

GAZA (Dispatches) – More than five months of Zionist regime's military onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip have left nearly 23 million tons of debris, according to the United Nations. This rubble – along with unexploded munitions – will take years to clear, estimates the UN. While the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is working with mine action partners to assess the threat of unexploded ordnance in the enclave, "response efforts have been hampered by restrictions on the import of humanitarian mine action supplies and authorization requirements on the deployment of specialized personnel".

No More 'Normal-Sized Babies'

UN Agency: One in Three Children Under 2 in Gaza Acutely Malnourished



UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) says one in three children under age 2 in northern Gaza is now acutely malnourished and famine is looming.

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – One in three children under age 2 in northern Gaza is now acutely malnourished and famine is looming, the main UN agency operating in the Palestinian enclave said on Saturday.

"Children's malnutrition is spreading fast and reaching unprecedented levels in Gaza," the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said in a social media post.

A UN official also said the humanitarian situation in Gaza is a "nightmare" for mothers and babies, with doctors reporting small and sickly newborns, stillbirths and women forced to undergo C-sections without adequate anesthesia.

"I'm personally leaving Gaza this week terrified for the one million women and girls of Gaza... and most especially for the 180 women who are giving birth every single day," Dominic Allen, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) representative for the state of Palestine, said in a video news conference from Al-Quds.

"Doctors are reporting that they no

longer see normal-sized babies," Allen said after visiting hospitals still providing maternity services in the north of Gaza, where need is especially great.

"What they do see though, tragically, is more stillborn births... and more neonatal deaths, caused in part by malnutrition, dehydration and complications."

The numbers of complicated deliveries are roughly twice what they

were before the Zionist regime's carnage -- with mothers stressed, fearful, underfed and exhausted -- and caregivers often lacking necessary supplies.

"We have had reports of insufficient anesthetic being available" for Caesarean sections, "which again is unthinkable."

"Those mothers should be wrapping their arms around their children," he said. "Those children

should not be wrapped in a body bag."

Allen said Israeli authorities had refused to allow in some UNFPA supply shipments, such as kits for midwives, or had removed supplies like flashlights and solar panels.

"It's a nightmare which is much more than a humanitarian crisis," he said. "It is a crisis of humanity... beyond catastrophic."

What he saw while driving through Gaza, he said, "really broke my heart."

Everyone he passed or spoke to, Allen said, "was gaunt, emaciated, hungry" and exhausted from the daily struggle to survive.

At one military checkpoint, he said, he saw a boy who appeared to be about five years old walking with his hands held high, clearly frightened, as his slightly older sister followed behind, holding a white flag.

Israel's genocidal campaign has killed at least 31,490 people in Gaza, most of them women and children, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

Rights Advocates Denounce 'Systemic Abuse' in Israeli Prisons



Record numbers of Palestinian detainees are filling Israeli prisons, where they face "systemic abuse" and torture, rights advocates warn.

GENEVA (Dispatches) – In the shadow of the war raging in Gaza, record numbers of Palestinian detainees are filling Israeli prisons, where they face "systemic abuse" and torture, rights advocates warn, calling for international action.

Members of several Israeli NGOs travelled to Geneva this week to raise concerns before the United Nations about a major "crisis" inside the regime's prisons.

"We are extremely, extremely concerned," said Tal Steiner, the executive director of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI).

"What we're looking at is a crisis," she told AFP.

She said nine people had allegedly died behind bars since October 7, according to Israeli sources.

And "there are almost 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli custody right now, ... a 200-percent increase from any normal year".

While the UN and others have long raised concerns about conditions for Palestinian detainees in the Zionist regime's prisons, Steiner said the situation had worsened dramatically since war erupted in

Gaza.

The Zionist regime's carnage inside Gaza has since killed more than 31,000 people, mainly women and children, according to the health ministry in Gaza.

"During the military onslaught on Gaza, there's been a crisis within Israeli detention facilities and prisons that has been really left ignored," said Miriam Azem of the Adalah legal center. The center is dedicated to protecting the rights of the Zionist regime's Palestinian citizens.

Her organization had managed to document "19 clear cases" of torture within the Israeli prison system just since October 7, including sexual violence, she told AFP.

"We're seeing really widespread and systemic use of many, many tools in order to inflict torture and ill-treatment on Palestinians."

This crisis, she said, "requires the immediate intervention of the international community".

Steiner agreed, warning that this was "an ongoing crisis."

"People are (suffering) in detention right now... An urgent intervention is very much needed."

Anti-Israel Boycott Campaign Grows Bigger

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – An alliance of app-based transport workers has boycotted Chevron-branded gas stations over its complicity in the Zionist regime's genocide in the Gaza Strip.

The International Alliance of App-Based Transport Workers (IAATW) said in a statement that its "drivers pledged to boycott Chevron-branded gas stations, including Texaco and Caltex," in alignment with the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaign "against oil companies complicit in Israel's occupation" and the "unprecedented" call from more than 30 Palestinian trade unions.

According to the statement, the move comes as IAATW delegates unanimously passed motions showing their unequivocal support for Palestine at their bi-annual international conference in Sri Lanka.

"Chevron has generated billions of dollars in revenue for apartheid Israel ... helping to fund the ongoing genocide against 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza."

The alliance said it believes that "refusing to support entities complicit in perpetuating injustices against Palestinians is a critical step towards justice and accountability."

Meanwhile, the U.S. giant

food chain McDonald's says its international sales will fall sequentially in the current quarter amid global boycotts over the corporation's support for the Israeli regime's months-long genocidal war against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Ian Borden, the chief financial officer of McDonald's, announced at the UBS Global Consumer and Retail Conference in New York that the first-quarter comparable sales in McDonald's International Developmental Licensed Markets segment will be "slightly lower" than the prior three-month period.

The company widely missed

Wall Street estimates for fourth-quarter sales in the segment in February, due to protests and boycott campaigns against several Western brands over their pro-Israel stance in the Gaza war.

McDonald's and other international brands have been hit by the repercussions of a campaign of anger in the Arab and Western world over their support for Israel's brutal war on the besieged territory since October last year.

The fast food chain's Israel franchise offered free food to Israeli occupation forces fighting in Gaza, and provided discounts to service personnel.

Report: Egypt Freed Daesh Leader Behind Deadliest Attack

LONDON (Dispatches) -- A senior commander of the Daesh terrorist group's regional branch in northern Egypt who played a key role in large-scale killings of civilians in terrorist attacks was released by the Egyptian government some three years ago, a report shows.

The report published on Thursday by the Middle East Eye showed that Muhammad Saad Kamel, known by the nom de guerre of Abu Hamza al-Qadi, has been living freely with his wife and three children in Ismailia in northern Egypt since he was granted amnesty by the Egyptian government in 2021.

The report cited a statement from Sinai Foundation for Human Rights (SFHR) showing that Qadi was once the third in command of the Si-

nai Province, a branch of Daesh operating in northern Egypt, adding that he was the group's "mufti" and "chief judge" between 2016 and 2021.

In fact, as the head of Sharia court of the Sinai Province, Qadi authorized the 2017 attack on a mosque in North Sinai which killed more than 305 worshippers.

The SFHR said, however, that the former Daesh commander has been granted amnesty, a home and a monthly salary by the Egyptian government since he turned himself in in 2021.

"Al-Qadi's fatwas laid the groundwork for an unprecedented bloody phase against civilians in Sinai," said the group.

However, an Egyptian military source told

the Middle East Eye that all "terror suspects who surrender themselves to military forces and cooperate peacefully are treated in a decent way".

That comes as Egypt has been tough on political activism and dissent in recent years, putting behind bars tens of thousands of people who have opposed the government of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

The SFHR said Egyptian citizens have a right to clearly know what criteria is used by their government to grant amnesty to individuals suspected of committing mass murder while at the same time keeping people behind bars for activism on social media or simply for protesting.

Palestinian Women Barred From Boarding Flights at London Airport

LONDON (Middle East Eye) – Two Palestinian women have reported that they were refused boarding on easyJet flights from London to Cairo in February and March by staff citing recent "rule changes".

Rana Baker, a lecturer in the history of the Middle East at King's College London, who was travelling from London Luton to Cairo on 7 March for a work trip, was denied boarding and informed that policy changes now required her to have a visa in order to travel to Egypt.

Baker, who has family in Cairo and is in the UK on a work visa, regularly travels to the Egyptian capital and has previously only been required to obtain an entry visa on arrival.

"I know that these are not the rules, I go multiple times a year," Baker told Middle East Eye. "I told them that I go to Cairo all the time, I was there in December, I don't need a visa to go."

"I'm very used to going to check in and staff members calling someone or looking on the

system, and then they always say that a prior visa needs to be held by Palestinian men, not women. I explained this, and I said, just check, I've done this a million times, and they kept giving me the same answer.

"I felt like there was something else going on. "If I want to go home to Gaza, I need to go to Cairo first. It would be really odd if they had this rule that I need to go through this process because that's just how I get home."

Baker spoke to multiple staff members who all confirmed that she was required to obtain a visa before travel.

Finally, one staff member admitted that "rules had been changed" following "recent events" in Palestine, referring to the five-month-long Zionist assault on Gaza that began on 7 October.

"I don't understand how these events are relevant when just before my flight there was a plane full of Israelis going to Tel Aviv and there seemed to be no problem," Baker said.