

Fire That Killed 12 in Turkey Under Control
ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkish authorities have brought under control an agricultural fire that killed 12 people and wounded 78 others in a region near the Turkish border with Syria and Iraq, local media reported on Saturday.
The fire had started late on Thursday due to the burning of straw and spread because of strong winds, the local governor's office said. Authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the fire, Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said in a post on X on Friday.
Broadcaster NTV and others said the fire was now under control and authorities were working to cool the scorched areas. NTV said many animals trapped in the fire were also killed.

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UN Chief: World Cannot Afford Lebanon Becoming Another Gaza

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed increasing concern over the escalating war of words and deadly clashes between the Zionist regime's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement.



Members of Lebanon's Hezbollah take part in a ceremony in a southern Beirut suburb.

UN peacekeepers are working to calm the situation and prevent "miscalculation" after both sides heightened their rhetoric and raised the possibility of full-scale conflict, he said.

"One rash move – one miscalculation – could trigger a catastrophe that goes far beyond the border and, frankly, beyond imagination," Guterres told reporters.

"Let's be clear: The people of the region and the people of the world cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza."

A UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL, as well as unarmed technical observers known as UNTSO, have long been stationed in southern Lebanon to monitor the situation along the demarcation line between Lebanon and the occupied territories, known as the Blue Line.

"UN peacekeepers are on the

ground working to de-escalate tensions and help prevent miscalculation," Guterres continued, adding, "The world must say loudly and clearly: immediate de-escalation is not only possible – it is essential. There is no military solution."

Hezbollah has fired retaliatory rockets and drones into Israel since it launched the war on Gaza last October.

Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and war minister Yoav Gallant have previously pledged to "turn Beirut into Gaza". This

week, Hezbollah leader Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah warned of "no restraint and no rules" if the Zionist regime launches a major attack on Lebanon.

Hezbollah has indicated it is not seeking a wider conflict, even as it has steadily drawn on more potent weaponry.

The resistance movement has thousands of fighters, many with experience in the Syrian war, and an arsenal of tens of thousands of missiles capable of hitting cities all over the Israeli-occupied ter-

ritories. It also has a large fleet of drones, one of which appears to have carried out an extended flight over the port city of Haifa this week.

There are fears a wider escalation could overwhelm the Zionist regime's Iron Dome missile system, which has so far failed to intercept most of the hundreds of missiles fired by Hezbollah.

The occupying regime has had bruising experiences in Lebanon in the past. After its forces invaded in 1982, they were stuck holding a buffer zone for nearly two decades after a war that saw the birth of Hezbollah. There was a second 34-day war in 2006 that bloodied the occupying regime.

But the political pressure on Netanyahu has swelled with no indication of when life will return to normal more than eight months after the beginning of the conflict.

Dozens of towns in the occupied territories are deserted with about 60,000 people evacuated to temporary accommodation, leaving empty streets with the occasional building scarred by rocket fire. Some 90,000 have also fled southern Lebanon.

Cuba Joins ICJ Case Against Israel Over Gaza Genocide



International Court of Justice (ICJ) President Joan Donoghue (C) speaks at the ICJ prior to the announcement of an initial ruling in the genocide case against the Zionist regime, brought by South Africa, in The Hague on January 26, 2024.

HAVANA (Dispatches) – Cuba has decided to join South Africa's case against the Zionist regime before the International Court of Justice.

According to Radio Havana Cuba, under its obligations to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Cuba will exercise its right as a third state to present its interpretation of the convention, which it asserts Israel has flagrantly violated in the Gaza Strip.

The case seeks to halt the atrocities against the Palestinian people due to the Zionist regime's disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force in the illegally occupied Gaza territory.

Cuba stressed that Israel, shielded by U.S. complicity, has consistently ignored its obligations as an occupying power under the Geneva Convention.

Cuba said genocide, apartheid, forced displacement, and collective punishments have no place in today's world and should not be tolerated by the international community. It called for justice and adherence to the UN Charter and international law.

Cuba joins Nicaragua, Colombia, Libya, Maldives, Egypt, Ireland, Belgium, Turkey, and Chile as countries that intend to or have formally announced their participation in the case against Israel.

Earlier this month, Chilean President Gabriel Boric announced its country's support for a genocide case against Israel, expressing his deep concern over the "catastrophic humanitarian situation" in Gaza, especially against women and children.

"Chile will become a party to and support the case that South Africa presented against Israel before the International Court of Justice in The Hague," Boric said.

The occupying regime stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, whose latest ruling ordered Tel Aviv to immediately halt its operation in Rafah, where more than 1 million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded in May.

Flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire, the regime has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal aggression on Gaza since an Oct. 7 attack by Hamas.

Over 37,400 Palestinians have since been killed in Gaza, most of them women and children, and more than 85,000 others injured, according to local health authorities.

More than eight months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water, and medicine.

Ex-Gitmo Detainee Compares Palestinian Prisoner Abuse to U.S. Torture

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Asadullah Haroon, a former Guantanamo Bay detainee, drew parallels between his own experiences of torture and the treatment of Palestinians in the Zionist regime's prisons, highlighting the systematic abuse prevalent in both situations.

"This is the worst form of oppression," he says. "When you are labeled as a terrorist you cannot defend yourself in any way. Without a doubt it's the same process; they are torturing the people in the same way. I think the Americans have made this and the Israelis are implementing it."

Haroon, who won his case against the U.S. government for

illegal imprisonment in 2021, was held without charge in the notorious Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba for 16 years following his arrest in 2007. Without a doubt, he says, Palestinians held in Israeli prisons now are enduring similar treatment to that he experienced, Al Jazeera reported.

"It's like in the first days when I was arrested, I was beaten to an extent that I was standing; I couldn't sit down or if I was sitting down and beaten up, I couldn't get up. Same with insomnia and I was assaulted for several days. A lot of the prisoners were bitten by dogs. We were provided very little medical care.

"Physical torture was really bad but the worst was mental torture in different forms. I believe there isn't much of a difference in the torture of prisoners of Palestine, Guantanamo, Bagram and Abu Ghraib."

Some 54 Palestinians have been killed in the Zionist regime's jails since the regime launched its deadly war on Gaza in October last year, according to the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs in Gaza. The United Nations Human Rights Office in Palestine says it has been receiving multiple reports of mass detentions, abuse of prisoners and forced disappearances of

Palestinians for months, while harrowing testimonies have been provided to aid agencies or posted to social media by Palestinians who have been released from detention.

In late April, the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, published details of the abuse of Palestinian prisoners who had been jailed without trial.

Its report included descriptions of regular beatings, prisoners being attacked by dogs, being forced to kiss the Israeli flag, being deprived of water (including for a toilet in a cell shared by 10 inmates), the electricity being cut, insufficient food and being stripped naked.

UN: Humanitarian Needs in Afghanistan Alarmingly High

HAMILTON, Canada (Anadolu) – The UN highlighted the alarming humanitarian need in Afghanistan, saying that more than 50% of the population require humanitarian assistance in the war-torn country.

"Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan remain alarmingly high. More than 50% of the population – some 23.7 million people – require humanitarian assistance this year, the third highest number of people in need in the world," Lisa Doughten, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division, said at a Security Council meeting on Afghanistan.

She emphasized the impacts of poverty, food insecurity, and climate change, saying: "1 in 4 Afghans are uncertain where their next meal will come from. Nearly 3 million children are experiencing acute levels of hunger."

Doughten also noted the devastating effects of climate change, with more frequent extreme weather events and annual droughts predicted

to become the norm by 2030. "Efforts are already underway to establish anticipatory action programs... but these will need to be sufficiently staffed and funded to bear fruit," she said.

She said that women and girls are "profoundly" impacted by the Taliban government, particularly the ban on girls' education, which is "fueling an increase in child marriage and early childbearing."

"Reports of attempted suicides among women and girls are also increasing," she added.

Despite challenges, 9.9 million people received assistance from January to March 2024, she said, adding that only 21% of the \$3 billion needed for 2024 has been funded.

She stressed the need for sustained assistance to support longer-term solutions, helping Afghans lift themselves out of poverty and withstand climate shocks.

The UN special representative for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, also told the council that the war-torn country remains in "crisis

management mode" despite the de-facto authorities maintaining political stability.

"The stability in Afghanistan that the de-facto authorities have continued to maintain, despite what I perceive as growing signs of popular discontent, should not hide the fact that as an international community we are still in a crisis management mode," Otunbayeva said.

Despite over 7 billion dollars in international aid, Afghanistan continues to face massive poverty and is ill-prepared for climate shocks.

"Afghanistan has a near zero carbon footprint but is the sixth most vulnerable country to climate change and the least prepared to address climate shock. International assistance resources are, unfortunately, decreasing, in part due to competing global demands on diminishing donor resources. The 2024 appeal of some three billion dollars is only 20% funded," she said.

Despite political stability in Afghanistan, she expressed concern over the lack of political space for dissent.

Senior U.S. Official Resigns Over Gaza War

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – A senior U.S. State Department official who served as deputy assistant for Zionist-Palestinian affairs said on Friday that he was resigning from his post, according to a report by the Washington Post.

The newspaper reported that Andrew Miller told his colleagues he had seen his family "sparingly" amid the Israeli war on Gaza that has been going on for more than eight months.

The State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller confirmed the departure in a statement to the Washington Post, saying, "Andrew brought deep experience and sharp perspective to the table every day."

Miller is described by people who know him as a stalwart supporter of Palestinian rights and statehood.

One U.S. official said Miller pushed for the U.S. to use its leverage over the Zionist regime, including the substantial military, economic, political and diplomatic support it provides to the Zionist regime.

"He's certainly on the more

progressive side of administration officials when it comes to the region, including on Israel-Palestine, but he has also never been a 'burn it all down and forgo pragmatism' type," the official said.

Miller played a leading role in the executive order issued in February that resulted in sanctions imposed against several extremist Israeli settlers for attacking Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, CNN television news network reported.

His resignation comes on the heels of at least eight other departures from the Biden administration over its support for the Israeli war in Gaza.

Miller's resignation is notable as it marks the departure of the most senior official with a role in Israeli-Palestinian policy-making.

Israel has been waging an onslaught against the Gaza Strip, targeting hospitals, residences, and houses of worship after Palestinian resistance movements launched a surprise attack, dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, on October 7.