

Canada's Finance Minister Quits in 'Bombshell' Blow to Trudeau
 OTTAWA (Reuters) -- Canada's Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland quit on Monday after clashing with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on issues including how to handle possible U.S. tariffs, dealing another blow to an already unpopular government. In a stinging resignation letter, Freeland dismissed Trudeau's push for increased spending as a political gimmick that could hurt Ottawa's ability to deal with the 25% import tariffs U.S. President-elect Donald Trump says he will impose. Freeland said she was quitting in the wake of a meeting last Friday with Trudeau, who asked her to take on a lesser role.
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Kayhan International

Iran Urges End to U.S., UK Airstrikes on Yemen
 TEHRAN – Iran on Monday called on the global community, international organizations, and Islamic countries to take decisive legal and humanitarian action in response to U.S. and UK airstrikes on Yemen's infrastructure. Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei condemned the attacks as blatant violations of international law and the UN Charter, as well as their ongoing and unlimited support for the "genocide in Gaza".

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Viewpoint
Muslim World's Indifference Emboldens US-Israel Aggressions

IRGC Navy Building Guided Missile-Capable Vessels



President Pezeshkian Awards Olympic, Paralympic Medal Winners



Iconic Palestinian Grandfather Killed by Israel in Gaza



Gazans Recount Horror After Israel Bombs Shelter

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) -- An Israeli airstrike on an UNRWA-run school sheltering displaced people in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, martyred at least 20 people, according to Palestinian health officials on Monday.

Women wept as men wrapped the bodies in shrouds before burying them.

"We had considered this school to be safe," Umm Muhammad Ashour, who had sought refuge in the school, told Middle East Eye. Ashour says she saw children's bodies "without heads, without legs".

The Zionist military claimed it struck Hamas fighters operating from a compound that previously served as a UN school, accusing them of using the premise as a training camp.

It did not provide evidence to back up its claim. Many children were among the killed, according to witnesses.

The victims included a woman and her daughters who, according to Ashour. "Their mother was searching everywhere to get them food," she said, adding that the children had decided to sleep without having dinner.

Louise Wateridge, a spokeswoman for UNRWA, said she met with children injured in Sunday's strike on the school turned shelter. They included a 17-year-old girl who suffered a severe leg injury and shrapnel wounds. She survived along with her twin sister and three other sisters, Wateridge said.

Their mother died and Wateridge said one of the sisters described "how their mother's bones were crushed under the rubble. There was nothing they could do to save her."

Wateridge also met with two siblings aged 2 and 5 at Nasser Hospital where the casualties were taken. Both children have severe head and body injuries, with 2-year-old Julia losing sight in her eye. "There is nothing we can do. We are already waiting for the next attack," Wateridge quoted a doctor as telling her.

Mahmoud, whose brother was killed in the strike, said that his family was getting ready to rest when the strike happened.

"We hadn't been sat for five minutes when we suddenly heard something falling," he told MEE. "We were not seeing anything; it was grey everywhere. I started calling for my siblings, my parents, my children, I could not see anything."

By the time rescuers arrived with some flashlights, Mahmoud was desperately looking for his children.

"I heard my four-months-old son screaming," he said. "What

has he done for me to have to pull him out of the rubble? I then heard my eldest son, who is two, screaming but I could not find him. I kept digging until I got him out of the rubble."

People kept digging through the rubble, trying to salvage any clothes or belongings, as the displaced Palestinians in the school dealt with another blow to what little remained of their sense of safety.

"We have been searching for a safe place, but there is no safe place," said Ashour, who has been displaced on multiple occasions since her home in northern Gaza was destroyed.

"Where is international law that is supposed to defend the oppressed?" she asked. "What do children have to do with this?"

The death toll in the Gaza Strip from the 14-month Israeli war topped 45,000 people on Monday, Palestinian health officials said, with 52 dead arriving at hospitals across the bombed-out strip over the past 24 hours.

The Gaza Health Ministry has said that more than half of the fatalities are women and children.

The Health Ministry said 45,028 people have been martyred and 106,962 wounded since the start of the Israeli war. It has said the real toll is higher because thousands of bodies are still buried under rubble or in areas that medics cannot access. The latest war has been by far the deadliest waged by the Zionist regime on Palestinians, with the death toll now amounting to roughly 2% of Gaza's entire prewar population of about 2.3 million.

Among the dead reported in the overall toll were 10 people, including a family of four, who were killed in an overnight Israeli strike in Gaza City, Palestinian medics said.

The strike late Sunday hit a house in Gaza City's eastern Shijaiyah neighborhood, according to the Health Ministry's emergency service. Rescuers recovered the bodies of 10 people from under the rubble, including those of two parents and their two children, it said.

In central Gaza's Nuseirat urban refugee camp, mourners gathered for the funeral of a Palestinian journalist working for the Qatari-based Al Jazeera TV network who was killed Sunday in a strike on a point for Gaza's civil defense agency. They carried his body through the street from the hospital, his blue bulletproof vest resting atop.

The strike also killed three civil defense workers, including the local head of the agency, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

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'Never Abandoned Resistance, Nor Betrayed Allies' Assad: I Wanted to Keep Fighting



Since President Assad's ouster, Israel has been pounding Syria and Zionist troops have advanced to within 25 km of Damascus as militants have stood by and watched.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Ousted Syrian President Bashar Assad said in a statement Monday he wanted to stay in the country after militants and terrorists captured the capital Damascus a week ago, but the Russian military evacuated him from their base in western Syria after it came under attack.

The comments are the first by Assad since he was overthrown by takfiri-led insurgent groups just over a week ago, saying there was a "flood of misinformation" surrounding the circumstances of his exit from Syria.

BERLIN (AP) — Chancellor Olaf Scholz lost a confidence vote in the German parliament on Monday, putting the European Union's most populous member and biggest economy on course to hold an early election in February.

Scholz won the support of 207 lawmakers in the 733-seat lower house, or Bundestag, while 394 voted against him and 116 abstained. That left him far short of the majority of 367 needed to win.

Scholz leads a minority government after his unpopular and notoriously rancorous three-party coalition collapsed on Nov. 6 when he fired his finance minister in a dispute over how to revitalize Germany's stagnant economy. Leaders of several major parties then agreed that a parliamentary election should be held on Feb. 23, seven months earlier than originally planned.

The confidence vote was needed because post-World War II Germany's constitution doesn't allow the Bundestag to dissolve itself.

Assad said in a statement on his Facebook page that he left Damascus on the morning of Dec. 8, hours after militants stormed the capital. He said he left in coordination with Russian allies to their Hmeimim air base in the coastal province of Latakia, where he had planned to keep fighting.

"First, my departure from Syria was neither planned nor did it occur during the final hours of the battles, as some have claimed. On the contrary, I remained in Damascus, carrying out my duties until the early hours of Sunday 8th December 2024," read the statement.

He said he then moved to Latakia in order to "oversee combat operations" at the Hmeimim air base alongside his Russian allies. The base then came under drone attack and the leadership in Moscow ordered the evacuation to Russia.

"Upon arrival at the Hmeimim airbase that morning, it became clear that our forces had completely withdrawn from all battle lines and that the last army positions had fallen.

"As the field situation in the area continued to deteriorate, the

Now President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has to decide whether to dissolve parliament and call an election.

Steinmeier has 21 days to make that decision — and, because of the planned timing of the election, is expected to do so after Christmas. Once parliament is dissolved, the election must be held within 60 days.

In practice, the campaign is already well underway, and Monday's three-hour debate reflected that.

Scholz, a center-left Social Democrat, told lawmakers that the election will determine whether "we, as a strong country, dare to invest strongly in our future; do we have confidence in ourselves and our country, or do we put our future on the line? Do we risk our cohesion and our prosperity by delaying long-overdue investments?"

Center-right challenger Friedrich Merz responded that "you're leaving the country in one of its biggest economic crises in post-war history."

Russian military base itself came under intensified attack by drone strikes. With no viable means of leaving the base, Moscow requested that the base's command arrange an immediate evacuation to Russia on the evening of Sunday 8th December.

"This took place a day after the fall of Damascus, following the collapse of the final military positions and the resulting paralysis of all remaining state institutions," the statement said.

"At no point during these events did I consider stepping down or seeking refuge, nor was such a proposal made by any individual or party," said the statement.

"The only course of action was to continue fighting against the terrorist onslaught."

In the statement, Assad also said he had never led Syria for "personal gain" but instead saw himself as the "custodian" of Syria who defended the country up to the last moment.

In the statement, Assad described himself as the "person who, during the darkest years of the war, did not leave but remained with his family alongside his people, confronting terrorism under bombardment and the recurring threats of terrorist incursions into the capital over fourteen years of war."

He also "never abandoned the resistance in Palestine and Lebanon, nor betrayed his allies who stood by him", nor did he "forsake his own people or betray the

"You're standing here and saying, business as usual, let's run up debt at the expense of the younger generation, let's spend money and ... the word 'competitiveness' of the German economy didn't come up once in the speech you gave today," Merz said.

The chancellor said Germany is Ukraine's biggest military supplier in Europe and he wants to keep that up, but underlined his insistence that he won't supply long-range Taurus cruise missiles, over concerns of escalating the war with Russia, or send German troops into the conflict. "We will do nothing that jeopardizes our own security," he said.

Merz, who has been open to sending the long-range missiles, said that "we don't need any lectures on war and peace" from Scholz's party. He said, however, that the political rivals in Berlin are united in an "absolute will to do everything so that this war in Ukraine ends as quickly as possible."

Polls show Scholz's party trailing well behind Merz's main opposition Union bloc, which is in

the lead. Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck of the environmentalist Greens, the remaining partner in Scholz's government, is also bidding for the top job — though his party is further back.

The far-right Alternative for Germany, which is polling strongly, has nominated Alice Weidel as its candidate for chancellor but has no chance of taking the job because other parties refuse to work with it.

Germany's electoral system traditionally produces coalitions, and polls show no party anywhere near an absolute majority on its own. The election is expected to be followed by weeks of negotiations to form a new government.

Confidence votes are rare in Germany, a country of 83 million people that prizes stability. This was only the sixth time in its postwar history that a chancellor had called one.

The last was in 2005, when then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder engineered an early election that was narrowly won by center-right challenger Angela Merkel.

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