

40 Germans Chain Themselves to Tracks to Protest Arms Sales to Israel

HAMBURG (Dispatches) -- Around 40 activists staged a protest at the Port of Hamburg, Germany, chaining themselves to railway tracks to oppose the government's arms exports to Israel and highlight civilian suffering in Gaza.

The demonstrators blocked the rail line connecting the Eurogate and Burchardkai container terminals, halting freight transport for several hours. Jule Fink, a spokesperson for the group, described the action as civil disobedience in solidarity with Palestine. "The Israeli regime has been committing war crimes in Palestine for a long time. This is genocide, and the German government is complicit, continuing to export weapons to Israel through its ports," Fink said.

Three Dead in Israeli Strikes on Lebanon as West Enables Attacks

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Israeli air and drone strikes across southern Lebanon on Saturday killed three people and injured several others, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry.

Two brothers from Shebaa were killed when their SUV caught fire after being struck on a road along the western slopes of Jabal al-Sheikh (Mount Hermon), while another person was killed and four wounded in a strike on a car in Baraashit, the ministry reported.

The National News Agency said earlier strikes hit a vehicle near Bint Jbeil's Salah Ghandour Hospital, injuring seven people after two missiles struck the car. The strikes are part of a series of attacks that have occurred since Israel and Lebanon agreed to a ceasefire in November 2024.

President Joseph Aoun condemned the attacks as a "flagrant breach" of international law, saying Israel is undermining Lebanon's stability and obstructing the



Civil defense members search the rubble of a building destroyed by an Israeli strike in the village of Teir Debba in southern Lebanon taken on November 6, 2025.

full deployment of Lebanese forces in the south.

Iran's Foreign Ministry also denounced the strikes as "savage" and called on the international community to intervene.

Russia expressed concern over the escalation. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria

Zakharova said, "We are very concerned about the recent increase in reports of violations by Israel of the ceasefire agreements that have been in effect since November 2024."

Lebanon has faced sustained Western pressure to disarm Hezbollah, which remains the only

broadly supported force able to confront Israeli incursions.

The European Union issued statements calling on Israel to comply with UN Resolution 1701 and adhere to the ceasefire, while urging Hezbollah and other Lebanese groups to refrain from retaliatory actions.

Analysts and Lebanese officials have said that Western pressure to disarm Hezbollah occurs even as Israeli forces continue operations in the south, effectively undermining Lebanon's capacity to defend its population.

The Lebanese army has been ordered to draft plans to assert control over southern Lebanon and confront further Israeli incursions.

The strikes on Saturday hit Shebaa, Baraashit, and Bint Jbeil, leaving civilians among the casualties. The ongoing attacks coincide with heightened tensions along the Lebanon border, as Israel continues drone and air operations near populated areas.

Kurds Fear Betrayal as U.S. Welcomes HTS Strongman Jolani to Washington

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) -- Syria's Kurds now face yet another looming betrayal. The so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), long allied to the United States, are being nudged toward a deal with Abu Muhammad al-Jolani, the former Al-Qaeda and Daesh affiliate-turned ruler of Damascus via his group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).

The U.S. envoy's push for a "road to Damascus" deal reflects a cynical re-alignment that disregards Kurdish rights and exposes Washington's transactional approach to its partners.

Jolani — once a takfiri terror leader, now de facto Syria's boss in the capital — controls a regime that oversees accelerating Israeli aggressions and occupation of Syrian territory and

allows sectarian militias to target minorities.

He is reportedly preparing to meet U.S. officials in Washington, a development that Kurdish leaders see as cementing ties with a former jihadist strongman at their expense.

Yet the U.S., having abandoned the Kurds before, is now whispering to them to accept a "partnership" with the very figure whose rise has shrunk Kurdish autonomy and stoked sectarian violence. The Kurds, themselves repeatedly let down by Washington, see this as deja vu.

In northeast Syria, Kurdish leaders question whether any deal brokered by HTS under Jolani will ever protect their political, cultural, and military rights

— or whether it is just the next stage in Washington's convenience-based diplomacy.

The draft constitution adopted by the Jolani regime keeps Arabic as the only official language, omits Kurdish identity, and leaves power firmly in the hands of Damascus. The Kurds have called the document "authoritarian in new form."

Meanwhile HTS's sectarian violence escalates. Minorities, notably Alawites, face massacres in areas nominally under Damascus' control while HTS governs from the capital with impunity. The Kurds fear that any "integration" deal will merely hand them over from U.S. protection to a regime that considers them second-class.

The U.S., on its part, seems

ready to overlook the horror of Syrian minorities' plight and the rise of a former takfiri strongman, purportedly to check Iran and Russia.

Kurdish officials see this as a repeat of Washington's pattern: recruit them in war, abandon them in peace. The message is clear: when Americans see you as useful, you matter — when not, you are left exposed.

In short, the Kurds are being asked to trust a U.S. pivot toward Jolani's HTS-dominated regime — a regime built on sectarian dominance and clandestine deals while Syrian territory continues to be eroded by Israeli strikes and occupation. The supposed "road to Damascus" looks instead like a one-way ticket into subordination.

Turkey Prepares Law to Allow Exiled PKK Fighters, Families to Return

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey is preparing legislation that would allow thousands of exiled Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) fighters and their families to return home, informed sources told Reuters, as Ankara pursues a reconciliation process with the decades-long insurgent group.

The proposed law, expected to be presented to parliament as soon as this month, would provide protections for returning fighters but stop short of granting a general amnesty for crimes committed during the PKK's insurgency, according to a senior regional official and a Kurdish political source.

Some senior PKK commanders could be sent to third countries under the plan.

The legislation is part of reconciliation efforts launched earlier this year between the Turkish government and the PKK, which has waged an insurgency against the state since the 1980s.

The group has operated from mountainous

areas in northern Iraq for decades, prompting repeated Turkish military operations across the border.

In Syria, the PKK is closely linked to the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a militia formed in 2015 that has helped Washington oversee control of oil- and wheat-producing regions in the country.

The Turkish army also maintains a presence in northern Syria and has carried out operations against the SDF over the years.

In February, PKK chief Abdullah Ocalan, imprisoned in Turkey for decades, called for an end to the group's armed struggle and urged fighters to hand over their weapons. On March 1, the PKK declared an immediate ceasefire in line with Ocalan's directive, and fighters began laying down arms in July.

Numan Kurtulmus, head of a reconciliation commission established by Ankara in August, told Reuters that once Turkey's security and

intelligence services verify that the PKK has fully disarmed and completed its dissolution process, the government will implement new legal measures.

"The country will enter a new phase of legal regulations aimed at building a terror-free Turkey," he said.

Sources indicated that returns could occur in separate waves for civilians and former fighters, while commanders may be temporarily relocated to third countries to facilitate the process. Families of exiled fighters would also be allowed to return.

Officials say the legislation represents a critical step in formalizing the reconciliation process, aiming to stabilize southeastern Turkey and reintegrate former combatants into society while maintaining security oversight. The law is expected to be a key milestone in Ankara's efforts to end one of the country's longest-running conflicts.

Electoral Silence Falls Across Iraq Ahead of Crucial Tuesday Ballots

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraq entered an electoral silence period early Saturday, a day before parliamentary elections, as Prime Minister Muhammad Shia al-Sudani urged citizens to participate widely, amid mounting external pressure and regional tensions.

The blackout, which began at 7 a.m. local time, prohibits parties and candidates from promoting campaigns until polls close, according to the Iraqi News Agency. The vote will decide 329 members of the Council of Representatives from 7,768 candidates, including 2,248 women, representing Iraq's complex political landscape.

Sudani appealed to Iraqis to vote freely and "send a clear message about the new Iraq," stressing the peaceful transfer of power. Independent High Electoral Commission officials said all preparations for special voting for security personnel, medical staff, and prisoners on Sunday, and the general vote on Tuesday, are complete.

The elections come amid growing U.S. pressure on Baghdad to sideline Iraq's anti-terror groups, including Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) units, whose popular charisma and effective defense of Iraqi territory have earned wide domestic support.

Critics say Washington's push risks undermining Iraq's own security and independence, particularly as these groups have been frontline defenders against past threats and continue to protect communities from destabilizing forces.

Israeli threats over cross-border security have further heightened tensions, with political and military leaders warning that sidelining Iraq's most capable anti-terror formations could weaken national defense.

Iraqi officials insist these groups operate within national law and maintain strong ties to local communities, providing essential security where conventional forces face limitations.

Iraqi National Wisdom Movement leader Ammar al-Hakim called for high voter turnout, framing the elections as a test of the country's ability to assert sovereignty.

He said participation was "a national duty and a testimony before God and history" and warned against allowing foreign powers to dictate the country's security or political choices.

The elections mark a critical moment for Iraq's political future, with Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish blocs vying for power under a system that allocates leadership posts among communities. Analysts warn that outside interference, coupled with regional threats, could skew outcomes or weaken post-election stability.

With 21 million registered voters and more than 39,000 polling stations nationwide, Iraqis are poised to decide the composition of their next parliament, balancing domestic political ambitions with the need to protect sovereignty and maintain security amid external pressures.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Peace Talks Collapse, Ceasefire Holds

KABUL (Dispatches) – Peace negotiations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have collapsed, though a ceasefire between the neighbors continues to hold, a Taliban spokesperson said on Saturday.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban government spokesman, said the talks failed because Islamabad insisted that Afghanistan take responsibility for Pakistan's internal security, a demand he described as beyond Kabul's capacity.

"During the talks, the Pakistani side attempted to refer all responsibilities regarding its security to the Afghan government, while at the same time it did not demonstrate any willingness to assume responsibility for either Afghanistan's security or its own," Mujahid said.

He added that the ceasefire brokered earlier by Qatar has not been violated by the Taliban and would continue to be observed.

Pakistan's defense minister had announced on Friday that talks aimed at preventing border clashes had ended without success, but said the ceasefire would remain in place unless Pakistan came under attack from across the border.

Skirmishes along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border resumed as talks were held in Istanbul, marking a significant escalation since the Taliban regained control of Kabul in 2021.

The breakdown comes amid longstanding tensions over

armed groups operating in Afghanistan. Islamabad has accused the Taliban of sheltering the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has carried out dozens of deadly attacks inside Pakistan.

Pakistan has launched airstrikes inside Afghanistan in response to TTP attacks, while explosions in Kabul last month were blamed by the Taliban on Pakistan.

The Taliban deny harboring the TTP and says it remains committed to mutual security.

"We will not allow anyone to use Afghan territory against another country, nor will we permit any country to use its territory to take actions against or support actions that undermine Afghanistan's national sovereignty, independence, or security," Mujahid said.

Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said Islamabad "will not support any steps by the Taliban government that are not in the interest of the Afghan people or neighboring countries."

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan thanked mediators Qatar and Turkey for their efforts.

According to the United Nations, clashes along the border that began in early October killed 50 Afghan civilians and wounded 447, while explosions in Kabul killed at least five people. The Pakistani army reported 23 soldiers killed and 29 wounded in attacks attributed to Taliban fighters, without disclosing civilian casualties.