of Pul Alam in Logar. The invitations for the 9 a.m. event were extended via social media.

Those being punished received between 21 and 39 lashes each, after being convicted in

a local court of theft and adultery, said an official in the governor's office who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to share details with the media.

The official said hundreds of people attended the lashings and that a ban was imposed on taking photos and video.

Such public lashings, as well as public executions and stoning for purported crimes, were common during the first period of Taliban rule, from 1996 until 2001 when the militants were driven out in a U.S.-led invasion.

After a 20-year insurgency, the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, coinciding with the withdrawal of U.S. and other foreign

troops from the country.

In the immediate aftermath of their second takeover of the country, the Taliban promised to be more moderate and allow for women's and minority rights. Instead, they have restricted rights and freedoms, including a ban on girl's education beyond the sixth grade.

The first confirmed public lashing since last year's Taliban takeover took place Nov. 11, when 19 men and women received 39 lashes each for alleged theft, adultery and running away from home.

The resumption of the practice underscored the Taliban's intention of sticking to their past rules.

### Plot...

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"As long as there are threats against Iran from neighboring countries, our armed forces will continue their measures to ensure maximum national security based on the international law and the United Nations Charter," the top diplomat stressed.

His remarks came as the IRGC resumed its missile and drone attacks targeting terrorist groups in the Pardi region deep inside Iraqi Kurdistan.

Since September 24, the IRGC has launched a series of air raids against the terrorist positions while urging the Iraqi authorities to act against them.

### IAEA Deviated From Technical Path

Amir-Abdollahian also reacted to a recent anti-Iran resolution passed by the IAEA Board of Governors (BoG) at the behest of the U.S. and European countries.

He noted that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had deviated from the technical path to take a political approach in its dealings with Iran.

An Iranian delegation, according to the foreign minister, recently held talks with the UN nuclear agency in Vienna and achieved a "roadmap" to resolve the outstanding issues as the agency promised to send its experts to Iran for technical talks.

"However, we abruptly faced a new resolution against the Iranian nation through a hybrid war," the top diplomat stressed.

The draft resolution, passed on Thursday, criticized Iran for what it called lack of cooperation with the agency. It was put forward by the United States, Britain, France and Germany, in continuation of their maximum pressure on Iran. Russia and China voted against the motion.

Iran has already voiced readiness to hold technical talks with IAEA experts to discuss the accusations related to so-called "undeclared" nuclear sites, which were made based on forged documents provided to the agency by the Israeli regime.

Amir-Abdollahian also stressed that Iran and the U.S. continue to have differences on key issues in order to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and lift cruel sanctions on Iran.

Resolving the remaining issues with the IAEA, receiving guarantees on the economic benefits of the deal for Iran, and removing unilateral sanctions are the three issues that need to be worked out, he said.

According to the foreign minister, Iran and the U.S. continue to exchange messages but American officials take a "hypocritical" stance while talking to mainstream Western media by saying something other than what they say in their messages to Iran.

Iran, continued the minister, has expressed readiness to attend a ministerial summit of JCPOA members in Vienna provided that other parties would also be ready for it. "This will happen when we make sure about our reasonable demands."

### Twin...

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said its word to the occupation; our people are steadfast and adhere to the choice of resistance," he said.

Similarly, the Palestinian Liberation Organization hailed the two operations and said they come in the context of a firm and normal response in face of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and terrorism against Palestinians.

In a statement it released following the operations, the PLO said, "The crimes of the occupation, the terror of its settlers, the desecration of the land and the people, the Judaization of Al-Quds, the execution of (Palestinian) citizens, the intimidation of the people, and other aggressive measures all aim at intimidating our people and discouraging them from continuing their struggle and resistance."

The statement underlined that such an apartheid regime and occupation can only be confronted through resistance.

Some analysts say such bombing attacks are very unusual and haven't taken place for several years. It has the characteristics of the operations that happened during the second Palestinian Intifada two decades ago, they say.

Israeli Knesset member Itmar Ben Gvir was reported by Hebrew media as saying that "the two explosions returned us back" to the Intifada era.

The Second Intifada broke out in September 2000 following a visit by the occupying regime's then leader Ariel Sharon to Haram al-Sharif or Temple Mount in Al-Quds, in a move that was denounced by Palestinians as highly provocative. The uprising ended in February 2005 following a truce between the Zionists and the Palestinians.

The occupied territories have been the scene of heightened tensions between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

During the past few months, Israeli forces

have stepped up overnight raids and killings against Palestinians, mainly in the West Bank cities of Jenin and Nablus, where new groups of Palestinian resistance fighters have been formed.

At least 190 Palestinians have been martyred by Israeli forces in the illegally occupied West Bank and besieged Gaza Strip since the beginning of 2022, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

### Multiple...

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fire at a nightclub in Colorado, killing five people and wounding 17. Earlier in the year, the country was shaken by the deaths of 21 when a gunman stormed an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Tuesday's shooting also brought back memories of another at a Walmart in 2019, when a gunman police say was targeting Mexicans opened fire at a store in El Paso, Texas, and killed 22 people.

A 911 call about the shooting in Chesapeake, which is Virginia's second-largest city and lies next to the seaside communities of Norfolk and Virginia Beach, came in just after 10 p.m. The store was open at the time, but Solesky didn't know how many shoppers were inside or whether the gunman was working.

Asked whether there was a security guard present, the police chief said he didn't know.

Joetta Jeffery told CNN that she received text messages from her mother who was inside the store when the shots were fired. Her mother, Betsy Umphlett, was not injured.

"I'm crying, I'm shaking," Jeffery said. "I had just talked to her about buying turkeys for Thanksgiving, then this text came in."

One man was seen waiting at a hospital after learning that his brother was dead, and others shrieked as they left a conference center set up as a family reunification center, The Virginian-Pilot reported.

Camille Buggs, a former Walmart employee, told the paper she went to the conference center seeking information about her former co-workers.

"You always say you don't think it would happen in your town, in your neighborhood, in your store — in your favorite store and that's the thing that has me shocked," said Buggs, 58, of Chesapeake.

Walmart tweeted early Wednesday that it was "shocked at this tragic event."

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner said in a tweet that he was "sickened by reports of yet another mass shooting, this time at a Walmart in Chesapeake."

State Sen. Louise Lucas echoed Warner's sentiment, tweeting that she was "absolutely heartbroken that America's latest mass shooting took place in a Walmart in my district."

### IRGC...

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IRGC spokesman Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif said at the time that the Zionist regime will be dealt with decisively for the killing of the two advisors.

"The Zionist enemy knows that it will not benefit from such crimes and will receive a decisive response," he said.

The IRGC, in a statement, vowed to avenge the martyrdom of the two slain advisors.

"Undoubtedly, the Zionist regime will pay the price of this atrocity," the IRGC's Public Relations Office said in a statement back then.

### Iraqis...

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warned Iraqi Kurdistan's local authorities that it will not tolerate the presence and activity of terrorist groups along its northwestern borders, saying the country will give a decisive response should those areas become a hub of anti-Islamic Republic terrorists.

Back in May, the IRGC struck and demolished positions of terrorist groups operating near the country's western borders in Iraq's northern Kurdish regional capital of Erbil.

Also in September last year, the IRGC launched an attack in northern Iraq, where it destroyed four bases belonging to hostile groups.

### Navy...

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underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Armed Forces Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has repeatedly called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities, decrying enemies for questioning the country's missile program.