

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) -- Hundreds of Palestinian fighters remain trapped in underground tunnels in Rafah, with reports suggesting around 200 are still inside.

Israeli media indicate concern that the tunnels may also hold the remains of Israeli captives, deterring heavy bombing. Earlier reports suggested Israel might allow fighters safe passage if they surrendered weapons and bodies, but prime minister Netanyahu rejected this. Hamas has released 17 Israeli bodies, though locating more is difficult amid rubble.

81. Value of each man depends upon the art and skill which he has attained.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Study: Three Million Life-Years Lost in Gaza Due to Israeli War

LONDON (Dispatches) -- A recent correspondence published in the medical journal The Lancet estimates that Israel's military aggression in the Gaza Strip have resulted in the loss of approximately three million life-years, underscoring the scale of civilian casualties and the long-term human cost of the conflict.

The study, which analyzed mortality and population data for 2022 provided by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, measured "life-years lost," a metric representing the total expected years of life that Palestinians who died prematurely would have lived under normal circumstances.

According to the report, male Palestinians have lost an estimated 2,006,379 life-years, while females have lost 1,075,984, reflecting the disproportionate impact on men and boys of potential military age.

The analysis also highlights that over one million life-years were lost among children under the age



A man walks between the bodies of people killed by Israeli bombardment in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza in this file photo.

of 15. Most of the deaths involved civilians, even when the definition of a potential combatant included all men and boys between 15 and 44 years.

The correspondence comes weeks after a ceasefire was agreed in Gaza. Despite the truce, Israeli airstrikes have continued sporadically, with over 200 Palestinians reportedly killed in recent attacks.

On October 29 alone, Israeli forces killed more than 100 Palestinians within a 12-hour period, citing violations of the ceasefire by Hamas.

The Gaza Ministry of Health currently reports a total of just over 71,000 fatalities. However, previous studies, including The Lancet, suggest the actual toll could be significantly higher.

Estimates accounting for indirect

deaths caused by the collapse of health services, famine, and disease indicate that total Palestinian mortality could range from 149,000 to nearly 600,000.

The findings underline the severe long-term consequences of the Israeli aggression, as the life-years lost metric captures not only the immediate deaths but also the broader societal impact of premature mortality, including lost contributions to families, communities, and the economy.

Experts warn that the high civilian death toll and widespread disruption to health and social services have deepened the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with repercussions likely to be felt for generations.

The Lancet's correspondence adds to a growing body of research documenting the human cost of the ongoing war, emphasizing that even temporary pauses in fighting may not significantly mitigate the long-term loss of life and societal damage inflicted on Palestinian communities.

Iraqi PM: Resistance Groups to Disarm Only After U.S. Forces Leave

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has declared that resistance groups will only disarm once U.S. forces leave the country, reaffirming plans for a full coalition withdrawal by 2026 amid threats from Washington.

Sudani emphasized in an interview with Reuters that a plan is still in place to have foreign forces purportedly fighting Daesh completely leave Iraq by September 2026 because the threat from terrorist groups have eased considerably.

"There is no Daesh. Security and stability? Thank God it's there ... so give me the excuse for the presence of 86 states (in a coalition)," he said, referring to the number of countries that have participated in the "coalition" since it was formed in

2014.

"Then, for sure there will be a clear program to end any arms outside of state institutions. This is the demand of all," he said, noting that factions could enter official security forces or get into politics by laying down their arms.

Washington wants Sudani to disband resistance groups affiliated with the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces, an umbrella group of anti-terror factions that has been formally integrated into Iraqi government forces.

Sudani's remarks came as Iraqi Defense Minister Thabit al-Abbasi revealed that the United States has delivered its "final" and "most serious" warning to Iraq concerning the activities of resistance factions in the country.

In an interview over the week-

end, Abbasi said that Washington's latest message "concerns armed factions and includes a direct threat in the event that those factions carry out any operations in response to what Washington intends to do in the region near Iraq in the coming days."

He explained that the warning was conveyed during a phone call with U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, adding that Hegseth concluded the conversation by saying, "This is your final warning... and you know very well how the current administration will respond."

U.S. President Donald Trump recently appointed a supporter of his 2024 presidential campaign—who has no government experience and previously ran only a chain of marijuana dispensaries—as his administration's new special envoy to Iraq

to help "advance the interests" of the United States.

In his first official statement published on his X account last week, Mark Savaya said his mission is to help Iraq shun resistance groups and free it from what it called "external interference".

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said during a press conference on Monday that Tehran views recent U.S. threats as an attempt to interfere in Iraq's domestic affairs, particularly ahead of its elections.

"In this context, we consider these threats a form of interference in Iraq's internal affairs, especially as they are made on the eve of elections with the aim of creating tension and influencing the internal processes of an independent country," Baghaei said.

Lafarge on Trial Over Payments to Daesh, Spotlighting West's HTS Ties

PARIS (Dispatches) -- French cement giant Lafarge went on trial in Paris on Tuesday, accused of funneling millions of dollars to Daesh and other takfiri groups to keep its business running in war-torn Syria, a case that underscores Western hypocrisy in the country's decade-long conflict.

Lafarge, now part of Swiss conglomerate Holcim, allegedly made payments via its subsidiary Lafarge Cement Syria (LCS) in 2013 and 2014 to secure access to raw materials, safe passage for trucks, and the continued operation of its factory in northern Syria, despite the region being dominated by violent takfiri factions, including Daesh and Al-Qaeda-linked groups.

Defendants in the trial include Lafarge itself, former executives, security staff, and two Syr-

ian intermediaries, one of whom is subject to an international arrest warrant.

In a parallel case in the United States, Lafarge pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to terrorist organizations and agreed to pay a \$778 million fine—the first conviction of its kind against a corporation.

French prosecutors have accused the firm of "funding terrorism" and violating international sanctions, with potential fines up to \$1.2 million, plus additional penalties if sanctions breaches are confirmed. Holcim has denied knowledge of the Syria operations.

The case highlights the West's controversial role in Syria. As the war intensified in 2012, Lafarge remained, leaving Syrian staff behind while evacuating expatriates. The payments fa-

cilitated the survival of takfiri groups that Western powers, including France, once tolerated or indirectly supported in a bid to topple President Bashar al-Assad.

Today, Syria is dominated by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), led by former Daesh and Al-Qaeda commander Abu Muhammad al-Jolani. Western countries—including France—are racing to establish ties with the de facto authorities, highlighting their hypocrisy.

Lafarge's Syria factory, valued at \$680 million, was built before the war erupted in 2011. In 2013–2014, LCS allegedly negotiated directly with takfiri groups to maintain operations.

Legal actions in France and the U.S. continue, including civil suits by Yazidi survivors accusing the firm of supporting atrocities.

Afghan Survivors Dig Through Rubble After Quake, Fear More Tremors

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Survivors of a powerful earthquake in northern Afghanistan that killed more than 25 people and injured nearly 1,000 were digging through the rubble of their homes Tuesday, trying to salvage what belongings they could after spending the night outside in the bitter cold.

Rain was forecast for the region, further compounding the misery for survivors.

The 6.3 magnitude quake struck just before 1 a.m. local time Monday, with an epicenter 22 kilometers (14 miles) west-southwest of the town of Khulm in Samangan province. By early Tuesday afternoon, the death stood at 27, while another 956 people were injured, Public Health Ministry spokesman Sharafat Zaman said in a statement.

The temblor also damaged historical sites, including Afghanistan's famed Blue Mosque in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, which is one of Afghanistan's most revered religious landmarks, and the Bagh-e-Jahan Nama Palace in Khulm.

The mosque is a major gathering place during Islamic and cultural festivals.

The most severely damaged historical monument in the province was the 19th century Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace, said Firozuddin Munib, Samangan province's Head of Information and Culture. The palace, built in 1890-1892, and its adjoining gardens are a popular site for visitors.

In Khulm, aftershocks rattled survivors, who spent the night out in the

open.

"People are still scared because of last night's earthquake because small tremors were felt during the day," said local resident Asadullah Samangani. "We spent the night in the open ground last night, the weather was very cold, we couldn't sleep, we feel like there will be another earthquake now."

He said authorities had sent tents and basic necessities, but that his home was "completely destroyed, nothing was left intact to use. Our children were all sick in the morning because we had spent the night in the cold, and all the household items were under the rubble."

Rescue crews were still operating in some areas on Tuesday, and were expected to finish by the end of the day.

The World Health Organization said partial damage had been reported in several health facilities, while the laboratory at the Samangan Provincial Hospital had collapsed, destroying critical medical equipment. Emergency response operations with health teams and rescue units were ongoing, it said.

Impoverished Afghanistan often faces difficulty in responding to natural disasters, especially in remote regions. Buildings tend to be low-rise constructions, mostly of concrete and brick, with homes in rural and outlying areas made from mud bricks and wood, many poorly built.

In August, a quake in eastern Afghanistan killed more than 2,200 people.

Trump: Saudi Arabia Will Join Abraham Accords Without Preconditions

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President Donald Trump said he does not believe Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman is serious about linking normalization with Israel to the establishment of a Palestinian state, predicting Riyadh will eventually join the Abraham Accords.

In an interview with CBS's 60 Minutes, Trump said he expects Saudi Arabia to sign the accords, which were initially brokered during his first presidential term in 2020 and included the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco.

"No, I think he's going to join. We will reach a solution. I don't know if it will be a two-state solution — that's up to Israel and other parties... and me as well," Trump said.

The comments come ahead of Prince Muhammad's scheduled visit to Washington on November 18 for an official working meeting with Trump, marking his first visit to the White House since 2018. A senior Trump administration official said discussions are underway about sign-

ing agreements during the visit, but details remain "in flux."

Trump's push for Saudi inclusion in the accords occurs amid ongoing efforts to expand the U.S.-brokered normalization with Israeli despite the Zionist regime's worst genocide over the past two years.

During his first term, the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco signed agreements to normalize relations with Israel, drawing sharp criticism from Palestinians who viewed the deals as a betrayal of their cause.

During the 60 Minutes interview, Trump also said he would "help" Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu with his corruption trial, describing it as unfair treatment — a highly unusual statement involving foreign interference in a U.S. ally's judicial process.

Trump added that he had previously pressed Netanyahu to apologize to Qatar over the September 2023 aggression on Doha and to accept a Gaza ceasefire, describing his actions as effective diplomatic pressure.