

# UNRWA Warns 'Very Bad' Financial Health Expected to Worsen

GENEVA (Dispatches) – The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) on Tuesday said its financial health is “very bad” and warned that it is expected to worsen amid the anticipated decision of U.S. President Donald Trump to extend the halting of funding.

“When the executive order and if the executive order is issued, we will be able to comment on that. Having said that the financial health of UNRWA is very, very bad. It got worse over the past few months, and is expected to continue to worsen,” UNRWA Communications Director Juliette Touma said in a UN briefing in Geneva.

Touma noted that the agency is “notable to plan ahead too much.” “In January, we were able to pay the salaries,” she said, but added, “It’s very, very difficult for us to



Zionist right wing activists deface the sign board in front of the shuttered gate of the UNRWA's West Bank Field Office in Al-Quds on January 30, 2025.

have an understanding over the financial situation of the agency. And this is nothing new.”

The U.S. funding to the UNRWA was suspended in 2024 under the

Joe Biden administration. About the situation in the West Bank, she said that the agency is delivering its services to a degree possible across the occupied West

Bank, including East Al-Quds, and that includes education and primary health care.

Large parts of the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank have been completely destroyed following a series of controlled detonations by Zionist troops, Touma said.

She added that as a result, all 30,000 residents had fled the camp as of Tuesday morning.

“The camp’s residents have endured the impossible,” she said.

Jenin has been a frequent flashpoint in the Zionist regime’s aggression, with the camp often subjected to military raids. The latest demolitions come amid escalating onslaught in the West Bank, which has seen a sharp increase in Israeli military operations since the start of the war in Gaza.

## U.S. ...

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detailed reports swiftly to counter misinformation,” said co-author Saman Karimi, a Johns Hopkins geophysicist. “Giving amplification to contents coming from verified scientific accounts could help reduce the misleading narrative. This can be done via partnership between social media platforms and trusted seismologists or agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey.”

## Satellite...

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on their land as well as checkpoints, unauthorized arrests, housing raids, and road closures.

The occupying regime of Israel initially declared that the incursions would be temporary, but the building of bases brings that claim into question.

Instead, taken along with Israel’s assertion that it would remain on top of Jabal –al-Sheikh – which lies in Syria – indefinitely, and its track record of annexing the occupied Golan Heights, the Zionists could potentially be planning to stay in the newly-entered areas for the long haul.

## Trump’s...

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far-reaching consequences by reshaping international politics and economics and alliances.

During his first term in office, Trump imposed more than 5,000 sanctions. His successor Joe Biden, while indicating to potentially scale them back, ended up intensifying them. According to the Washington Post, the Biden administration added more than 7000 sanctions to the U.S. total.

In fact, each 21st-century American president has imposed more sanctions than the last, despite high-level warnings that addiction to them could have dire consequences.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew under the Obama administration famously warned that the “overuse of sanctions” could herald the demise of the dollar. Biden’s treasury secretary Janet Yellen said that U.S. financial sanctions had pushed more countries to seek alternative financial transaction methods not involving the dollar.

This is because the world is finally fed up with the U.S. abusing its dollar hegemony to shift domestic crises and harvest global wealth by damaging the economic and financial stability and well-being of other countries.

The U.S. administration’s application of direct and secondary sanctions increases the risks of holding assets or invoice transactions in dollars, affecting firms located in third countries due to the extra-territoriality of the US law.

This spurs targeted countries and third parties to diversify away from the U.S. dollar for international payments.

A 2022 research study found that the share of the U.S. dollar in foreign exchange reserves of central banks was 59% in 2021 compared to 71% in 1999. The decline, they argued, was at least in part a result of the continued imposition of financial sanctions by the U.S.

Ironically, the Ukraine war which the U.S. and European governments have been inflaming through a constant flow of arms is accelerating the collapse of the dollar, explaining why Trump is pushing for an “immediate ceasefire” and end to the conflict, no matter what.

Western sanctions on Russia have enabled Beijing to test plans long in development to replace the dollar with the yuan for cross-border trade. And Russia has been more than willing to conduct trade in yuan and establish the financial infrastructure to support yuan transactions with third parties.

Iran has joined the bandwagon, actively promoting local currency settle-

ments and multilateral cooperation and offering alternative choices and possibilities for the global financial order.

But more significantly, de-dollarization is advocated by the BRICS, an intergovernmental organization founded by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, with Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates joining in 2024.

On Thursday, Trump reiterated his threat of 100% tariffs against BRICS nations, warning them against replacing the U.S. dollar as a reserve currency.

The Kremlin in December said that any U.S. attempt to compel countries to use the dollar would backfire, after Trump made the same threat against the BRICS.

## New ...

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Sabahi-Fard will maintain his previous position as commander of the Army’s Air Defense Force while also taking on the responsibilities of leading the country’s joint air defense command. He succeeds Brigadier General Qader Rahimzadeh, who previously headed the base.

## FM...

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to the large-scale presence of Gaza’s Resistance forces during the recent exchange with Israel.

The Iranian minister said that this perception has sparked internal debates within Israeli society, where many now see themselves as defeated.

Addressing the military aspects of the war in Gaza and Lebanon, Araghchi said despite suffering attacks, Hezbollah has maintained its operational strength.

He said the group continues to hold its ground in southern Lebanon, demonstrating resilience that prevented Israel from achieving the territorial gains it had secured during the 2006 war.

While acknowledging the losses suffered by Resistance in Gaza, Lebanon, and beyond, Araghchi reiterated that Resistance is not merely a movement but an ideology, one that cannot be eradicated through bombings or massacres.

He said despite repeated efforts to disarm Resistance, its greatest weapon is not conventional arms but the sacrifice of its martyrs.

Concluding his speech, Araghchi said the Resistance forces must rebuild and apply lessons learned from the recent conflict.

“I am confident they will return stronger than before. This is not the first time Hezbollah has lost a leader, yet each time, it has emerged more powerful.”

The conference was attended by a number of Iranian administrative and military officials as well as international figures.

The keynote speakers at the closing ceremony also included the representative of the Islamic Jihad movement in Iran, Nasser Abu-Sharif, President of the Islamic Azad University Mohammad Mahdi Tehanchi, university professor Hamid Reza Moqaddamfar, and Secretary General of the Islamic Radios and Televisions Union Ali Karimian.

## Iran...

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political, legal and international duties,” it stated.

The ministry underlined that the Supreme National Security Council is still the only authority that defines the strategy of the nuclear negotiations and makes arrangements among the organizations involved.

The statement came after media speculations that Ali Shamkhani has taken charge of handling the nuclear talks.

# Israel Escalates 'Unprecedented' Demolitions of Palestinian Buildings

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime is escalating demolition orders against Palestinian buildings and other facilities in the occupied West Bank and within the occupation state under the pretext that they have been built without construction permits, the Palestinian Information Centre has reported.

The Israeli occupation forces have lately ordered the demolition of seven houses in Furush Beit Dajan village east of Nablus as part of an unprecedented demolition campaign, according to the head of the village council, Tawfiq Hajj Mohammed.

In Taquu village south of Bethlehem, Israeli bulldozers have destroyed a two-storey house belonging to the siblings Usama and Tayseer Sulaiman. A complete siege was imposed on the area banning citizens from getting any-

where near while the demolition took place.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian citizen was forced to self-demolish his house in Wadi Ara in the occupation state to avoid paying exorbitant fines.

In Sur Baher village to the south of Jerusalem, al-Taqwa Mosque was bulldozed by the occupation regime last Wednesday. The regime also demolished Hamza Mosque in the Jenin refugee camp, said the Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Endowments), adding that such a practice violates international laws and conventions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs added that the Israeli demolition of the mosque is a grave violation against the Palestinian people and their religious sanctities.

East of Bethlehem, the occupation forces raided an-Noa’man vil-

lage and delivered demolition notices for 45 houses, in an attempt to destroy the entire village.

Jamal Al-Daraawi, the head of the village council, affirmed that such orders aim at the forced displacement of the Palestinian residents prior to their land being annexed by the Zionist regime’s municipality in occupied Al-Quds. An Israeli military court, added al-Daraawi, imposed a property tax on each home in the village a year and a half ago.

The Israeli occupation authorities have also destroyed the homes of Bedouin villagers in al-Araqib village in the Negev for the 235th time in yet another attempt to displace the villagers.

The Zionist regime destroyed at least 8,765 Palestinian facilities, including 3,107 agricultural buildings and 2,725 houses, in the oc-

cupied West Bank and Al-Quds between January 2010 and January 2025, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Demolition campaigns are not only meant to forcibly displace Palestinian people from their homes, but also aim to break the determination of the Palestinian people and their legitimate resistance against the Israeli occupation.

In a related issue, the Knesset — the Zionist regime’s parliament — has approved a draft law allowing Jewish settlers to take over direct ownership of land and assets owned by Palestinians, which further encourages settlement activities on Palestinian lands. All of Israel’s settlements and the settlers who live in them are illegal under international law and are regarded as a war crime.

# UN: Maternal Deaths in Afghanistan May Rise After U.S. Funding Pause

NEW YORK (Reuters) – A UN aid official said on Tuesday that a U.S. funding pause would cut off millions of Afghans from sexual and reproductive health services, and the continued absence of this support could cause over 1,000 maternal deaths in Afghanistan from 2025 to 2028.

U.S. President Donald Trump last month ordered a 90-day pause in foreign development assistance, pending assessment of efficiencies and consistency with his foreign policy, setting alarm bells ringing among aid groups around the world that depend on U.S. support.

Trump has also restored U.S. participation in international anti-abor-

tion pacts, cutting off U.S. family planning funds for foreign organizations providing or promoting abortion.

Pio Smith, regional director for Asia and the Pacific at the UN sexual and reproductive health agency (UNFPA), said that over nine million people in Afghanistan would lose access to services as well as over 1.2 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, due to the closure of health facilities. Afghanistan has one of the highest death rates in the world for pregnant women, with a mother dying of preventable pregnancy complications every two hours, he said.

“What happens when our work is not funded? Women give birth alone, in unsanitary conditions... New-borns die from preventable causes,” Smith told a Geneva press briefing. “These are literally the world’s most vulnerable people.”

Taking the example of Afghanistan between 2025 and 2028, he explained, the estimate is that the absence of U.S. support will result in 1,200 additional maternal deaths and 109,000 additional unintended pregnancies. Across the Asia-Pacific region, UNFPA receives about \$77 million in U.S. funding, added Smith.

Riva Eskinazi, director of do-

nor relations at the International Planned Parenthood Federation told Reuters that it, too, would have to halt family planning and sexual and reproductive health services in West Africa as a result of the pause.

“We can foresee an increase in unintended pregnancies and maternal deaths,” she said. “There is going to be a problem sending contraceptives to our members. It’s devastating.”

IPPF, a federation of national organizations that advocates for sexual and reproductive health, calculates that it would have to forego at least \$61m in U.S. funding over four years in 13 countries, most of which are in Africa.

# Turkey’s Pro-Kurdish Party: Ocalan to Make 'Historic Call' Soon

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkey’s pro-Kurdish political party said on Tuesday that Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed leader of the PKK militant group, will make a “historic call” soon, amid a political effort to end its decades-long conflict with the Turkish state.

“Ocalan is preparing to make a historic call in the coming days for a permanent solution to the Kurdish issue,” DEM Party co-chairman Tuncer Bakirhan told his party in parliament.

“We are ready for a permanent and radical solution,” he said. “We attach importance to this call and support it.”

The Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), designated a terrorist group by Turkey, has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984 with the aim of carving out an ethnic

homeland for Kurds.

Peace talks between Ankara and the PKK collapsed in 2015, leading to a resumption of the conflict, in which more than 40,000 people have been killed.

Turkish media have reported that Ocalan could choose Feb. 15, the anniversary of his capture in Kenya in 1999, as a possible date for a statement. He has since been imprisoned on an island near Istanbul.

Bakirhan did not say what Ocalan would announce. His remarks suggested that any call for PKK disarmament could be conditional on steps taken by Turkey, rather than an outright declaration.

President Tayyip Erdogan’s government has backed an offer first made in October by Devlet Bahceli, the leader of the nationalist MHP

party and a key Erdogan ally, for Ocalan to call on the PKK to disarm.

Bahceli said at the time there was no need for a new peace process, saying that the PKK should surrender unconditionally to Turkish justice and serve prison sentences.

But Bahceli also spoke in October of the prospect of Ocalan being given the “right to hope”, if the PKK disbanded, suggesting he could potentially be set free and address the DEM in parliament. He also proposed the implementation of unspecified democratic reforms - a contrast to his usual strident rhetoric.

Bakirhan said the DEM, parliament’s third biggest party, urged the government “to strengthen the ground that will correspond to the seriousness of this call and to play its role in the historic solution”.

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