

# UN Rapporteur: Zionist Regime 'Colonial Power' Violating International Law

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime is carrying out a colonization policy toward Palestine, the UN special rapporteur on human rights for the Israeli-occupied territories has told The Guardian.

Francesca Albanese, an Italian lawyer and human rights academic, has been the target of a campaign by pro-Zionist groups to discredit her based on accusations of bias and anti-Semitism.

Albanese described the criticism as "intimidation, no more, no less," adding that it amounted to "dogs barking at airplanes."

She told The Guardian: "For me, apartheid is a symptom and a consequence of the territorial ambitions Israel has for the land of what remains of an encircled Palestine."

The remarks came as a Palestinian government official in Gaza has warned that the only power plant would stop working within days, as fuel quantities are running out, given the continued closure of the Karam Abu Salem crossing (south).

This came during a press conference held by the head of the government media office, Salama Maarouf, at al-Shifa



*Palestinians sift through the rubble of a building hit in an Israeli air strike in Beit Hanun, in the northern Gaza Strip.*

Medical Complex in Gaza City.

Maarouf said on Friday, "We warn from the continued closure of the crossings and the ban of entering needed fuel for the power plant, where the plant's administration was forced to shut down one of the three turbines to prolong its work duration," noting that the plant may completely shut down within 72 hours.

For the fourth consecutive day, coinciding with the start of the Israeli esca-

lation in the Gaza Strip, the occupying regime completely closed the Beit Hanoun "Erez" crossing for the transportation of individuals, and the Karam Abu Salem crossing for the transportation of goods.

Maarouf called on "the international community to perform its duties regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip."

In the same context, Maarouf said that since dawn on Tuesday, the occupying regime has destroyed about 8 buildings,

consisting of 28 housing units.

He added, "About 532 housing units were damaged, 37 of which are uninhabitable and 495 are partially and severely damaged."

Meanwhile, Gaza cancer patients miss treatment as the Zionist regime border shut amid fighting.

Gaza resident Dina El-Dhani was due to meet her oncologist this week at a hospital in Al-Quds but she has been unable to cross into the occupied territories since the border was closed amid heavy.

Dhani is one of 432 cancer patients who have not been able to receive treatment since Tuesday.

Her appointment with a doctor at Augusta Victoria Hospital in Al-Quds was meant to determine which radiation treatment she will receive.

"They told me it is delayed. Do I have to wait another two months to get a new appointment?" said 40-year-old Dhani. "The crossing is life, because as patients our treatment doesn't exist here. (The border crossing) either enhances my treatment or enhances my departure."

The four days of fighting has disrupted the lives of millions of people.

## Resistance... (Continued From Page One)

wrought by Israeli warplanes and salvage whatever they could. One man carefully pulled documents out from under the rubble. Another carried away a mattress.

Four homes in densely populated residential neighborhoods were reduced to dust in the pre-dawn attacks. The Zionist military alleged the targeted homes belonged to or were used by Islamic Jihad combatants. The residents denied the military's claims and said they had no idea why their homes were targeted.

"We have no rocket launching pads at all. This is a residential area," said Awni Obaid, beside the debris of what was his three-story house in the central town of Deir al-Balah.

The nearby house of his relative, Jihad Obaid, was also leveled. He had been standing some hundred meters away when his apartment was bombed.

"I felt like vomiting because of the dust," he said. "This is extraordinary hatred. They claim they don't strike at children, but what we see is craziness, destruction."

Islamic Jihad has retaliated by firing a thousand rockets toward southern and central Occupied Palestine. On Friday, the group escalated its assaults and fired rockets toward Al-Quds, setting off air raid sirens in the settlements south of the contested capital.

A rocket on Thursday penetrated missile defenses and sliced through a house in the central city of Rehovot, killing a Zionist and wounding several others.

Hamas, the larger resistance movement that has administered Gaza since 2007, has praised Islamic Jihad's strikes.

Islamic Jihad has taken the lead in the past few rounds of fighting with the occupying regime of Israel.

On Saturday, the deadly Israeli raid into the Balata refugee camp turned the focus of the conflict back to the long-simmering West Bank. Residents said that Zionist forces besieged a building, sharing footage of a large explosion and smoke billowing from the crowded camp. Ejected bullet casings littered the alleys. Blood soaked the streets. The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the two as 32-year-old Said Meshah and 19-year-old Adnan Araj. At least three other Palestinians were wounded in the raid, the latest of near-daily Israeli arrest operations in the territory.

Israeli-Palestinian fighting has surged in the West Bank under the occupying regime's most extremist cabinet in history. Since the start of the year, 111 Palestinians have been martyred in the West Bank and east Al-Quds, according to a tally by The Associated Press — the highest death toll in some two decades. In that time, 20 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

## IRGC... (Continued From Page 2)

equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient.

Iranian officials have repeatedly 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.

On Friday, Admiral Tangsiri said his forces are at their highest level of preparedness and have complete control over the Persian Gulf in the air, surface, and subsurface area.

"The movement of the enemy's vessels in the Persian Gulf is under constant surveillance of the IRGC Navy," he told reporters in of Bushehr.

He said the strategic waterway of

the Persian Gulf is in full security. "The Navy and Ground Forces of the IRGC and Army, as well as the [IRGC] Aerospace Division, have made great progress."

Tangsiri said, "With such equipment and capable forces, the preparedness level of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran is increasing day by day."

The Persian Gulf — spanning some 251,000 square kilometers — is bounded by the Arvand River in the north, which forms the frontier between Iran and Iraq, and the Strait of Hormuz in the south, linking the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

The strategic inland sea is an international trade route connecting the Middle East to Africa, India, and China.

## Iran... (Continued From Page 2)

He told them the Zionists had displayed weakness and frustration in the face of resistance by the Palestinians.

Haniyeh, for his part, said resistance groups are "ready" and "coordinated" for confronting the Israeli attacks. He also praised the political stance of Iran in support of Palestine. "Resistance will determine the fate of this Zionist aggression and the Israeli regime has no other choice but to surrender," Haniyeh said.

Nakhlah also said the Palestinians will continue to resist until the regime accepts the conditions put forward by the resistance.

## Saudi... (Continued From Page 2)

and important role in the establishment of world peace and development through multi-polar structures ever since the formation of the League of Nations, which lasted for 26 years and was replaced by the United Nations in 1946.

"Iran's interaction and presence in international multi-polar structures dates back to more than one hundred years ago. Campaigns of pressure against the Iranian government and nation have never managed to undermine the country's prominent position in international spheres," Prince Faisal said.

Amir-Abdollahian announced on Thursday that Saudi Arabia had appointed a new ambassador to Tehran. Under the terms of the agreement signed on March 10, both countries agreed to appoint new ambassadors and reopen their embassies within two months.

The meeting between the foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia on April 6 marked the first such meeting in seven years and emphasized the need to implement the China-brokered agreement.

The detente has been lauded by both sides as having the potential to ease tensions in the Middle East region.

Diplomatic relations between Riyadh and Tehran were severed by Saudi Arabia in January 2016 after Iranian protesters, angered by the execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr by the Saudi government, stormed its embassy in Tehran.

## Daesh... (Continued From Page 2)

Earlier an element working for the "Iran International" broadcaster had been arrested by security forces in Galikesh in the same province.

The intelligence office of Golestan said that the element was responsible for collecting, producing and sending fake news from the province to Iran International.

It said the suspect had also played a major role in recent riots in the region by publishing frequent posts and stories on the social media.

## WSJ: Egypt Ignored U.S. Requests to Block Russian Flights

CAIRO (RT) – Egypt has ignored U.S. requests that it close its airspace to Russian military flights, the Wall Street Journal has reported. This airspace is a vital corridor between Russia and its military bases in Syria.

Multiple American officials asked Cairo in February and March to declare its skies off limits to Russian military aircraft, the newspaper reported, citing U.S. and Egyptian officials. Egypt has not responded to these requests, and flights between Syria and Russia have reportedly continued unimpeded.

Asked by the Wall Street Journal, a U.S. State Department official declined to "comment on private diplomatic conversations."

Situated on Syria's Mediterranean coast, Khmeimim Air Base is one of Russia's most important military facilities in Syria. With Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey blocking most Russian military flights since last year at the U.S.' request, Russian aircraft must now fly south over Azerbaijan and Iran, west over Saudi Arabia, and finally back north over Egypt before landing at Khmeimim.

Without permission to fly over Egypt, Russia would be forced to seek a new and far longer route over Africa to reach its forces in Syria by air. Meanwhile, Turkey's closure of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits to military vessels last year has complicated the

movement of arms and equipment by sea.

American officials believe that Moscow is moving weapons from Syria to the battlefield in Ukraine, although this has not been confirmed or denied by the Russian side.

Discounting Ukraine, Egypt is the second-largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world, receiving about \$1.3 billion a year from Washington. Despite only the Zionist regime receiving more direct military support from the U.S., Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has not completely aligned his foreign policy with that of Washington.

El-Sisi has deployed troops in Libya and ordered airstrikes

against the U.S.-recognized Government of National Accord, all while funding the opposing Libyan National Army, which was aided on the battlefield by Russian military contractors.

The Egyptian president has a cordial relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the country has adopted a neutral stance on the conflict in Ukraine. According to recently leaked Pentagon documents, however, el-Sisi recently dropped a plan to supply arms to Russia and instead agreed to supply the U.S. with artillery ammunition for Kiev's forces. The decision was made following what the Washington Post termed "a diplomatic offensive from Washington."

## Qatar PM Meets Senior Taliban Officials in Kandahar

DOHA (MEMO) – The Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammed Bin Abdul Rahman al-Thani has met Taliban officials in the Afghan city of Kandahar, in the south of the country.

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid posted pictures on social media on Friday of a visit by a high-ranking Qatari delegation.

Mujahid explained that al-Thani

and Head of State Security Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Khulafai met with head of the Taliban's interim government Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund and other officials.

According to Mujahid, the Qatari delegation and the Taliban stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral relations, increasing trust between the two countries and developing cooperation in various fields, such as education, health and economy.

He added that Akhund expressed his welcome of Qatar's cooperation and goodwill towards Afghanistan and stressed the need to strengthen bilateral relations.

Kandahar province, in southern Afghanistan, gained political importance after the Taliban took control of the country in 2021.

The population of Kandahar is predominantly Pashtun, who form the backbone of the Taliban. Several senior Taliban officials are

from Kandahar and have homes in the city.

Recently, two Taliban spokespeople, Zabihullah Mujahid and Bilal Karimi, opened an office in Kandahar.

Qatar hosted peace talks between the Taliban and the former Afghan government and played an important role in the process that led to the Doha Agreement signed between the Taliban and the U.S. on 29 February, 2020.

## Iraq Does Not Expect OPEC+ to Make Further Cuts in June

BEIRUT (Reuters) – Iraq does not expect OPEC+ to make further cuts to oil output at its next meeting in June, its oil minister Hayan Abdel-Ghani said, in the first indication from an OPEC minister about a potential decision as oil prices slide.

"At the next meeting, which will be held on the 3rd and 4th (of June), there will be no additional reduction, and as for Iraq, we cannot reduce further," Abdel-Ghani said in an interview, his first to foreign media since taking office last year.

In a following statement, he said Iraq is committed to voluntary oil production cuts that started in May and last until the end of 2023, and noted that Iraq was not asked to make any additional such cuts before a June 4 OPEC+ meeting.

OPEC and its allies led by Russia, known as OPEC+, agreed to cut production in late 2022

to support the market as the economic outlook worsened, hitting prices.

Then in a surprise move in early April, Saudi Arabia and other OPEC+ members announced further oil output cuts of around 1.2 million barrels per day.

The announcement helped push oil prices sharply higher, but those gains have since been erased as fears of a global economic slowdown took hold.

Brent crude futures were at \$75.25 a barrel at 1710 GMT, set to end the week flat after three weeks of decline.

OPEC+ members are set to meet in Vienna on June 4 to decide on their next course of action.

"The second cut was voluntary and it has helped us a lot in the stability of the market and boosting prices," Abdel-Ghani said.

The April cuts punished oil short sellers, or

those who bet on oil price declines.

Back in 2020, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman warned traders against betting heavily in the oil market, promising that those who gamble on the oil price would be "ouching like hell".

Iraq said it would cut 211,000 barrels per day (bpd) starting May as part of the voluntary cuts.

Turkey halted 450,000 bpd of its northern exports through the Iraq-Turkey pipeline on March 25 after an arbitration ruling ordered Ankara to pay Baghdad Damages of \$1.5 billion for unauthorized exports by the Kurdistan Regional Government between 2014 and 2018.

It is unclear when flows will resume but Abdel-Ghani said Baghdad had still not heard back on a request to the Turkish state energy company to restart exports.