

CALIFORNIA (Dispatches) – A University of California, Los Angeles, student was hospitalized after a hunger strike in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza who are on the brink of famine after the Zionist regime implemented an 11-week aid blockade of food, water, and humanitarian aid into the enclave. Palestinian Lebanese film student, Maya Abdullah, 23, ended up in hospital on May 18 after she fainted on the ninth day of her hunger strike, while seeking to pressure her university to divest from the Zionist regime. “On day nine of my hunger strike, I unexpectedly passed out at my school and had to be rushed to the hospital,” she said in a video on Instagram. Abdullah said that UCLA administration did not respond to notice of her hospitalization. She said that being hospitalized and not having a conversation with the administration was “disheartening”.

# Report: Israel Faces ‘Diplomatic Tsunami’ Over Gaza Escalation

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime is facing “an unprecedented diplomatic crisis” due to its military escalation in Gaza, local media said on Wednesday, calling the situation a “diplomatic tsunami.”

The regime is undergoing “one of the most severe diplomatic challenges in its history, as international criticism intensifies over its war in Gaza, including from longtime European allies,” the public broadcaster KAN said.

KAN said the regime’s diplomatic standing has collapsed globally within weeks, culminating Tuesday when major European nations announced a series of escalatory measures against the occupying regime.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said France supports revisiting the EU-Israel Association Agreement, the most important framework binding the regime to the EU.

In the UK, the government imposed sanctions on illegal Israeli settlers and organizations involved in violence against Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, summoned the occupying regime’s ambassador Tzipi Hotovely for a formal rebuke, and halted free trade negotiations -- moves seen



**Palestinians photographed amid the wreckage of the al-Mawassi camp targeted by Israeli strikes in the south of the Gaza Strip, May 18, 2025.**

as signaling Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s dissatisfaction with the regime’s policies.

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy, in a speech to parliament, said that ties could not continue “as usual” under the current Israeli cabinet of Benjamin Netanyahu.

EU foreign affairs chief Kaja Kallas later announced that a majority of EU member states had agreed to reopen discussions on the future of the EU-Israel partnership agreement.

However, nine countries – including Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Greece – opposed the move, reflect-

ing deep divisions within the bloc, the report said.

KAN noted that even raising the agreement for debate, without formal withdrawal, constitutes a major diplomatic blow to the Zionist regime. It added that France and the Netherlands have effectively reversed their traditional support for the regime.

Although Italy and Germany voted against reopening the deal, both have recently issued sharp public criticisms of the regime’s policies.

As cracks deepen in the EU’s stance, KAN said, attention is now turning to the U.S., the regime’s

most important ally.

While public support from Washington remains, multiple reports indicate growing private frustration with the regime over the prolonged war and stalled humanitarian efforts.

The stepped-up genocidal campaign coincided with U.S. President Donald Trump’s Persian Gulf tour last week.

Ignoring mounting international pressure, the regime has tightened its blockade on Gaza, leading to the deaths and injuries of hundreds in recent days.

Former Zionist regime prime minister Ehud Olmert said earlier Wednesday that thousands of innocent Palestinians were being killed, calling the regime’s actions in Gaza “close to a war crime.”

Yair Golan, leader of the regime’s so-called Democrats Party, also condemned the killing of children by Zionist troops and the ongoing policy of forced displacement, warning that the regime risks becoming “pariah” if it does not act responsibly.

Since March 2, the Zionist regime has maintained a strict blockade on Gaza, denying entry to humanitarian aid and pushing the territory into famine, which has already claimed numerous lives.

## Washington Admits Pressing Countries to Receive Gaza Evacuees



**Palestinians walk past the Al Nuseirat Bakery, destroyed in an Israeli airstrike, in Nusseirat refugee camp Gaza Strip, Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023.**

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Washington admitted pressing countries to receive Gaza evacuees ‘voluntarily’, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said.

He confirmed that the United States has contacted several countries to encourage them to take in Palestinians who have, in his words, “voluntarily” left Gaza to escape the Zionist regime’s extermination campaign.

This comes as the regime intensifies its military campaign across the Gaza Strip, ordering further evacuations and expanding operations aimed at destroying and occupying the territory in full, as part of its broader strategy to displace the population.

U.S. President Donald Trump had earlier proposed relocating Gaza’s two million residents as part of a post-war reconstruction plan. Although he denied any forced expulsion, Trump presented vague ideas including U.S. control over Gaza and turning it into the “Middle East Riviera”.

During a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Rubio was asked whether the U.S. was involved in any forced deportations. He responded, “There’s no deportation,” and added, “What we have talked to some nations about is, if someone voluntarily and willingly says, I want to go somewhere else

for some period of time because I’m sick, because my children need to go to school, or what have you, are there countries in the region willing to accept them for some period of time?”

Rubio continued, “Those will be voluntary decisions by individuals.”

However, Democratic Senator Jeff Merkley questioned this notion, asking, if “there is no clean water, there is no food, and bombing is all around you, is that really a voluntary decision?”

Rubio did not name the countries involved in the discussions but ruled out Libya.

This follows a report by NBC News, which cited unnamed sources claiming the Trump administration is working on a plan to permanently relocate about one million Palestinians from Gaza to Libya.

Meanwhile, the Zionist regime continues its military operation under the name “Operation Gideon’s Chariots”, which has expanded the scope of its campaign in Gaza. The aim appears to be accelerating the displacement of Palestinians from the Strip in coordination with the U.S. administration.

Nevertheless, Israel Hayom reported, citing informed sources, that Washington is not giving this issue the attention required to move the plan forward rapidly.

## Israeli Official: Only 5% of Extremist Zionists Responded to Conscription Orders in 2024

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – Only 5% of 24,000 radical Jews, also known as Haredim, responded to military draft orders in 2024, an Israeli military official said on Wednesday.

“The army had issued 24,000 draft orders out of 80,000 planned,” Shai Tayeb, head of the personnel planning branch in the Israeli army, said during a Knesset Subcommittee meeting.

“Only 1,212 people responded to the 24,000 draft orders,” he added.

The Israeli official said that the army intensified the pursuit of the draft dodgers, especially at the

Ben Gurion Airport, where 411 were arrested and 43 others were banned from leaving the country.

He said that the penalties for the dodgers will be tightened and dealt with strictly, since “current sanctions for individuals are insufficient.”

The Haredi community, which accounts for roughly 13% of the Zionist regime’s 10 million population, has continued to protest conscription following a supreme court ruling on June 25, 2024, mandating their enlistment and halting funding for yeshivas (religious schools) whose students

refuse service.

Haredim argue that Torah study is their primary duty and that integration into secular society threatens their religious identity.

For decades, Haredi men have evaded conscription at age 18 through repeated deferrals tied to yeshiva enrollment until reaching the exemption age of 26.

The Israeli opposition accuses the regime’s prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu of pushing for a new law to restore Haredi exemptions to satisfy coalition partners Shas and United Torah Judaism, risking the regime’s collapse.

Rejecting international calls for a ceasefire, the Zionist regime’s army has pursued a brutal aggression against Gaza since October 2023, killing nearly 53,700 Palestinians, most of them women and children.

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants last November for Netanyahu and his former war minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

The Zionist regime also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its war on the enclave.

## Turkey, Israel Set Up Hotline Over Syria Tensions

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Turkey and the Zionist regime have established a hotline to prevent possible military flare-ups in Syria, following talks held between the two sides in April, two sources familiar with the issue told Middle East Eye.

Turkish and Zionist regime officials have been meeting in the Azerbaijani capital Baku since April for direct talks to resolve their differences regarding Syria.

While Ankara emerged as a key actor following the ouster of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in December, the Zionist regime expressed deep concern over the new status quo, publicly opposing any Turkish military deployment to the country.

Several individuals and security sources from prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s cabinet repeatedly referred to Syria’s new rul-

er Ahmed al-Sharaa’s regime as “radical” and stated that the Zionist regime would not tolerate Turkey taking over airbases near Palmyra.

However, both sides engaged in talks in April, with Azerbaijani mediation, to work out a deconfliction mechanism to avert future possible military conflict.

While further talks, a fifth round, are scheduled for later this month on a broader deconfliction deal, a 24/7 hotline was established in April to quickly resolve any accidental military tensions.

Turkish Defense Ministry sources, speaking to MEE, said they had nothing to announce yet.

Although Turkish officials have repeatedly stated they would not allow a “sphere of influence” in Syria that would permit the Zionist regime to strike areas at will, sources said the

discussions are focusing on finding a way forward that could satisfy both sides’ concerns.

Last month, Ankara moved to take over the T4 airbase near Palmyra to deploy armed drones and surveillance aircraft. This move triggered an Israeli air campaign that struck the base multiple times before Turkish officials moved in, damaging the tarmac and destroying hangars.

The Turkish military has drafted plans to temporarily deploy a Russian-made S-400 air defense system to the base to protect it and deter possible attacks. This has concerned Zionist regime officials, who perceive it as an attempt to monitor and potentially expose their aerial operations in real-time.

Ankara says it needs the bases to easily and quickly track and strike Daesh groups operating near Palmyra in the desert.

## Iraq’s Oil Ministry Rejects Energy Deals Signed by KRG With U.S. Firms

BAGHDAD (Xinhua) – The Iraqi Oil Ministry rejected recent energy contracts signed between Iraq’s Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and U.S. companies, calling them a clear violation of Iraqi law.

In a statement, the ministry said the deals, worth tens of billions of U.S. dollars, violated rulings issued by the Federal Supreme Court.

“The ministry affirms the invalidity of these contracts based on the Iraqi Constitution and the decisions of the Federal Court,” it read.

Despite the country’s need to expand gas investments and meet

local demand for electricity, the ministry emphasized that oil and gas resources are the property of all Iraqis that must be managed by the federal government.

Masrour Barzani, prime minister of KRG, said Tuesday on social media platform X that “a new phase of Kurdistan-U.S. ties begins” as the KRG signs “two multi-billion dollar deals with HKN Energy and WesternZagros Resources.”

The dispute highlights ongoing tensions between Baghdad and the country’s semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region over control of the energy sector.