

Iranian FM Urges UN Chief to Prevent Rafah Invasion
 TEHRAN -- Iranian Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian said Monday the United Nations must take action to prevent further mass atrocities by the Israeli regime in the city of Rafah in southern Gaza Strip.
 In a letter to UN chief Antonio Guterres, the minister warned against the "devastating" outcomes of Israel's plan to carry out a full-fledged ground invasion of Rafah. "It is imperative that the United Nations system fulfill its responsibilities in this critical juncture and avert further mass atrocities against the Palestinians who have taken refuge in Rafah."

Kayhan International

Hezbollah: Israel to Suffer Bigger Defeat if Lebanon Attacked
 BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- A senior official of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement warned Monday a potential attack by the Israeli regime on Lebanon would lead to a defeat bigger than what the regime has suffered in Palestine.
 Sheikh Nabil Qaouk, a member of Hezbollah's Executive Council, said that Israel's plans to launch an attack on Lebanon to make up for its defeats in Gaza would further complicate the regime's woes and would accelerate the collapse of the Israeli cabinet led by prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

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Viewpoint
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Israel Seeking to Restrict Palestinian Access to Al-Aqsa



Yemenis Target UK, U.S. Ships, Down Reaper Drone

SANAA (Dispatches) -- The Yemeni army said Monday it hit a British cargo ship that is believed to be significantly damaged and shot down a U.S. drone over its territory as the Yemeni group continued to target ships in the Red Sea demanding an end to Israel's war on Gaza.
 The Yemeni claims of new operations come as the United States carried out five strikes in Yemen late on Saturday night as part of Washington's military campaign to support Israel in its war on Gaza. Yemenis have now expanded their attacks to include U.S. and UK ships after the two countries launched strikes on the war-torn Arab nation.
 The Rubymar cargo ship suffered "catastrophic damages and came to a complete halt" after being targeted in a military operation, said Yemen's military spokesman Yahya Saree in a televised address on Monday.
 "As a result of the extensive damage the ship suffered, it is now at risk of potential sinking in the Gulf of Aden. During the operation, we made sure that the ship's crew exited safely."
 The British maritime security firm Ambrey confirmed that the Rubymar is a UK-registered cargo ship that came under attack late on Sunday.
 The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) also confirmed the incident -- without naming the ship -- and said it took place some 35 nautical miles (65km) south of al-Makha (Mocha) in Yemen.
 "Military authorities report crew have abandoned the vessel. Vessel at anchor and all crew are safe," it said. "Military authorities remain on scene to provide assistance".
 On Monday, Ambrey said another vessel, a U.S.-owned bulk carrier had called for military assistance citing a "missile attack". The

UKMTO also confirmed the incident 100 nautical miles (185km) off Yemen's Aden.
 The Yemeni army also claimed to have downed a U.S.-made MQ-9 Reaper attack drone over Yemen, which it said "was carrying out hostile missions against our country on behalf of the Zionist entity".
 The army has downed the same drone -- which is worth over \$30 million -- several times before.
 The Pentagon acknowledged in November that an MQ-9 was shot down over the Red Sea. The Yemeni armed forces possess surface-to-air missile systems capable of shooting down the advanced drones.
 The Yemenis had claimed a confirmed missile attack on a British oil tanker that the U.S. identified as a Panamanian-flagged vessel carrying crude bound for India.
 They have been carrying out operations in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden near Yemen's shores since October in a stated effort to support the Palestinian cause against the occupying regime of Israel and its Western backers.
 The Yemeni military spokesman on Monday said the country remains undeterred and operations will continue.
 U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said it launched successful strikes against three mobile antiship cruise missiles, one surface drone, and one underwater vessel. This, it said, marked the first time since the start of the war that the Yemenis tried to use an unmanned underwater vessel.
 The Zionist regime's war on Gaza, which has martyred more than 29,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, is showing no signs of stopping as Israel vows to expand its ground invasion into Rafah, the last large city in the enclave where 1.4 million Palestinians are taking shelter.

Palestinians Urge End to Israeli Occupation, Apartheid World Court Begins Historic Hearings



The Palestinian delegation attends the hearing on the consequences of the Israeli occupation at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, The Netherlands on Feb. 19, 2024.

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (Dispatches) -- The Palestinian foreign minister on Monday highlighted Israel's apartheid and urged the United Nations' top court to declare that the regime's occupation of lands sought for a Palestinian state is illegal and must end immediately and unconditionally.
 The remarks came at historic hearings into the illegality of

Israel's 57-year occupation. The case opened against the backdrop of the Israeli war on Gaza, which immediately became a focal point of the day -- even though the hearings were meant to center on Israel's open-ended colonization of the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip and illegally annexed east Al-Quds.

Palestinian Foreign Affairs Minister Riad Malki told the International Court of Justice that "2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, half of them children, are besieged and bombed, killed and maimed, starved and displaced."
 "More than 3.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank, including in Al-Quds, are sub-

jected to colonization of their territory and racist violence that enables it," he added.
 International law expert Paul Reichler, representing the Palestinians, told the court that the policies of Israel's regime "are aligned to an unprecedented extent with the goals of the Israeli settler movement to expand long term control over the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in practice to further integrate those areas within the territory" the occupying regime of Israel.
 The hearings follow a request by the UN General Assembly for a non-binding advisory opinion into Israel's policies in the occupied territories. Judges will likely take months to issue an opinion.
 In court, Malki cited the right to self-determination enshrined in the UN charter as he told judges that "for decades, the Palestinian people have been denied this right and have endured both colonialism and apartheid."
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Palestinian Children in Gaza Die of Starvation

RAFAH (Dispatches) -- An eight-year-old Palestinian girl has died from dehydration and starvation in Gaza City, the NGO, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reported.
 The organization's teams in northern Gaza said that Hanin Saleh Hassan Jumaa died from a severe calcium deficiency caused by starvation.
 "I cannot forget the night of my daughter Hanin's death when she asked me for food, and I told her, 'Sleep, I will bring you in the morning,'" her father said.
 He said that the following morning, she began to moan. "When I sat next to her, I found her as if she was preparing to die."
 "I rushed her...to the hospital on a donkey cart due to the lack of cars, only for the doctor to tell me that my daughter had died from dehydration and lack of food."

The rights group warned in January of the growing risk of famine especially among children and the elderly. It cited the earlier death of infant Jamal Mahmoud Jamal al-Kafarna on January 18, who died "of hunger in his mother's arms".
 Euro-Med Monitor also reported the death of one-year-old Baraa al-Haddad from hunger and dehydration on December 30, and 14-year-old Jana Deeb Qudeih, who had cerebral palsy, on December 8.
 "This tragic incident of a young girl dying from hunger is a stark reminder of the severity of the crisis in Gaza, with hunger at catastrophic levels and children being particularly vulnerable to starvation," Jean-Michel Grand, Executive Director of Action Against Hunger UK told Middle East Eye.
 According to the World Food

Program (WFP), Palestinians in Gaza now make up 80 percent of people facing starvation worldwide.
 A UN report published in December warned that 93 percent of people in the besieged enclave face "crisis levels of hunger," and that a quarter of the strip's population faces "catastrophic hunger and starvation".
 According to the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, all children under five in Gaza, 335,000, are at high risk of starvation.
 WFP spokesperson Steve Taravella said in December: "The scale and swiftness of this crisis is unprecedented in modern times," adding that "If current predictions continue, we will reach famine by February."
 According to the UN's humanitarian coordination agency OCHA, the situation is

particularly dire in Rafah and the north of Gaza, where 15 percent of children are facing acute malnutrition amid aid shortages.
 "Save the Children's staff on the ground have said that there is a severe shortage of food aid reaching them and that they have been unable to find items like flour or to afford it, reporting a bag of flour being sold for up to \$140," Randa Ghazy of Save the Children told MEE.
 "A staff member in Rafah said that sometimes families only receive one biscuit per person or a can of beans for an entire family. A staff member in Al-Mawasi said that the situation was desperate and that he had met people who had not eaten any food for three days," she added.
 OCHA reported that aid convoys are increasingly being denied
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