



Yemeni Delegation Heads for Oman for Prisoner Exchange Talks

SANA'A (Dispatches) – An Ansarullah delegation departed the Yemeni capital Sana'a to Oman on Saturday to attend a new round of UN-sponsored negotiations with the former government side over a prisoner exchange, al-Masirah TV reported. On Thursday, the Yemeni television, Al-Yemen, said the government side would head for Oman for the talks. The talks are expected to last a week in the Omani capital Muscat. In April 2023, nearly 900 prisoners from both sides were released following UN-sponsored negotiations between the Yemeni government and the mercenaries, marking the second-largest prisoner exchange between the warring sides since the war broke out in 2015.

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# Washington Sent Israel Thousands of 2,000-Pound Bombs Since Oct. 7

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – The Biden administration has sent to the Zionist regime large numbers of munitions, including more than 10,000 highly destructive 2,000-pound bombs and thousands of Hellfire missiles, since the start of the war in Gaza, said two U.S. officials briefed on an updated list of weapons shipments.

Between the war's start last October and recent days, the United States has transferred at least 14,000 of the MK-84 2,000-pound bombs, 6,500 500-pound bombs, 3,000 Hellfire precision-guided air-to-ground missiles, 1,000 bunker-buster bombs, 2,600 air-dropped small-diameter bombs, and other munitions, according to the officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly.

While the officials didn't give a timeline for the shipments, the totals suggest there has been no significant drop-off in U.S. military support for its ally, despite international calls to limit weapons supplies and a recent administration decision to pause a shipment of



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Experts said the contents of the shipments appear consistent with what the Zionist regime would need to replenish supplies used in this eight-month intense military campaign in Gaza, which it launched on Oct. 7.

The news Axios website also cited one U.S. and one Israeli of-

ficial as saying that the release of about 1,700 500-pound bombs was one of the issues discussed during this week's meeting between Zionist war minister Yoav Gallant and senior White House officials.

"During the meetings in Washington, we were told that the 500-pound bombs will be released after the Rafah operation is over in

two weeks," an Israeli official said.

The shipment, which also includes the 2,000-pound bombs, was put on hold in May amid concerns about the invasion of the city of Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's 2.4 million population have sought shelter from Israeli strikes elsewhere in Gaza.

According to the report, the U.S. administration is still reviewing the other part of the shipment which includes 1,800 2,000-pound bombs.

The occupying regime launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians.

Since then, the United States has supplied the occupying regime with more than 10,000 tons of military equipment and used its veto power against all United Nations Security Council resolutions that called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

## U.S. Congress Passes Amendment Denying Gaza Genocide



The shrouded bodies of people killed in Rafah during Israeli bombardment on the southern Gaza strip, are placed on a truck for burial outside al-Najjar hospital on 29 December 2023.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – The majority of members of the U.S. Congress, including more than 60 Democrats, have voted in favor of an amendment that would bar the State Department from using the Gaza health ministry's count for the death toll in Gaza.

The vote pushes forward a piece of legislation that, if it passes, could further silence the discussion within the U.S. government about the devastating impact that the Zionist regime's war on Gaza has had on the enclave's Palestinian population.

The amendment, a part of the State Department's annual appropriations bill, passed with a 269-144 vote. Sixty-two Democrats joined the vote, while only two Republicans did not vote in favor of it.

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib spoke on the floor of Congress, saying that the amendment was essentially "genocide denial". The International Court of Justice ruled earlier this year there was a plausible case of the Zionist regime committing genocide in Gaza, after South Africa submitted a case on the issue.

"It's disgusting that my colleagues would support legislation to prohibit U.S. officials from even citing the Palestinian death toll," Tlaib, the lone Palestinian lawmaker in U.S. Congress, said on the House floor.

"They want to erase the Palestinians

who are living, and now they are trying to erase the Palestinians who are dead. This is genocide denial."

Since the Zionist regime's war on Gaza began in October, many international NGOs as well as the United Nations have relied on the Gaza health ministry to know how many Palestinians have been killed by the occupying regime troops.

It has been the sole source of regularly updated information on the death toll, as Zionist troops have decimated the enclave's health infrastructure and repeatedly laid siege to several hospitals.

So far, the death toll stands at nearly 38,000 Palestinians, the majority of whom are women and children.

However, with thousands of Palestinians likely under the rubble and the ministry facing a lack of resources, health experts believe the death toll is likely to be far higher.

While the legislation would force the State Department not to use the death toll, the Biden administration had already cast doubt on it early on in the war.

"[There is] no notion that the Palestinians are telling the truth about how many people were killed," Biden said in a press conference in late October.

Those comments sparked outrage not just among Palestinians but also among rights groups and NGOs working on the ground in Gaza.

## Pro-Palestine Demonstrators Rally Outside Biden Campaign Event

MANHATTAN (Dispatches) – Clashes erupted in Manhattan as pro-Palestine demonstrators attempted to force their way into a venue where U.S. President Joe Biden was attending a campaign event.

Footage shows police making arrests as they attempted to disperse the crowds outside the Hammerstein Ballroom on West 29th Street.

Protesters are seen clad in keffiyehs while waving Palestinian flags and releasing green smoke.

"This is about fighting against imperialism and colonialism worldwide. Israel is a colonialist project that is run by the imperialist United States," an activist said.

"We have an absolute responsibility to do something

about it. Our tax dollars go to this; our tax dollars kill children; we have a responsibility to speak up whenever we can, every single day," she continued.

According to local reports, at least 32 protesters were arrested as they marched to the venue from Madison Square Garden.

The rally was organized by

'Within Our Lifetime', a prolific activist group in Manhattan led by Palestinian-American Nerdeen Kiswani.

Biden was attending a campaign fundraising event at the Hammerstein Ballroom, where he reportedly met with 640 donors as he looks to take on former President Donald Trump in November's presidential election.

## Taliban: Afghan Women's Rights 'Internal Issue'

KABUL (AFP) – Taliban authorities said on Saturday that demands over women's rights were "Afghanistan's issues" to solve, ahead of United Nations-led engagement talks where the exclusion of Afghan women has sparked outcry.

The Taliban government, which has imposed restrictions on women since seizing power in 2021 that the UN has described as "gender apartheid", will send its first delegation to the third round of talks starting in Qatar on Sunday.

Civil society representatives, including from women's rights groups, will attend meetings with the international envoys and UN officials on Tuesday, after the official talks.

Rights groups have condemned the exclusion of Afghan women from the main meetings and the lack of human rights issues on the agenda.

The Taliban authorities "acknowledge the issues about women", government spokesman

Zabihullah Mujahid told a news conference in Kabul on the eve of the latest talks.

"But these issues are Afghanistan's issues," said Mujahid, who will lead the delegation.

"We are working to find a logical path toward solutions inside Afghanistan so that, God forbid, our country doesn't again fall into conflict and discord."

He said the Taliban government would represent all of Afghanistan at the meetings and, given their authority, should be the only Afghans at the table.

"If Afghans participate through several channels, it means we are still scattered, our nation is still not unified," he said.

The talks were launched by the UN in May 2023 and aim to increase international coordination on engagement with the Taliban authorities, who ousted a Western-backed government when they swept to power.

The Taliban government has not

been officially recognized by any state and the international community has wrestled with its approach to Afghanistan's new rulers, with women's rights issues a sticking point for many countries.

Taliban authorities were not invited to the first talks in Doha last year and refused to attend the second conference, demanding that they be the sole Afghan representatives to the exclusion of invited civil society groups.

That condition has been met for the third round.

Mujahid reiterated that the Taliban government sought positive relations with all countries.

However, he added that "no major or key discussions" would take place in Doha and that the meeting was an opportunity to exchange views, particularly with Western countries.

The agenda will include combating narcotics and economic issues, key topics for authorities in the impoverished country.

## Saudi Arabia Condemns New Israeli Settlement Plans

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia condemned on Saturday Israel's security cabinet decision to expand illegal settlement in the occupied West Bank, warning of "dire consequences," according to a statement by the foreign ministry.

The statement came following an announcement by Israel's official broadcasting authority that the cabinet approved a plan Thursday to legalize five settlement outposts in the West Bank, issue tenders to build thousands of housing units in the settlements, and impose sanctions on the Palestinian Authority.

It reported on Friday that the cabinet approved extremist finance minister Bezalel Smotrich's plan to counter the Palestinian statehood recognition and actions against Israel in international courts.

Settlement outposts are small communities established by illegal Zionist settlers on privately owned Palestinian land

without approval from the Israeli government.

The ministry expressed the "kingdom's categorical rejection of the ongoing Israeli violations of international law and international legitimacy resolutions."

It also warned of "dire consequences" if the Israeli authorities continued with the illegal settlement expansion plans.

In a related context, Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmed Aboul Gheit also condemned the same Israeli decision in a statement, describing it as a "complete and final reversal of the Oslo Accords, a return to square one, and an entrenchment of the blatant occupation logic."

The Oslo Accords, dated Sept. 13, 1993, were an agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, involving arrangements for Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

About Gheit called on "the international community to see the Israeli regime for what it truly is: a racist, right-wing cabinet uninterested in peace, seeking to dismantle any semblance of Palestinian authority, including in Area B, which under the Oslo Accords, is under Palestinian civilian control."

Smotrich's plan involves revoking permits and benefits for Palestinian officials, restricting their movement, and preventing senior officials from leaving the country.

Also, it includes measures such as removing executive powers from the Palestinian Authority in the southern West Bank, enforcing laws against unauthorized construction, and protecting heritage sites and environmental areas.

The areas designated as "Area B" in the West Bank fall under Palestinian civil control and Israeli security control.