

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Police in Saudi Arabia have detained a female Palestinian pilgrim for displaying the flag of Palestine in the holy city of Mecca, accusing her of issuing political statements, a report says. The woman, whose identity has not been disclosed yet, was detained by Saudi police at the Great Mosque of Mecca – known as Masjid al-Haram – in Mecca for having Palestinian flag on her bag, MintPress News reported on Monday. The report, citing the woman, added that Saudi police told her that carrying the Palestinian flag in that place was tantamount to making “political statements.” The woman, in protest, explained that “others were displaying the flags of countries like Morocco and Turkey, arguing that she is Palestinian ... therefore the flag simply represents her nationality.”

One who takes account of his shortcomings will always gain by it; one who is unmindful of them will always suffer. One who is afraid of the Day of Judgment, is safe from the Wrath of Allah.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Dozens More Palestinians Martyred, Wounded in Israeli Strikes

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) – Gaza’s civil defense agency said on Tuesday that Israeli strikes overnight killed at least 19 people across the Palestinian territory, where the occupying regime has resumed its aggression.

Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that “19 civilians including several children were martyred” and dozens more wounded in the latest Israeli raids.

Five children and four adults were killed in a strike that hit a home in the central city of Deir el-Balah, while two separate pre-dawn attacks on Gaza City and Beit Lahia in the north left a total of 10 people dead, Bassal said.

Separately, a media outlet affiliated with the Islamic Jihad movement, a Hamas ally, announced the death on Monday of an employee named Ahmed Mansur in an Israeli strike on a tent used by journalists in the Khan Yunis area.

The Palestinian government media office had on Monday reported the death of journalist Hilmi al-Faqaawi, who worked for a local news agency, in the same strike, which also wounded another nine.

The Zionist regime’s military meanwhile said the strike had targeted “Hassan Abdel Fattah Mohammed Aslih,” claiming that he was a Hamas fighter operated “under the guise of a journalist and owns a press company.”

Israel resumed intense strikes on the Gaza Strip on March 18, ending a two-month ceasefire with Hamas. Efforts to restore the truce have so far failed.



According to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory, at least 1,391 Palestinians have been killed in the renewed Israeli operations, taking the overall death toll since the start of the war to 50,752.

‘Shocking Accounts of Crimes’

Zionist troops have provided detailed testimonies describing extensive destruction and killings in Gaza during operations to establish a buffer zone along the fence, according to a new report by the Israeli group Breaking the Silence.

The report compiles accounts from soldiers involved in enforcing the buffer zone plan. The troops and commanders are not named, but their statements are described as deeply disturbing.

The group said: “One of these missions was to create a ‘buffer zone’ inside the Gaza Strip, which

in practice meant razing the area to the ground. ... Through widespread, deliberate destruction, the military laid the groundwork for future Israeli control of the area.”

The buffer zone, referred to by soldiers as “the perimeter,” reportedly stretches from Gaza’s northern coast to the southern border with Egypt. It lies entirely within Gaza, beyond the regime’s internationally recognized borders.

A non-commissioned officer from the Armored Corps, discussing operations in January and February 2024, said troops were told there were no civilians in the area: “There is no civilian population. They’re terrorists, all of them. ... There are no innocents.”

Describing their engagement orders, he said: “We go in and if we identify suspects, we shoot them.”

He also detailed the destruction: “The ‘bear’, the D9 (armored bulldozer), drives and mows down everything in its path. ... Essentially, everything gets mowed

down, everything.”

When asked what that included, he replied: “Everything is everything. Everything that’s built, ... orchards, cow sheds, chicken coops.”

He described the result as: “Hiroshima. That’s what I’m saying, Hiroshima.”

Another soldier, a first sergeant in Reserve Battalion 5, said their main task in Khuza’ah, Khan Younis, between December 2023 and January 2024 was demolition: “I’m talking up to hundreds of structure units, ... the destruction is total.”

He explained that the Gaza Division mapped destruction zones using colors: “Green means more than 80% of buildings were taken down -- residential buildings, greenhouses, sheds, factories, ... it needs to be flat.”

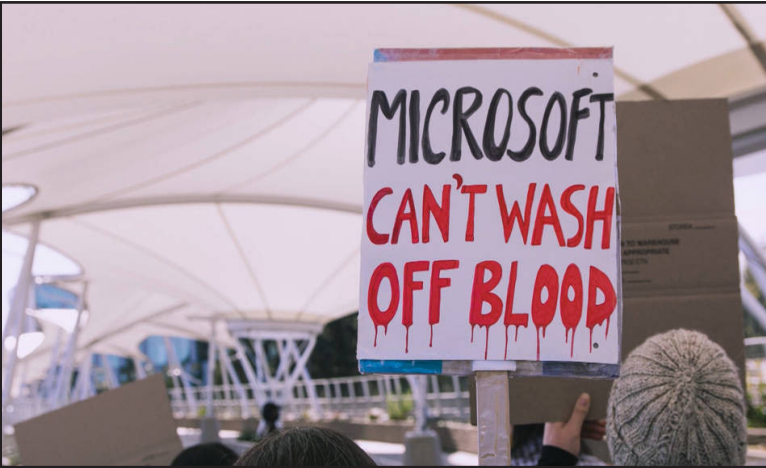
A first sergeant in the Combat Engineering Corps who served in northern Gaza in November 2023 said: “We take down houses, ... knock it down, so there’s absolutely nothing left, a pile of rubble.”

He described demolition assignments as daily tasks: “You get up in the morning, get the locations, ... every day, except if we run out of explosives.”

He said platoons could demolish 40-50 houses per week: “It was a matter of half an hour per house.”

A reserve artillery officer said commanders had wide discretion in targeting: “There is no system of accountability in general. Anyone who crosses a certain line, that we have defined, is considered a threat and is sentenced to death.”

Microsoft Fires Engineers Over Protesting AI Supply to Israeli Military



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. tech giant Microsoft has fired two software engineers who protested the company’s AI technology supply to the Zionist regime’s military.

Ibtihal Aboussad, a software engineer in Microsoft’s AI division, was fired on Monday for “willful misconduct, disobedience, or neglect of duty.”

Vaniya Agrawal, another engineer, had planned to resign on April 11, but the company made her resignation effective immediately on Monday, according to CNBC.

The protests began Friday when Aboussad, during the company’s 50th-anniversary event, interrupted AI CEO Mustafa Suleyman’s presentation, shouting that he had “blood on his hands” and accusing Microsoft of enabling the Israeli military with AI weapons, saying: “50,000 people have died, and Microsoft powers this genocide in our region.”

Later, Agrawal disrupted a separate panel featuring CEO Satya Nadella, former CEO Steve Ballmer, and founder Bill Gates, shouting: “Shame on all of you. ... Cut ties with Israel.”

Following the protests, Aboussad emailed Microsoft staff and executives, alleging that the company had suppressed dissent among employees. The email included a link

to a petition from “No Azure for Apartheid,” a group of Microsoft employees who have previously protested the company’s ties to Israel.

Microsoft responded to Aboussad’s email, saying that they acknowledged his “misconduct” and asserting that the “immediate cessation” of his employment “is the only appropriate response.”

Agrawal similarly expressed her concerns in an email, criticizing Microsoft’s involvement in the military-industrial complex and labeling the company “complicit” in supporting surveillance, apartheid, and genocide.

A Microsoft spokesperson said on Friday: “We provide many avenues for all voices to be heard. Importantly, we ask that this be done in a way that does not cause business disruption. If that happens, we ask participants to relocate.”

The Israeli military employs AI to analyze intelligence, intercept communications and surveillance data for signs of suspicious behavior and track enemy movements.

Over 50,700 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza in a brutal Israeli onslaught since October 2023, most of them women and children. The occupying regime also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its war on the enclave.

Israel Razes More Palestinian Homes, Illegal Settlers Burn Wedding Hall in West Bank

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – Zionist troops demolished three more Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, witnesses said.

Two houses inhabited by ten Palestinians were razed in Burqin town, west of Salfit city, Wassim Sabra, one of the owners, told Anadolu.

A third house was demolished in Wadi Fukin village, west of Bethlehem city, for an alleged lack of building permits, witnesses said.

The occupying regime widely uses the pretext of a lack of construction permits to demolish Palestinian homes, especially in Area C in the occupied West Bank, which is under the occupying re-

gime’s so-called ‘administrative and security control,’ and constitutes around 60% of the West Bank.

Under the 1995 Oslo Accords between the Zionist regime and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the West Bank, including East Al-Quds, was divided into three portions – Area A, B, and C.

Meanwhile, illegal settlers set fire to a wedding hall in the town of Bidya, west of Salfit city, witnesses said.

According to the official news agency Wafa, settlers spray-painted racist anti-Arab graffiti on walls in the town, including “death to Arabs.”

Home demolitions and settler

violence against Palestinians have escalated in the occupied West Bank since the start of the Zionist regime’s genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023.

At least 945 Palestinians have since been killed and over 7,000 others injured in the occupied territory, according to Palestinian figures.

In another development, the Zionist regime’s army rounded up at least 35 more Palestinians in fresh military raids in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, according to prisoners’ affairs groups.

The arrests took place in several towns and areas in the West Bank, the Commission of Detainees’ Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner

Society said in a joint statement.

During the raids, Israeli army forces stormed several Palestinian homes, vandalized properties, and interrogated dozens of people, the statement said.

The raids came as the Israeli army has continued a deadly military aggression in the northern West Bank since January, killing over 70 Palestinians, displacing thousands, and turning many homes into military outposts.

Tuesday’s arrests brought the number of Palestinians detained by the Israeli army in the West Bank since October 2023 to over 15,800, including those who were released after being arrested, according to Palestinian figures.

Ministry: Israel Withholds \$1.9bn of Palestinian Tax Revenues

RAMALLAH (Xinhua) – The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that the Zionist regime is withholding more than 7 billion shekels (about 1.9 billion U.S. dollars) in tax revenues belonging to the Palestinian Authority (PA).

In a press statement, the ministry described the Israeli move as part of a wider campaign against the Palestinian people, accusing the occupying regime of engaging in policies of “displacement and annexation.”

“The continued deductions are part of racist

and colonial political schemes aimed at undermining the Palestinian National Authority, the institutional embodiment of the State of Palestine on Palestinian soil, in clear violation of international legitimacy resolutions,” the statement said.

The ministry called for urgent intervention by Arab and Islamic countries to provide financial and political support to the Palestinian government, including establishing a financial safety net.

It also urged the international community to

act swiftly to protect Palestinian rights and institutions.

Under existing arrangements, the occupying regime collects customs duties and value-added taxes on goods imported into Palestinian territories and transfers the funds to the PA monthly.

Security tensions in the West Bank have intensified since the start of the Zionist regime’s genocidal campaign in October 2023, further deepening the PA’s financial crisis and limiting its ability to pay salaries and deliver essential public services.

Sources: Netanyahu Lobbying U.S. Against F-35 Sale to Turkey

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime’s prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been lobbying U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio to block the sale of F-35 warplanes to Turkey, citing concerns over Ankara’s growing influence in Syria, three sources, including two senior western officials, told Middle East Eye.

Netanyahu raised the F-35 issue during multiple calls with Rubio in March and April, the two western officials said. A third source familiar with the matter confirmed that Netanyahu had pressed Rubio on the arms sale.

Netanyahu has privately said he will push Trump against the F-35 sale but has yet to discuss it with him. The Zionist premier met Trump at the White House on Monday, his second visit this year.

Netanyahu has a slew of files to address with Trump. However, the Zionist regime and Turkey’s rivalry is heating up in Syria.

Last week, the occupying regime bombed three military bases in the country - including Syria’s Tiyas air base, also known as T4. The strikes came as Israel saw a limited window of opportunity to attack the bases before Turkey moved its military assets in.

MEE revealed previously that Turkey is deploying a Hisar-type air defense system to the T4 base.

Turkey’s control of the bases is part of a pending defense pact that Ankara and Damascus have been negotiating since December. The agreement would see Turkey provide air cover and military protection for Syria’s new ruling system, which currently lacks a functioning military.

Netanyahu and his advisors see Rubio as a strong ally in trying to stop Turkey from acquiring F-35s, the western officials told MEE.

Rubio is one of the top Turkey hawks in Trump’s cabinet. He was one of the few American officials to express concern over the arrest on 19 March of Istanbul’s mayor, Ekrem Imamoglu. The imprisonment of Imamoglu, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s top rival, sparked mass protests in Turkey.

Amid fallout over the arrest, Trump’s Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, said Trump held a “really transformational” phone call with Erdogan, saying there was “just a lot of good positive news coming out of Turkey right now”.

The sources told MEE that Netanyahu has raised the F-35 issue with Rubio several times, including on a call that took place before Rubio hosted his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan, in Washington DC on 25 March.