



IOM: Large-Scale Refugee Returns Could Overwhelm Syria

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Large-scale returns of refugees to Syria could overwhelm the country and even stoke conflict following the toppling of President Bashar al-Assad, the head of the UN migration agency said Saturday, according to Reuters. The UN refugee agency has estimated that one million people will return to Syria in the first six months of 2025. Some European countries have already frozen asylum applications for Syrians. “We believe that millions of people returning would create conflict within an already fragile society,” Amy Pope, director-general of the International Organization for Migration, told a Geneva press briefing after a trip to Syria. “We are not promoting large-scale returns. The communities, frankly, are just not ready to absorb the people who are displaced,” she said, calling for support from donors to help stabilize and rebuild the country.

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Sweden's Halt to Funding Doubles Suffering

UNRWA: Gaza Reduced to 'Graveyard'

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Philippe Lazzarini has expressed that the decision of the Swedish government to stop funding UNRWA in 2025 “is disappointing and comes at the worst time for Palestine Refugees. The decision is one day after the members of the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a resolution in support of UNRWA.”

“Sweden has been a reliable longstanding partner to UNRWA providing both political and financial support for decades,” he added, noting: “This is a sad day for Palestine Refugees and the multilateral system which Sweden has spearheaded.”

Sweden’s decision to stop funding comes as “UNRWA is under unprecedented politically driven attacks, including through the use of disinformation. The attacks aim at stripping the Palestinians from their refugee status,” Lazzarini said.

Lazzarini warned that the cessation of funding for UNRWA would undermine decades of



Unrwa emergency officer Louise Wateridge has described the dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza, where repeated Israeli attacks have left residents exposed to cold and rain with little shelter.

Sweden’s investment in human development, including depriving hundreds of thousands of girls and boys in the region of their right to education: “For the people of Gaza, this decision will double their suffering endured over the past 14 months since October 7.”

The commissioner-general went on to say: “I hope the Government of Sweden will reconsider its decision and pursue its longstanding solidarity by investing in both a political solution and the human

development of Palestine Refugees through UNRWA.”

Meanwhile, UNRWA Emergency Officer Louise Wateridge, speaking from Nuseirat in central Gaza, described the dire humanitarian conditions in the besieged territory, where repeated Israeli attacks have left residents exposed to cold and rain with little shelter.

“The world is not seeing what’s going on with these people—it’s impossible for families to shelter in these conditions,” said Wa-

teridge, highlighting the desperate need for aid as heavy rains were forecast to worsen the situation on Friday evening. She noted that most residents are living under makeshift fabric shelters, lacking even basic waterproof structures. “Sixty-nine percent of the buildings here have been damaged or destroyed. There’s absolutely nowhere for people to shelter from these elements,” Wateridge added.

Describing the catastrophic state of Gaza, she remarked, “An entire society here is now a graveyard. Over 2 million people are trapped. They cannot escape. And people continue to have basic needs deprived, and it just feels like every path here that you could possibly take is leading to death.”

Rosalina Bollen, a UNICEF communication specialist also said that children in Gaza are “cold, sick and traumatized”, and 96 percent of women and children cannot meet their basic nutritional needs.

“Gaza must be one of the most heartbreaking places on earth for humanitarians. Every small effort to save a child’s life is undone by fierce devastation,” Bollen said in a statement.

Thousands in Morocco Demand End to Normalization With Zionists



Protesters lift flags of Palestine during a demonstration in Rabat in solidarity with Palestinians amid Israel's ongoing bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

RABAT (Dispatches) – Thousands of Moroccans participated in solidarity protests in support of the Gaza Strip, which is suffering under the Zionist regime’s genocidal war, during which they demanded an end to normalization with the occupying regime.

The solidarity protests were organized after Friday prayers for the 63rd consecutive week in several cities in the kingdom in response to the call of the NGO Moroccan Commission for Advocating the Nation’s Causes. The protests were held under the slogan, “Normalization is treason”, according to reports by Anadolu Agency.

Anadolu Agency stated that the protesters denounced the ongoing extermination by the Zionist regime for the second year in a row, demanding the protection of Palestinian civilians.

They chanted slogans in support of the Palestinian cause and others, condemning the targeting of civilians. Among the chanted slogans were “Palestine is a free land, and the Zionists must leave” and “The martyr left a will, do not abandon

the cause.”

They also raised banners, some of which read “Support the resistance and reject normalization” and “From the Marrakesh al-Murabitun to the Moroccan Quarter in Palestine, eternal support for the resistance and complete rejection of the Zionists.”

In December 2022, Morocco and the Zionist regime restored their diplomatic relations under U.S. mediation in a move that popular groups and political forces in the kingdom rejected. This was followed by a visit by high-ranking Israeli officials to Rabat, which ended with the start of the war on Gaza; however, it did not sever diplomatic relations with the occupation.

With U.S. support, the Zionist regime has been committing genocide in Gaza since October 7, 2023, killing and wounding more than 152,000 Palestinians. Over 11,000 are believed to be missing amid massive destruction and famine that killed dozens of children and elderly people in one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the world.

Gaza Civil Defense: Israel Leaves Palestinian Bodies for Stray Dogs

GAZA (Dispatches) – Gaza’s Civil Defense reported on Saturday that Zionist troops killing Palestinians and leaving their bodies in the streets where stray dogs feed on them is a clear violation of international law.

In a statement, the Civil Defense explained that the occupying regime’s have repeatedly targeted rescue teams and ambulances, specifically when they attempt to approach the bodies of those killed.

It emphasized that the regime has also obstructed efforts to re-

cover the bodies of thousands of Palestinians who have died under the rubble of homes destroyed in Israeli airstrikes.

It added that it had found several Palestinian bodies that had been reduced to skeletons.

In other instances, it described seeing stray dogs feeding on the bodies in several neighborhoods, including Zeitoun, Shujaiya, Tel al-Hawa, the Jabalia area, Tal al-Zaatar, Beit Hanoun, and parts of the eastern areas of Khan Younis and Rafah.

Stressing that these actions by the Zionist regime constitute violations of the Geneva Conventions, it called on the signatory countries to “take immediate action to ensure Israel’s compliance with international law.”

They urged the international community, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), to “pressure Israel to follow proper protocols for handling the bodies of the deceased during wartime.”

The Zionist regime launched a genocidal war on Gaza that has killed more than 45,200 people, mostly women and children, since Oct. 7, 2023.

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants last month for Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former war minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

The regime also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its war on Gaza.

Facebook Hosted Adverts Fundraising for Zionist Army, Lawmakers

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Facebook has been hosting paid adverts for charities fundraising for the Zionist regime’s army battalions accused of war crimes and lawmakers encouraging the resettlement of the Gaza Strip.

Eko, a U.S.-based campaigning organization, identified 98 Facebook adverts targeting Europe and the U.S. to solicit funds for Israeli army equipment, including advanced thermal drones, assault rifle sights, armor, night vision goggles and helmets.

“The most concerning issue with these fundraising appeals is their focus on drones potentially used in the ongoing violence in Gaza and Lebanon,” Eko said in its report.

“Many of the drones... are reportedly modified by the Israeli army to carry explosives.”

One advert showed a soldier called Kobi, who is identified as a “lead machine gunner” for the 551 Commando Brigade, making an appeal for night vision goggles in front of a destroyed mosque.

Earlier this year, Bellingcat identified the 551 Commando Brigade working with the 8219 Combat Engineering Battalion on widespread demolitions in Gaza, including residential blocks, mosques and entire neighborhoods. The UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing has described these demolitions as potential crimes against humanity.

Another advert from the Tsedaka Centre, a Miami-based non-profit, featured an Israeli captain asking for donations. The advert links to the Chesed Fund, which hosts a campaign to purchase armor plates, tactical helmets, vests, assault rifle lasers and advanced drones.

Eko highlighted in its report that these advertisements may violate EU and U.S. laws governing non-profits and could affect charities’ tax-deductible contributions if the funds are directed toward military purposes.

Maen Hammad, a campaigner for Eko, said Meta has become the megaphone for the “Israeli

far-right” since the Zionist regime launched its war on Gaza after October 2023.

“Meta has become the megaphone for the Israeli far-right, amplifying their calls and profiting from their ads which push their extremist and genocidal policies,” Hammad told Middle East Eye.

“Worse yet, the platform is also a hub for groups to fundraise for military equipment used by IDF units implicated in war crimes. This is far from an oversight - it’s another example of Meta’s profit-driven betrayal of human rights.”

The campaigning group also identified a series of Hebrew language adverts targeting users in the occupied territories paid for by Israeli members of parliament.

These adverts described Palestinians as “savages” and “bloodthirsty” and called on the Israeli army to use the “dahiya” doctrine - the mass destruction of civilian infrastructure - against Palestinians.

U.S. Gives Nod to \$5bn in Potential Arms Sales for Egypt

CAIRO (Dispatches) – The United States State Department has approved the potential sale of more than \$5bn in arms for Egypt.

The State Department informed Congress that it had approved the sale of \$4.69bn worth of equipment for 555 U.S.-made M1A1 Abrams tanks operated by Egypt, along with \$630m in Hellfire air-to-surface missiles and \$30m in precision-guided munitions.

In a statement, it said the sale would support U.S. “foreign policy and national security” by helping to improve the security of a “major” non-NATO ally that had acted as an important strategic partner in West Asia.

Egypt and the U.S. have worked increasingly closely since the outbreak of the war in Gaza in October 2023, with Cairo playing a role in negotiating a ceasefire.

The deals come despite ongoing concern in Washington over the Egyptian government’s poor human rights record under President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Rights group Amnesty estimates that Egypt currently holds about 60,000 political prisoners, including British-Egyptian activist Alaa Abd El-Fattah, jailed for “spreading false news” after sharing a Facebook post about alleged police

brutality.

Egypt has in the last two years pardoned hundreds of political prisoners. But rights groups have said at least three times that many have been arrested over the same period.

U.S. President Joe Biden took office in 2021 pledging a harder line on Egypt over human rights concerns, but his administration has approved several arms deals.

In 2022, his administration approved the sale to Egypt of 12 Super Hercules C-130 transport aircraft and air defence radar systems totaling an estimated \$2.5bn.

The State Department’s notification of the latest potential sale to Congress did not indicate that a contract has been signed or that negotiations have concluded.

The proposed sale would “not alter the basic military balance in the region”, said the statement, adding that transactions related to the Abrams tanks would take up to a decade to implement.

The U.S. Congress can still block the sales, but such attempts are usually unsuccessful.

Cairo is one of the largest recipients of U.S. security aid since its peace treaty with the Zionist regime in 1979. The largest recipient is the occupying regime of Israel.