

ANTALYA (Dispatches) – Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas will visit Turkey next week for talks about the Gaza war and reconciliation efforts between Palestinian factions, the Turkish foreign minister said on Sunday. The visit comes as intensive diplomacy is underway to pause the fighting in the almost five-month-old Zionist genocidal campaign. Egypt, Qatar and the United States have mediated in weeks of talks to secure a truce by the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in a week. Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said: "There is a serious desire and effort to reach a ceasefire before Ramadan," in closing remarks to an annual diplomacy forum in the Mediterranean holiday resort of Antalya.

If you are greeted then return the greetings more warmly. If you are favoured, then repay the obligation manifold; but he who takes the initiative will always excel in merit.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

# UNICEF Cautions 'Every Minute Counts' as Hunger Kills Children in Gaza



The executive director of the UNICEF has warned the international community about the impact of the Zionist regime's war on children in the Gaza Strip.

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – Catherine Russell, the executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has once again warned the international community about the impact of the Zionist regime's war on children in the

Gaza Strip, stressing they are suffering from acute malnutrition and are on the brink of death. Russell took to her social media account X to express shock over the report a day before that some 10 children died of malnutrition in Gaza.

"Horrible news out of Gaza that at least 10 children have died of malnutrition and dehydration so far while many more are on the brink", she wrote, adding that 1 in 6 children under the age of two in northern Gaza are acutely malnourished.

Russell called for a "ceasefire now", arguing that "every minute counts" for children in Gaza facing "deadly" malnutrition.

She stated that even a minute's delay in the access of Palestinian children in Gaza to food, water, medical care and protection from Israeli bullets and bombs will have terrible consequences.

"None of these things will be possible without establishing a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza," stressed the UNICEF chief who once called Gaza the "most dangerous place in the world to be a child."

Michael Fakhri, the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, has also called for sanctions against Israel after warning a "famine may very well be already occurring" in Gaza amid reports a 10th child died from starvation.

"Israel has been intentionally starving the Palestinian people in Gaza since October 8," Fakhri said in a post on social media.

"The only way to end/prevent this famine is an immediate ceasefire. And the only way to get a ceasefire is to sanction Israel," he added.

## Yemenis Say Will Continue Sinking British Ships



The Rubymar has sunk in the Red Sea after days of taking on water, officials said Saturday, March 2, 2024, the first vessel to be fully destroyed as part of their campaign over the Zionist regime's war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

CAIRO (Dispatches) – Yemeni forces vowed on Sunday to continue targeting British ships in the Gulf of Aden following the sinking of UK-owned vessel Rubymar.

The U.S. military confirmed on Saturday that the UK-owned vessel Rubymar had sunk after being struck by an anti-ship ballistic missile fired by Yemeni forces on Feb. 18.

"Yemen will continue to sink more British ships, and any repercussions or other damages will be added to Britain's bill," Hussein Al-Ezzi, Yemeni deputy foreign minister, said in a post on X.

"It is a rogue state that attacks Yemen and partners with America in sponsoring ongoing crimes against civilians in Gaza."

A ranking Yemeni official says UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his government "bear responsibility" for the sinking of the Rubymar.

The UK-owned Belize-flagged bulk carrier, the M/V Rubymar, came under the Yemeni military's attack on February 18 with several naval missiles in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait — a strategic waterway linking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

Yemeni authorities said the Rubymar, was had been abandoned for 12 days, sank late Friday as stormy weather took hold over the Red Sea, with the U.S. Central Com-

mand (CENTCOM) releasing an image of the vessel on its side and confirming that it was going under.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, said in a post on his X social media account on Saturday that Sunak and his government are responsible for the sinking of the British vessel over their support for the Israeli regime's genocidal war against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Houthi underlined that the British government has a "chance to salvage" the Rubymar by authorizing humanitarian aid to enter Gaza, which has been under Israel's incessant bombardment over the past five months.

"We say to Sunak: You and your government bear responsibility for M/V Rubymar and the responsibility to support genocide and siege in Gaza," the Yemeni official said in an Arabic-language post on X.

"You have a chance to salvage the M/V Rubymar by sending a letter of guarantee... that the relief trucks agreed upon would enter Gaza."

The sinking of the Rubymar, which carried more than 41,000 tonnes of fertilizer and previously leaked fuel, could cause ecological damage to the Red Sea, with Yemeni officials having warned multiple times about "a major environmental disaster if it sinks."

## Thousands Join Israeli Captives' Families in March on Al-Quds

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – A march by thousands demanding the release of captives held in Gaza has reached Al-Quds as negotiators resumed ceasefire negotiations in Cairo that would include a swap deal with Hamas.

A column of protesters, led by families of captives seized by Palestinian resistance fighters during Hamas' operation, walked up the winding highway to Al-Quds, arriving at the city at sundown.

They concluded a four-day march that began at one of sites hit by the October attack, and were expected to be joined by

more protesters at a rally outside prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence.

"We're here marching in support of the families of those who are taken captive, wishing that they will be released soon and that they will be safe. We're praying for them in every step that we take," said Danny Cuperman, one of the marchers.

Gaza truce talks resumed in the Egyptian capital on Sunday. U.S. President Joe Biden has said he hopes a ceasefire will be in place by the time of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which starts on March 10.

Dozens of captives could be freed if a deal is reached.

The United States, Egypt and Qatar have been mediating truce negotiations since January. The last deal led to a week-long pause in fighting in November, during which Hamas released more than 100 captives, mostly women, teens and children, and the Zionist regime freed about three times as many Palestinian female and teen prisoners.

Almost five months into the war in Gaza, 134 captives are still being held incommunicado in the coastal enclave, according to the Zionist regime's authori-

ties. Among them are soldiers and civilians, men and women, a child and his baby brother.

The Zionist regime's military assault on Gaza that has killed more than 30,000 Palestinians there, according to the health ministry in the enclave.

Israelis have been protesting nearly every week under different banners, though in numbers far smaller than the mass demonstrations that gripped the occupied territories in 2023. Some demand the cabinet quit over the Oct. 7 security failure while others focus on the release of captives and aid to Gaza.

## Omanis Boycott Western Brands, Fast-Food Chains as Many Turn Against West

MUSCAT (Middle East Eye) – Since the war in Gaza began in October, Mohammed Hamed has not touched a drop of his favorite soft drink, Mountain Dew.

"I used to drink Mountain Dew almost every day, a day would not go without it, but now I have stopped," he told Middle East Eye.

As an Omani who is committed to boycotting western goods over the support of the U.S. and its allies for the Zionist regime in its war on Gaza, he now buys Thai drinks and Kinsa, a Saudi drink brand.

He has also changed his shopping habits, and now boycotts western supermarkets in Oman in solidarity with the Palestinians.

"I have never stepped inside a Carrefour since the war started," he said, referring to the French supermarket chain that has three stores in Muscat.

The boycott campaign in Oman since the start of the Zionist regime's war on Gaza has led to a drop in sales for major U.S. companies including McDonald's and Starbucks, and the emergence of alternative consumer brands sourced from non-western and Muslim countries.

Hamed said he is a boycott activist and showed MEE his phone with a post he recently created featuring an illustration of Aaron Bushnell, the U.S. Air Force serviceman who died after setting himself on fire outside the Zionist regime's embassy in Washington DC on 25 February in a protest at U.S. support for the occupying regime's actions in Gaza.

The post says: "Aaron Bushnell sacrificed his life in protest of Palestine and you can't give up Starbucks!"

"I am going too deep with this situation, I'm starting to get crazy, because I see a lot of vid-

eos [from Gaza]. There is a lot of suffering happening there," said Hamed.

Like many Omanis, Hamed began a consumer boycott of western goods in October, and he's still doing it nearly five months later.

"Most of my family and friends are fed up already [with the boycott], but I'm doing my best to boycott as much as I can."

He now shops at Viva, a supermarket chain that specializes in offering alternatives to western brands.

An Omani government source said the boycott movement had begun early in the war and was spontaneous rather than organized: "Most of the Omanis were active in the boycott movement."

"There is a shift in the market, in every consumer product in your [daily] life ... and even Omani brands are benefiting."

## Hamas, Qatari, U.S. Envoys in Cairo for Gaza Talks

CAIRO (Dispatches) – Delegations from Hamas, Qatar and the United States are in Egypt for "a new round of negotiations" toward a truce in the Gaza war, state-linked al-Qahera News reported Sunday.

Cairo, Doha and Washington have mediated in weeks of talks aiming to pause the fighting in the almost five-months-old Zionist onslaught.

Their goal has been to secure a truce by the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on March 10 or 11, but hopes have been dampened by a series of failed talks since a one-week pause in November.

A Hamas source on Sunday told AFP its delegation to Cairo is being led by senior leader Khalil al-Haya.

"The delegation will meet Egyptian mediators and deliver the

group's response to the new Paris proposal," the source said, in reference to negotiations held last month in the French capital with Israel's presence.

In previous talks Egyptian officials have functioned as the key conduit between U.S. envoys and Hamas, as well as between Israel and Hamas.

The negotiations have centered on a proposal to pause the fighting for six weeks and for Hamas to free captives in return for the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, and greater aid deliveries.

The aggression began on October 7. The Zionist regime's onslaught on the besieged Palestinian territory has killed 30,410 people, mostly women and children, the Gaza health ministry reported Sunday.