

Hezbollah Leader Dismisses Disarmament Demands as 'Gift' to Zionist Regime

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – The leader of Hezbollah resistance movement Sheikh Naim Qassem on Friday dismissed calls for the group to disarm, warning that any such effort was a ‘delusion’ that would serve the Zionist regime’s interests.

“No one will be allowed to remove the weapons of the resistance,” Qassem said during a public address focused on Lebanon’s defense strategy and the current political landscape. “Israel wants to see Lebanon weak and defenseless so it can fulfill its expansionist ambitions.”

He pointed out that proposals to disarm Hezbollah under the pretext of strengthening the state amounted to offering a “gift” to the Zionist regime. The resistance movement’s weapons, Qassem said, were a response to Israeli occupation and aggression, and remained essential to safeguarding Lebanon’s sovereignty.

“The Lebanese army alone is not equipped to defend the country,”



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

he said, asserting that Hezbollah’s military role was necessary alongside state institutions.

The remarks escalate a simmering debate over Hezbollah’s military autonomy. Qassem accused domestic critics advocating disarmament of promoting foreign agendas and inflaming artificial crises. “The true danger is Israel’s

occupation and ongoing aggression,” he said.

Sheikh Naim Qassem also warned Israel on Friday evening not to continue its attacks on Lebanon, emphasizing that the resistance movement has options to respond to the attacks at the appropriate time if they continue.

He condemned the Zionist re-

gime’s actions, saying it has carried out “over 2,700 attacks on Lebanon since the ceasefire was agreed upon (in November last year), despite having no justification for such hostilities.”

He stressed that while Hezbollah has allowed room for diplomacy to address these violations, this opportunity is not open-ended.

Directly addressing the Zionist regime, Sheikh Qassem noted that Hezbollah has “multiple response options and does not fear confrontation,” stressing that the response will come at a time of Hezbollah’s choosing.

A fragile ceasefire has been in place in Lebanon since November, which ended months of cross-border warfare between the Zionist regime and the Lebanese group Hezbollah, which escalated into a full-scale conflict in September.

Lebanese authorities have reported more than 2,742 Israeli violations of the truce, including the deaths of at least 192 victims and injuries to 485 others.

Palestinian Gov’t Denounces Settler Threat to Al-Aqsa

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Palestinian government has expressed “extreme concern” over threats circulating among Zionist settler organizations to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates warned on Saturday of calls by Zionist settler organizations circulating on Hebrew-language social media platforms to attack and demolish the mosque and construct a temple in its place.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Al-Quds, Islam’s third holiest site and a symbol of Palestinian identity, has become symbolic of the intensified tension amid the occupying regime’s war on Gaza.

An AI-generated video depicting the destruction of the mosque and construction of the “Third Temple” under the title “Next Year in Al-Quds,” was published on the

platforms earlier this week.

In a statement published on X, the ministry said it considers the posts on social media a “systematic incitement to escalate the targeting of Christian and Islamic holy sites in occupied Al-Quds”.

“The Ministry calls on the international community and its relevant UN institutions to deal with this incitement with utmost seriousness, and to take the measures required by international law,” it said.

Armed Settlers Storm Village, Damage Palestinian Property

Meanwhile, armed illegal Zionist settlers stormed the Bedouin village of Ras Ein al-Auja, north of Ariha in the occupied eastern West Bank on Saturday, attacking Palestinian-owned property, according to eyewitnesses and hu-

man rights groups.

Hassan Mleihat, coordinator of the al-Baydar Organization for the Defense of Bedouin Rights, said armed illegal settlers in groups entered the village with herds of sheep, grazing them near Palestinian homes, damaging property, and trying to stop residents from reaching their lands.

“Settler attacks on Bedouin communities have sharply escalated and now target every aspect of Bedouin life,” Mleihat said.

In the northern Jordan Valley, illegal settlers also stole water pumps and destroyed crops in Khirbet al-Deir, eyewitnesses told Anadolu.

The Jordan Valley is in the northeastern part of the occupied West Bank and falls under the Tubas governorate.

Since the start of the Zionist regime’s war on Gaza on Oct. 7,

2023, illegal settlers have set up 60 illegal outposts across the occupied West Bank, including 51 since the start of 2024, according to the Palestinian government’s Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission.

Violence by illegal settlers has forced 29 Palestinian communities to flee between Oct. 7, 2023, and the end of 2024. The commission said 311 families – around 2,000 people – were displaced.

Tension remains high across the occupied West Bank, where at least 952 Palestinians have been killed and over 7,000 injured since the Gaza war began in October 2023, Palestinian data show.

In July 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that the Zionist regime’s occupation of Palestinian land is illegal and ordered the removal of all settlements in the West Bank and East Al-Quds.

Fired Employees Call for Boycott of Microsoft Over Role in Gaza Genocide

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Two former Microsoft employees slammed the company for complicity in the Zionist regime’s genocide in Gaza and systematic apartheid in the West Bank, urging global boycotts against the tech giant.

Hossam Nasr, a software engineer, and Abdo Mohamed, a data scientist, who were both fired in 2024 for organizing a vigil for Palestinians killed in Gaza, called for severing Microsoft’s partnerships that support military operations.

According to Nasr, Microsoft provides cloud services, AI capabilities, translation, and data storage to the Zionist regime’s military, and “they use Microsoft translation services to translate the data they collect on Palestinians from Arabic to Hebrew.”

“Then they feed that into a pipeline of AI targeting systems that help determine where to bomb in Gaza and help Israel classify innocent Palestinians as terrorists,” he said, citing reports showing a 200-fold increase in Israel’s use of Microsoft’s AI tools between October 2023 and March 2024.

“Their usage of cloud storage increased to 13.6 petabytes,” he added.

“Microsoft Azure also hosts the target bank for the Israeli military,” he said, noting: “It hosts the civil registry of the Palestinian population.”

“These systems allow Israel to accelerate and exacerbate its genocide in Gaza to unforeseen levels,” he said.

Nasr pointed out that Microsoft staff became deeply embedded in Israeli military units, including Unit 8200, the notorious Israeli military intelligence branch.

“Microsoft employees become so embedded... that they become described as soldiers, acting as soldiers within those units,” he said.

“This kind of deep partnership allows Israel to automate and remove any sort of human element to the Palestinians,” he added. “It turns the mass murder of Palestinians into essentially a video game.”

Nasr said Microsoft’s technology is also used in the West Bank through applications such as Al-Munasik, which helps control Palestinian movement.

“Microsoft is enabling the apartheid system and the

racial segregation system in the West Bank and the rest of Palestine,” he said.

He also criticized Microsoft’s employee donation program, saying, “They allow donations to illegal Israeli settlements and match them.”

“No Azure for Apartheid” campaign, which they co-founded, was inspired by earlier efforts at other tech companies.

“That campaign started as bombs were dropping on the heads of Palestinian children in Gaza in the wake of the Sheikh Jarrah events in 2021,” Nasr said, adding, “We took inspiration from our colleagues at Google and Amazon... to launch our own campaign at Microsoft in 2024.”

Nasr explained that the goal of their campaign was to sever Microsoft’s partnerships that support the Israeli regime’s forces brutal attacks against Gaza and the West Bank.

He insisted that holding meetings and writing letters did not have the necessary impact, and boycotting the company was the only way to stop its cooperation.

Pentagon: U.S. Military to Reduce Syria Troops to Under 1,000



U.S. forces near an armored military vehicle in Syria's northeastern Hasakah province.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – The U.S. military intends to reduce its military occupation forces in Syria to less than 1,000 troops in the coming months, according to Pentagon officials.

“This deliberate and conditions-based process will bring the U.S. footprint in Syria down to less than a thousand U.S. forces in the coming months,” chief Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said in a statement on Friday.

The U.S. military has about 2,000 U.S. troops in Syria across several bases, mostly in the northeast.

The Pentagon did not specify in the release how many troops will be pulled out, but The New York Times reported on Thursday that the number is 600.

The release also did not provide a specific timeline for the withdrawal.

U.S. President Donald Trump said in late January that the U.S. “will make a determination” on troops in Syria following a report that said he intends to withdraw American forces.

“I don’t know who said that, but we’ll make a determination on that,” Trump told reporters at the White House at the time. “We’re

not involved in Syria. Syria is in its own mess. They’ve got enough messes over there. They don’t need us involved.”

The U.S. military has since 2014 deployed its forces and equipment in northeastern Syria with no authorization from the Arab country’s government, with the Pentagon claiming that the deployment is aimed at preventing the oilfields in the area from falling into the hands of Daesh terrorists.

Damascus, however, maintained the deployment was meant to plunder the country’s natural resources.

Over the past years, multiple footage has emerged revealing that the U.S. occupation forces have used tankers to smuggle Syrian crude oil from the country’s northern provinces to their bases in northern Iraq, as part of Washington’s systematic plundering of Syria’s basic commodities.

Trump has also admitted on several occasions that American forces were in the Arab country for its oil wealth.

Moreover, there have been several reports showing Washington’s direct or indirect support through its regional allies for the Daesh terrorist group over the past years.

Colombian President Likens Palestinians’ Plight to Suffering of Jesus Christ

BOGOTÁ (Dispatches) – Colombian President Gustavo Petro late Friday condemned the Zionist regime’s actions in Gaza and likened the plight of Palestinians to the suffering of Jesus Christ.

“At the moment of the Passion and death of Jesus, let us reflect on the Palestinian people, from where he came, now under a bloody genocide,” Petro wrote on X responding to a post about Dr. Hossam Abu Safiya, a prominent Palestinian physician in critical condition while in the occupying regime’s detention following alleged torture.

Safiya, director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, was detained by Zionist troops earlier this year.

According to Dr. Abu Safiya’s lawyer, Gheed Qassem, after being abducted, he spent two weeks in the Sde Teiman military base. He then was transferred to Ofer detention camp, where the regime keeps hundreds of Palestinian abductees.

“He is suffering greatly, he is exhausted from the torture, the pressure and the humiliation he has endured to force him to confess to acts he did

not commit,” said Qassem.

A social media campaign under the hashtag #FreeDrHussamAbuSafiya has brought together healthcare organizations, celebrities and UN leaders.

The campaign includes the director of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who has demanded Dr. Abu Safiya’s immediate release.

Human rights organizations and local media outlets have raised alarms in recent weeks over his treatment in custody, citing severe abuse and deteriorating health.

Petro’s statement came during the Christian observance of Holy Week, further intensifying its symbolic weight. The Colombian leader has been an outspoken critic of the regime’s military campaign in Gaza, repeatedly accusing it of committing war crimes.

The Colombian leader has been an outspoken critic of the Zionist regime’s genocidal campaign in Gaza, and has repeatedly criticized the Zionist regime for its war crimes in Gaza, where over 51,000 Palestinians have been killed.