

Gazans Bury 112 Family Members Killed in 2023 Israeli Carpet Bombing

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) — Palestinians on Tuesday buried 112 members of the Abu Shari'a and al-Hasayna clan killed in an Israeli airstrike in November 2023, after their remains were recovered from beneath the rubble last month.

The strike flattened an entire residential block in Gaza City's Sabra neighbourhood, killing over 300 people. Recovery efforts were halted for nearly three years due to lack of equipment. More victims are still believed buried beneath the debris. Relatives expressed both relief and renewed grief after nearly 1,000 days of waiting.

Yemen Strikes Saudi Airport, Forces Oil Tankers to Detour Around Africa

SANAA (Dispatches) — Yemen's Ansarallah-led armed forces announced on Tuesday that they targeted a "sensitive site" at Saudi Arabia's Najran Airport with a drone strike, in response to Saudi violations of Yemeni airspace.

"With God's help, the [Yemeni Armed Forces] succeeded in targeting a sensitive target belonging to the Saudi enemy at Najran Airport using a drone. The strike was accurate," the YAF said in a statement, adding that violating Yemen's airspace would "not go without a response and punishment."

Saudi authorities have remained silent on the announcement, and no sirens or blasts were reported.

The attack follows a stern warning from Ansarallah leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi late last month, who said Riyadh was heading toward "full-scale escalation" and that Yemen would meet it "with full escalation."

"The oppressor will learn [that] America won't save him. Britain won't save him. Israel, the Zionist enemy, won't save him," Houthi said.



This file picture shows a view of the entrance to Najran Regional Airport in southern Saudi Arabia.

His speech coincided with a Guardian report stating Riyadh is "preparing" for a massive military assault against Yemen involving land and sea operations. Saudi Arabia's Defense Ministry subsequently announced it was readying a "multinational naval coalition" for the Red Sea.

The escalation comes after Yemen imposed a naval blockade on Saudi shipping in the Red Sea on July 20, in response to over a decade of war

and siege imposed by the kingdom. Saudi tankers have already been targeted multiple times, with an Aramco facility in Jazan set ablaze and forced shut.

Data shows Saudi crude loading volumes at the Red Sea port of Yanbu have plummeted 40 percent due to Yemen's blockade and retaliatory strikes.

Six Saudi-flagged supertankers have diverted from Bab el-Mandab toward southern Africa rather than

risk transit through Yemeni-controlled waters, Reuters reported. The 25-day detour adds significant costs to Saudi oil deliveries from Asia.

Meanwhile, Yemen recently announced it shot down a Turkish-made, Saudi armed reconnaissance drone in Al-Jawf province.

The maritime blockade comes as tanker traffic through Hormuz has fallen by nearly 80 percent, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence, with just 24 vessels transiting during the week of July 20 compared to 110 when a U.S.-Iran ceasefire was in place.

Saudi Arabia waged war against Yemen in 2015 at the head of an Arab coalition, backed logistically by the UK, U.S., and Israel. The war resulted in an unprecedented famine and hundreds of thousands of deaths. A 2023 peace process stalled, and recent Saudi airstrikes on Yemen have revived hostilities.

In late July, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. carried out airstrikes on Iraq, killing 20 members of the Popular Mobilization Units, prompting Iraqi resistance to vow retaliation.

Israel Expands Ground Incursions in Syria, Holds 46 Kidnapped Villagers

DAMASCUS — Israeli forces launched a renewed wave of raids in southern Syria on Tuesday, advancing into the village of Mariya in the Yarmouk Basin area of Daraa province, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA).

The incursion saw Israeli troops search several civilian homes before withdrawing without making arrests. Since Monday, Israeli forces have also been conducting earth-moving operations north of Wadi al-Raqad to reopen an old dirt road, using a bulldozer accompanied by a tank and a pickup truck.

The raids are part of a broader pattern of Israeli military aggression that has intensified since the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in December 2024, when Is-

rael declared the 1974 Disengagement Agreement void and seized control of the Syrian buffer zone.

According to rights groups and local monitors, at least 46 Syrians remain detained or forcibly disappeared by Israeli forces since the regime change. Families of the detainees, including teachers, students and farmers from Quneitra, Daraa and Rif Damascus, have staged protests outside UN posts demanding information about their loved ones' fate.

Former detainees describe being blindfolded, interrogated and transferred into Israel itself, held without charge and without access to lawyers or family contact. Human Rights Watch has documented abuses including arbitrary

detention and the unlawful transfer of detainees out of occupied territory into Israel, a violation of international law.

The raids and detentions occur under the watch of Syria's new administration, headed by Abu Muhammad al-Jolani, a former Al-Qaeda and Daesh deputy who now rules Damascus. According to monitoring groups, Israel has conducted at least 41 ground incursions into southern Syria since February alone, with the HTS-led regime maintaining a "suspicious silence" in response.

Analysts and observers have noted that Jolani's passivity has emboldened Israeli forces to escalate operations, carrying out a combination of air, ground and artillery

strikes without meaningful reaction from Damascus.

Reports have even documented Israeli troops disarming and stripping HTS militants in Daraa, with Syrian authorities remaining silent.

The UN has repeatedly called on Israel to adhere to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement and respect Syria's sovereignty, with Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stating violations are "unacceptable and must stop".

However, with the Damascus regime unwilling or unable to respond, Israeli forces continue to operate freely in southern Syria, arresting civilians and expanding their military footprint with impunity.

Legal Experts: U.S., Israel Behind ICC Prosecutor Khan's Removal

THE HAGUE (Dispatches) — The removal of International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan has raised serious concerns about the independence of the ICC's top office, with legal experts warning that political considerations — including anger over Khan's pursuit of Israeli leaders — fatally undermined the disciplinary process.

The Assembly of States Parties (ASP), the ICC's governing body, voted on July 24 to dismiss Khan after an 18-month misconduct probe, finding he engaged in "prohibited conduct against a subordinate staff member." Khan has denied any wrongdoing.

The decision came despite a panel of three judges appointed by the ASP bureau concluding unanimously in March that the facts did not establish any wrongdoing under the relevant legal framework. The bureau effectively disregarded the judges' opinion and recommended Khan's removal.

The bureau also amended voting rules to

lower the threshold, changing from a two-stage vote to a single vote.

"The ASP is a political body. Delegates vote on issues in accordance with instructions from their governments," said William Schabas, professor of international law at Middlesex University, told Middle East Eye. "A determination by the ASP that 'serious misconduct and serious breach of duty' has taken place is an inherently political one."

Schabas noted the ASP's decision "does not identify the specific act or acts that constitute 'serious misconduct'" and that it "is not a proper judgment. It is not a judicial decision."

"Undoubtedly, the anger of some States Parties at Khan's decision to pursue prosecution of Israeli leaders contributed to the decision," he said, adding that "others may have voted to remove him because they were promised something by Israel or by the United States."

Khan was the first ICC prosecutor to seek

warrants against sitting leaders of non-African states, including Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu. His May 2024 move against Israeli leaders prompted U.S. sanctions against Khan, his deputies and eight ICC judges.

"Great harm has been done to the court in general and to the independence of the prosecutor," Schabas said.

"The next prosecutor will live with the concern that decisions to investigate certain situations and to seek arrest warrants against certain individuals will provoke the ire of some States Parties who may then use the disciplinary proceedings in order to threaten or intimidate the prosecutor."

Schabas called for revising ICC rules to ensure future removal decisions are "judicial in nature" and made by "independent and impartial judges," arguing that without such protections, "the independence of the prosecutor" remains vulnerable to political pressure.

U.S. Leverages Sanctions to Force Syria to Cut Russian Oil

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) — In a brazen display of opportunism, the United States is leveraging sanctions relief to strong-arm Syria into abandoning Russian oil — while simultaneously positioning American energy giants to revive the very fields U.S. troops spent years plundering.

Syria has agreed to slash Russian crude imports, which surged 75% this year to approximately 60,000 barrels per day, in exchange for Washington's pledge to remove Damascus from the state sponsors of terrorism list, a designation held since 1979.

American officials made clear that halting Russian deliveries would "raise the chances of removing the terrorism status quickly and without complications." Damascus, desperate for sanctions relief, has agreed to diversify its supply sources — effectively trading Moscow for Washington.

At the same time, Syria has signed an agreement with ConocoPhillips and Novaterra Energy to revive gas production at the Conoco field in Deir ez-Zor province — the very assets U.S. forces and Kurdish allies seized and systematically looted throughout the war.

From 2014 until Assad's fall, American troops occupied Syria's oil-rich northeast, controlling the al-Omar field — the country's largest — and the Conoco gas field. Syrian officials took the matter to the UN Security Council,

describing U.S. actions as "naked resource theft." By 2021, Syrian oil production stood at approximately 85,900 barrels per day, of which 70,000 barrels were looted by American forces and their proxies — totaling \$100.5 billion in economic losses.

Local residents in Hasakah province stated bluntly that the U.S. entered Syria "in the name of counterterrorism, but its real goal is to plunder Syrian resources."

With Assad gone and a new takfired administration in Damascus, Washington has reversed course. The same regime which the U.S. had claimed to be fighting is now negotiating to have American companies revive the country's battered energy sector.

The ConocoPhillips deal, signed in June, aims to increase gas production by 4 to 5 million cubic meters per day within a year. French energy giant TotalEnergies has also held talks regarding offshore exploration contracts in July.

Congress has directed the Pentagon to evaluate strategies to diminish Moscow's influence and facilitate the withdrawal of Russian forces from Tartus naval facility and Khmeimim airbase.

Syria has agreed to cut Russian imports — a move that serves Washington's geopolitical interests far more than it serves Damascus under former Al-Qaeda deputy Abu Muhammad al-Jolani.

Israel Gloats Over Ceuta Disaster in Spain After 70 Migrants Dead

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) — Israeli political leaders have openly mocked Spain over a migration crisis in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta that left at least 70 Moroccan migrants dead, using the tragedy to retaliate against Madrid's condemnation of Israel's war in Gaza and its refusal to back U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

Israel's ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, wrote on X with barely concealed glee: "Spain, which never misses an opportunity to lecture Israel, has declared a state of emergency in Ceuta following the crisis over its immigration policy." Spain did not declare a state of emergency in Ceuta.

Danon's grievance appears to be Madrid's forceful and consistent condemnation of Israel's terrorist campaign in Gaza, along with its refusal to back the U.S. and Israel in their war against Iran.

"The involvement of official Israeli channels in amplifying anti-Spanish rhetoric in the wake of the Ceuta crisis seeks to undermine Spanish strategic positions in the Middle East and North Africa region," Denis Cenus, a geopolitical analyst at the Centre for European Policy Analysis, told Middle East Eye.

"This constitutes clear retaliation for Spain's firm stance on the Palestinian cause and the joint U.S.-Israeli attacks against Iran," he added.

More than 60,000 Moroccan migrants attempted to cross from Morocco into Ceuta, with at least 70 drowning or being crushed in the attempt — a number expected to rise. Among the dead was Moroccan footballer Faten Ben Omar El Azizi, who played for Moghreb Atletico Tetuan.

"The youth are lost... Who opened

the door the first time? Why did they open it so that our children could be killed?" her mother said before Faten was buried in a Tetouan cemetery.

According to several reports, the Moroccan state headed by King Muhammad VI opened the border gates into Ceuta last Thursday. Madrid has so far avoided publicly blaming Rabat, but officials privately believe Morocco deliberately orchestrated the crisis.

Before many bodies were recovered, Israel's terrorist insecurity minister Itamar Ben Gvir offered "congratulations" to Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez "for his profound commitment to welcoming immigration and 'human diversity'," adding: "As someone who demonstrates great concern for Hamas and the residents of Gaza, I call on you to open the doors of Spain and grant refuge to residents of Gaza who seek to emigrate."

The intervention humiliated Morocco, which normalized ties with Israel in December 2020 and has treated that relationship as diplomatic leverage.

Israel and the U.S. have both started questioning Spain's hold over Ceuta and Melilla. In Washington, a House Appropriations Committee report published in April described Ceuta and Melilla as Spanish-controlled cities "located in Moroccan territory," urging negotiations over their status — a signal to NATO member Spain.

Spanish Transport Minister Oscar Puente shared a post stating: "Some in Washington, Tel Aviv, and Rabat... wanted images of our security forces and armed forces machine-gunning children on the beach."