Ex-Israeli Intel Head: Iranians 'Pragmatic', 'Patient'

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- A former head of Israel's military intelligence has owned up to the fact that Iran is "pragmatic" and exerts ample "patience" to follow through its plans in the West Asia region, one of which he says is the elimination of Israel.

Aharon Ze'evi-Farkash, the former head of Israeli military intelligence directorate (Aman), said in an interview with Israeli media that the regime does not have a "strategic policy" to deal with Iran and deter the Islamic Republic's



U.S. Base in Iraq Comes Under Drone Strike

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- The Ain al-Asad air base housing U.S. troops in Iraq has come under a fresh attack by resistance forces opposing Washington's support for the Israeli regime's war on Gaza.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) on Monday launched a drone attack on the base located in the western province of Anbar. The attack came just two days after Iraqi resistance groups fired multiple ballistic missiles and rockets at Ain al-Asad, reportedly causing traumatic brain injury for the personnel in the base.

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Viewpoint

The Heavy Cost of US Lies

Farewell to Military Advisors **Assassinated** in Syria



Iran to Face UAE in Group Winner Match at Asian Cup



Protests Continue Worldwide in Support of **Palestine**



Families of Captives Storm Knesset

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) --Protesters have stormed a parliamentary committee session in Occupied Al-Quds on Wednesday amid growing outrage over Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to agree to a deal to end hostilities in Gaza and release Israeli captives.

They pushed into the Knesset Finance Committee discussion, demanding action from the lawmakers to free their family members held by the fighters of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas since October 7,

A woman held up pictures of three family members, saying, "Just one I'd like to get back alive, one out of three!"

Other protesters, clad in black T-shirts, held up signs reading, "You will not sit here while they die there.'

"Release them now, now, now!" they chanted.

A group of protests also gathered outside Netanyahu's coastal residence, calling on the head of the regime to work for the release of Israeli captives.

Netanyahu has so far rejected any deal with Hamas for the release of captives. On Sunday, he once again rejected conditions presented by Hamas to end the conflict in exchange for the release of hostages. He says such a prospect means "surrender."

Out of the 253 captives Israel says Hamas captured during Operation Al-Aqsa Storm of October 7, the regime believes 132 are still in Gaza, of whom 104 are thought to be alive.

A growing number of reports suggest that Israeli military forces may have been responsible for the death of their own soldiers in Hamas custody.

On Friday, the mother of a slain Israeli soldier who was held captive by Hamas said the regime's forces gassed her son to death while he was being held in a tunnel in Gaza.

And Hamas said in mid-January that two of the captives had been killed in Israeli airstrikes

University Sheltering Gazans in Khan Younis Bombed



A woman wails as lifeless bodies of Palestinians martyred in Israeli attacks are brought to the mortuary of Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza on January 22, 2024.

GAZA STRIP, Palestinian Territories (Dispatches) - Gazans sheltered Monday from intense bombing and shooting in the city of Khan Younis.

Witnesses reported deadly strikes and fierce fighting between Zionists soldiers and Hamas combatants overnight in the southern city which has become the latest epicenter of the

The health ministry in Hamasrun Gaza reported on Monday that more than 120 people had been martyred in the previous 24

"Artillery shelling has not stopped since 5:00 am," said Yunis Abdel Razek, 52, sheltering with his family at the city's Al-Agsa University.

Mahdi Antar, 21, had sought refuge at Al-Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis.

"The situation is terrifying. Tonight and today are very difficult, bombing and shooting. I do not know what to do. I think they will storm the hospital," he said.

Victims of the latest Israeli strikes were brought to the hospital, at least one on a handpulled cart.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said Zionist forces were "besieging" their ambulance centre "and targeting anyone attempting to move in the area".

At one building that had been hit, men walked over broken concrete with only torches casting a dusty light to help them search in the darkness for survi-

Al-Aqsa University campus in Khan Younis opened its doors for the refugees from the north of the Strip following the Israeli invasion on 7 October.

"Today, the university has been bombarded by the Israeli occupation which has led to the death of a number of people," said Birzeit University, based in the occupied West Bank, in a post

"Birzeit sees this as a blatant violation of all the international charters and laws that incriminate the violation of the sanctity of academic institutions," it added.

"The Israeli occupation, since Oct. 7, has destroyed more than 390 academic institutions, the last of which was bombing Al-Israa University, and The Islamic University. The university calls on the international world to work in order to stop this genocidal crimes in Gaza," the university said.

Palestinians in Gaza have little way of communicating with those in the outside world amidst an Israel-imposed communications blackout.

For days, those without international sim cards have had no internet or telecommunications

Palestinians say this is a deliberate move by Israel to prevent reports of war crimes from getting out to the world.

Of the 600,000 people facing starvation globally, only five percent live outside of Gaza, according to figures from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

The organization made up of UN agencies and other non-profit groups also said 90 percent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million

people faces food insecurity.

Israel blocked food and energy supplies into Gaza when it began its war on the Palestinian territory in October.

The area had already been under a military blockade since

The strikes came as European Union foreign ministers held meetings in Brussels with top diplomats from the warring sides and key Arab states.

The 27 EU ministers first met Israel's foreign minister Israel Katz before sitting down separately with the Palestinian Authority's top diplomat, Riyad al-Maliki.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told the occupying regime of Israel "peace and stability cannot be built only by military means".

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has drawn condemnation from the United Nations and defied the United States, which provides Israel with billions of dollars in military aid, by rejecting calls for a Palestinian state.

Maliki demanded the EU call for an immediate ceasefire and urged the bloc to consider sanctions against Netanyahu for "destroying the chances" for a Palestinian state.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said "the whole world" sees a Palestinian state solution as "the only way out of this misery".

According to the Reuters news agency, the Zionist regime is considering building an artificial island with sea and air ports off blockaded Gaza, as a longterm solution to shipping goods into the Palestinian territory, the transport minister said. Yisrael Katz told Army Radio

on Wednesday he wants an international force to control the island for "at least 100 years" and for unloaded cargo to be brought into Gaza along a 4.5km (3-mile)-long bridge with a security checkpoint.

The talks came a day after Hamas issued a 16-page report, in Arabic and English, explaining the background to the October 7 operation in southern occupied territories.

It called the operation a "defensive act" and "necessary step' against Israeli occupation, "reclaiming the Palestinian rights and on the way for liberation and independence like all peoples".

The operation resulted in the deaths of about 1,140 Zionists in southern occupied territories, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

Since then, the Zionist regime has carried out a genocidal war that has killed at least 25,295 people in Gaza, around 70 percent of them women, young children and adolescents, according to the latest toll issued Monday by Gaza's health ministry.

U.S. intelligence agencies have estimated that the Israeli invasion has killed "around 20 percent to 30 percent" of Hamas fighters and is still far from its goal of destroying the resistance movement, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday.

In a video statement issued after the Hamas report, Netanyahu said "our soldiers have fallen in vain" and security would not be guaranteed if Israel accepted Hamas's demands for the release of hostages.

These included ending the war, withdrawing Israeli forces from Gaza, releasing Palestinian prisoners and guaranteeing that Hamas would stay in power, he

Netanyahu is under intense pressure to return the captives and account for security failings surrounding the October 7 attacks.

According to Haaretz, the extremist Israeli security minister Itamar Ben Gvir has threatened to pull out of the ruling coalition led Netanyahu, should the war on Gaza end.

"If it's decided to stop the war, I will not be a part of this government," Ben Gvir reportedly said, repeating past threats to topple Netanyahu's cabinet.

PM Modi Opens Temple Built Over Razed Mosque

AYODHYA, India (Dispatches) — More than three decades after a mob of militant Hindu radicals razed a mosque to the ground in the Indian town of Ayodhya, the country's prime minister, Narendra Modi, on Monday inaugurated the new Hindu temple that will stand in its place.

Modi called it the fulfillment of "the dream that many have cherished for years".

Many boycotted the ceremony, accusing Modi of orchestrating the event for political gain before elections in the spring, where he will seek a third term in power.

The demolition of the mosque in 1992 paved the way for Hindu nationalism to become the dominant political force it is today, and the pledge to build a Ram Temple in Ayodhya has been at the core of Modi's Bharatiya Janata party's (BJP) political agenda to establish Hindu supremacy in India.

The temple will not be complete until next year, prompting some Hindu figures to object to it being inaugurated early. Alongside Modi, the few others to take part in Monday's temple consecration ceremony were Yogi Adityanath, the hardline Hindu monk and BJP chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, and Mohan Bagwat, the head of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the rightwing Hindu paramilitary organization that birthed the BJP.

Kapil Komireddi, the author of Malevolent Republic: A Short History of New India, said the

close alignment between the prime minister and the Ram temple was indicative of the threat posed by the BJP to India as a secular republic whose constitution enshrines all religions as

"This is a purely political spectacle, the culmination of a 40year political project - one that has been achieved through great violence," said Komireddi. "It is the coronation of Hinduism as India's state religion and the crowning moment for the cult of personality erected around Modi. I see this as a very sad moment

Disputes over the holy site in Ayodhya date back over a century. A mosque, Babri Masjid, had been built there in 1528 by the Mughal emperor Babur, one of the Muslim leaders who ruled India for almost 500 years, but Hindus later began to push for the right to worship at what they believed was the birthplace of Lord Ram.

for India."

Muslims continued to worship at Babri Masjid until 1949, when the issue was taken up by a small hardline Hindu group, who alleged that a temple had previously stood at the site and pledged to "liberate" the land and rebuild it. After an idol of Ram was placed in the mosque, allegedly by a Hindu priest, its gates were locked.

The campaign among rightwing Hindu groups to reclaim Ayodhya

(Continued on Page 7)