

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – An international summit in Baghdad on “regional stability” planned for late November has been postponed due to the ongoing Israeli onslaught on Gaza, an Iraqi official said.

The third edition of the Baghdad conference “for economic integration and regional stability,” “is postponed until further notice due to the regional events” in West Asia, said Farhad Alaalidin, adviser to Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani. The gathering, which follows one in Baghdad in 2021 and another in Jordan late last year, was announced by the Iraqi government in August to establish “a regional agenda in support of Iraqi sovereignty” after years of unrest.

People in this world are like travelers whose journey is going on though they are asleep. (Life's journey is going on though men may not feel it).

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Explosions Rock U.S. Military Bases in Iraq, Syria

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – An explosion rocked a U.S. military base in Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah on Thursday night, a pro-government radio station reported.

The blast was heard at a U.S. military base located in the Shaddadi area, in what appeared to be a drone attack, according to the Sham FM radio.

No more details were provided, but the base and other U.S. military bases in eastern Syria have been subject to drone attacks recently against the backdrop of the Zionist military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network, citing local sources, reported that the drone hit the facility in al-Shaddadi town, located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of Hasakah.

Meanwhile, a military facility occupied by U.S. forces in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan re-



U.S. soldiers and military vehicles at a base in Syria's northeastern town of Rmelan.

gion has also come under attack by explosive-laden drones, the latest in a series of strikes on American forces in the two neighboring countries.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, in a statement published on its Telegram channel claimed responsibility for the early Friday morn-

ing attack on U.S. forces based near the Erbil International Airport.

It noted that the base was targeted by two drones, linking the assault to the U.S. support for the Zionist regime's bloody military campaign against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Pentagon spokesman Brigadier General Pat Ryder confirmed dur-

ing a press briefing that American troops were targeted in Erbil.

“We are aware of an attack today against U.S. forces at Erbil air base in Iraq,” he said.

“Between October 17 and 18, Eastern Time, 21 U.S. personnel received minor injuries due to drone attacks at al-Asad air base in Iraq and al-Tanf garrison in Syria,” Ryder said.

“At Tanf garrison, during these two days, there were 17 U.S. personnel who sustained minor injuries, 15 of whom were diagnosed with TBI - Traumatic Brain Injury. At al-Asad air base, four personnel were diagnosed with TBI but no other injured and again in all cases members returned to duty,” he noted.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday urged Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani to pursue the attackers of U.S. bases and troops in Iraq, according to the State Department.

UN: Aid Needs in Gaza, West Bank Estimated at \$1.2bn



A Palestinian man holds the remains of his mother wrapped in a blanket amid the rubble of a building destroyed in an Israeli strike on the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on November 2, 2023.

GENEVA (Dispatches) – The UN humanitarian office said on Friday it would cost an estimated \$1.2 billion to meet the needs of 2.7 million people - the whole population of the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and 500,000 people in the West Bank - until the end of the year.

On Oct. 12, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) had initially appealed for \$294 million in funding to support nearly 1.3 million people.

“The situation has grown increasingly desperate since then,” said OCHA spokesperson Jens Laerke.

Aid supplies to Gaza have been choked since the Zionist regime began bombarding the densely populated enclave on Oct. 7, with aid organizations saying it is nowhere near matching the needs of its residents.

In addition to killing thousands, heavy bombardment by Zionist troops has hindered aid workers' ability to deliver desperately needed supplies.

“There's been a high number of casualties reported, as well as the reported use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in some of the most densely populated areas in Gaza,” said Liz Throssell, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

In its revised appeal for funding that

will be published on Monday, OCHA said it would outline the need for food, water, health care, shelter, hygiene and other urgent priorities.

“We urge donors to promptly make resources available for the response,” Laerke said.

“Our ability to ease the suffering of the Palestinian population will depend on adequate funding, safe and sustained access to all people in need, wherever they are, sufficient flow of humanitarian supplies, and - importantly - fuel.”

The worsening violence in the West Bank has fuelled concerns that the flashpoint Palestinian territory could become a third front in a wider war, in addition to the northern border where clashes with Lebanese Hezbollah forces have mounted.

Ammar Al-Dwaik, Director General of the Independent Commission of Human Rights of Palestine in Ramallah, seat of the limited Palestinian self-rule authority in the West Bank, said that many people were afraid to venture far from their homes.

“We see increasing numbers of soldiers everywhere. The Israeli army's treatment of people is becoming more and more aggressive and humiliating,” he told reporters in Geneva via videolink.

Bahrain Recalls Ambassador From Israel Amid Escalating Gaza Onslaught

MANAMA (Dispatches) – Bahrain has confirmed that it recalled its ambassador from the Israeli-occupied territories, whose escalating war in Gaza has posed a challenge for regional governments that have pursued closer ties with the occupying regime.

Following an earlier statement from Bahrain's lower house of parliament, the government confirmed on Thursday that its ambassador was returning and that the Zionist regime's ambassador in Manama had left “a while ago”.

The consultative parliamentary body – which has no powers in the area of foreign

policy – said earlier in the day that economic relations with the occupying regime had also been severed. But Israel said that ties with Bahrain were “stable”.

“Economic relations with Israel have been halted,” said a statement from the Council of Representatives on Thursday.

The move was “in support of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people,” the statement read.

Abdulnabi Salman, the Bahraini legislature's first deputy speaker, confirmed the decision to AFP, saying the “ongoing conflict in Gaza cannot

tolerate silence.”

Bahrain's National Communication Center, the government's media arm, said the “priority at this stage must be focused on protecting the lives of civilians” in the besieged Palestinian territory.

The brutal war that the Zionist regime has been waging against the coastal sliver since October 7, has so far claimed the lives of over 10,000, including 3,700 children and more than 2,300 women.

The regime launched the war after Gaza's resistance groups conducted Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, their biggest operation against the occupying entity in

years.

Bahrain and the regime established diplomatic relations in 2020 as part of United States-brokered Abraham Accords.

Back in 2021, Bahrain's main opposition group, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, denounced Manama's normalization of relations with Israel as “a crime,” emphasizing that the ruling Al Khalifah regime's policies did not conform to the will of the Bahraini nation.

The country has witnessed numerous protests ever since the rapprochement, condemning the detente as an instance of “treason.”

Pakistan Speeds Up Afghans' Repatriation as Deadline Expires

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (Reuters) – Pakistan opened more border centers on Friday to speed up the return of tens of thousands of undocumented Afghans, an official said, two days after a deadline to leave or face expulsion expired and ignoring pleas to give the plan a rethink.

Pakistan has brushed off calls from the United Nations, rights groups and Western embassies to reconsider expelling more than a million of 4 million Afghans in the country, saying they had been involved in attacks and crimes that undermined the security of the country. Afghanistan denies the accusations.

The UN refugee agency, the International Organization for Migration and the UN Children's Fund on Friday expressed concern for the safety of children and families affected by the expulsion, saying a humanitarian crisis was unfolding with winter on the way.

Mullah Hassan Akhund, prime minister in Afghanistan's Taliban-led administration, also expressed reservations.

“It is 100% against all principles, come and talk face to face,” he said in a video-recorded statement.

Facilities at the main northwestern border

crossing of Torkham have been increased three times to cater for the rising number of returnees, said Abdul Nasir Khan, deputy commissioner for Khyber district.

“Everything is normal now as the returnees no longer need to wait in queues for hours,” he told Reuters.

Those arriving in Afghanistan complained of hardships.

“We spent three days on border in Pakistan. We had very bad situation,” said Mohammad Ismael Rafi, 55, who said he lived for 22 years in the southwestern Pakistani border town of Chaman where he had a retail business.

“Thank God that we have arrived back to our country,” he said. It took him six days to leave his home in Pakistan with his 16 family members and belongings to reach a makeshift tent village on the other side of the border.

Rafi accused Pakistani officials of taking bribes, a charge Islamabad denies.

Afghan schoolboy Sarfraz, 16, who goes by one name, said he and his father had never visited Afghanistan and did not want to go there now. His grandfather migrated to Paki-

stan decades ago.

“Where should we go?” he asked in response to a Reuters query in northwestern Peshawar. “There is no work there. We're poor people. We are being forced. We have to leave.”

The Taliban administration in Afghanistan, scrambling to cope with the sudden influx, has set up temporary transit camps where food and medical assistance will be provided.

Refugee groups have reported chaotic and desperate scenes at the camps.

Pakistani authorities started rounding up foreigners, most of them Afghans, hours before the deadline.

Many of the migrants fled Afghanistan during the decades of armed conflict since the late 1970s, while the Taliban's takeover after the withdrawal of U.S.-led coalition forces in 2021 led to another exodus.

Khan, the official, said 19,744 Afghans had crossed the Torkham border on Thursday, 147,949 in total since the government announced the deadline. More than 35,000 have left through southwestern Pakistani border crossing at Chaman.

U.S. Lawmakers Slam Pro-Zionist Lobbying Group for 'Inflammatory Ads'

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. lawmakers have been feuding with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (Aipac) after the powerful pro-Israel lobbying group attacked them for voting against a resolution supporting the Zionist regime.

Aipac singled out Republican Congressman Thomas Massie in a tweet on the social media platform X, saying that he had stood with “The Squad,” a group of progressive Democrats, to vote against supporting the Zionist regime.

Massie, the sole Republican to vote against the resolution, accused Aipac of “intentionally misrepresenting” his vote.

Massie said the resolution “contains an open-ended promise of military support that is so broad that it could be interpreted to commit U.S. soldiers to the conflict”.

He added he was opposed to sending the Zionist regime aid

that could also rope the U.S. into a new Middle East war.

Massie joined nine progressive democrats - including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Jamaal Bowman, Rashida Tlaib, and Ilhan Omar - in voting against the resolution.

Aipac also attacked other Democratic lawmakers.

“Aipac literally ran ads with my face next to Hamas rockets, resulting in a string of threats against my life,” Congresswoman Ilhan Omar tweeted.

“What they are doing is insulting and Islamophobic,” she added.

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi accused Aipac of using “deeply cynical and inflammatory ads” against Omar.

Democratic Congressman Mark Pocan accused Aipac of being “undemocratic”, saying that “they clearly don't care about dead kids, it's all about backing a conservative Netanyahu position”.