

Three Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in West Bank raid

Author:

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RAMALLAH: Three Palestinians were killed and 14 injured on Thursday by Israeli forces during their latest raids into the West Bank flashpoint district of Jenin.

At dawn, the Israeli forces stormed the towns of Yamoun and Kafr Dan in Jenin, where violent confrontations erupted. Six civilians were injured by bullets, three of them seriously.

In a clash near Jenin on Thursday morning "two youths died of injuries sustained in an Israeli attack," the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

Hours later, the ministry announced the death of a 45-year-old Palestinian father of six who was "critically wounded by Israeli bullets" on Wednesday in Beita, south of Nablus.

Those attending the three funerals raised slogans denouncing the "crimes" committed by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinians.

Ramallah and Jenin observed a commercial strike on Thursday in protest against the killings.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the Palestinian presidential spokesman, said Palestine is "at a crossroads due to the dangerous Israeli escalation," and accused Israel of "playing with fire through its provocative actions, chaos and daily hysteria against the Palestinians."

Talking to Arab News, Palestinian security officials expressed deep concerns over the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the West Bank, especially as younger generations rushed to engage in the clashes.

Palestinians have endured spates of fatal shootings and indiscriminate detentions since the beginning of Ramadan, which have cast a pall of gloom over the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

April has witnessed a sharp escalation in cases of extrajudicial executions by Israelis. Fourteen civilians have been killed, dozens injured, and some 1,000 have been detained in the nightly West Bank raids.

Hussein Al-Sheikh, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, told the Voice of Palestine radio that the Israeli government has taken a clear decision to raise the pace of killings by instructing its army to kill without hesitation, pointing out that "what is happening is a real massacre that cannot be tolerated."

Sheikh condemned aggression witnessed at Al-Aqsa Mosque, with continuous

incursions by Israeli settlers and their attempts to worship in its courtyards.

He made an urgent appeal to national factions, including the Hamas movement, to sit together to achieve national unity, stressing that aggression can only be defeated with national unity.

The Israel Defense Forces said its raids are conducted to arrest wanted persons and confiscate weapons.

The Israeli army has raised the level of alertness as the Jewish Passover festival looms on the horizon. A decision is expected to be taken regarding the imposition of a complete closure on Palestinian territories.

The state of high alert has continued around the Gaza Strip front in light of the escalation of threats by the Palestinian factions.

“The purpose of the ongoing Israeli military and security activities in various parts of the West Bank these days is to prevent terrorist attacks against Israelis. It is interested in giving Israelis a sense of security to celebrate the upcoming Passover,” said Roni Shakid, who worked as a correspondent for a prominent Israeli newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth, for three decades, and lived through the first and second intifadas.

He said: “Without the support from the Palestinian community violent armed attacks against Israeli citizens would not have happened.”

Shakid added that popular uprisings have become integral to the long Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The new Palestinian generation, he said, is not aware of what happened in the intifadas of 1987-1993 and 2000-2003 and wants to put its name in the record of the Palestinian struggle.

Palestinian political analyst Ghassan Al-Khatib, the vice president of Birzeit University in the West Bank, told Arab News that the current Israeli government continues to oppress the Palestinians without the slightest consideration of its impact on the status of the Palestinian Authority.

“The situation will worsen, and no one knows where things will go, especially since Israel has focused on the economic solution and Palestinians see no hope for a political solution,” Al-Khatib said.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Ministry of Education has asked those in charge of educational programs in schools that belong to Palestinian Israelis not to include any material in the curricula that covers commemorating the Nakba – the destruction of Palestinian society and homeland in 1948, and the permanent displacement of a majority of the Palestinian Arabs.



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Israeli forces kill Palestinian in Jenin raid2 Palestinians shot dead by Israeli army in Jenin clashes: medics

[Turkish citizens warming to NATO and EU as new cold war bites](#)

Author:

Thu, 2022-04-14 18:01

ANKARA: A new survey has found that Turkish public opinion is more oriented toward international organizations such as NATO, reflecting a positive stance on the country's EU membership bid.

The survey, titled "Turkish Perceptions of the European Union," was conducted by the German Marshall Fund of the US with the field study carried out in

March by Istanbul-based Infakto Research Workshop across 29 provinces of Turkey through face-to-face interviews with 2,180 people.

The survey revealed that 48 percent of respondents expressed trust in the EU, a rise from the 40 percent who said the same last year; 39 percent voiced support for NATO, a jump from 32 percent in 2021.

As a candidate for EU accession for 23 years and as a powerful member of NATO with increasing economic and military dependency on Russia, Turkey is now trying to find a place in the changing European security and political architectures.

NATO's tough position on the Ukraine conflict also turned the public opinion in favor of the alliance, seeing it as a key pillar of Turkey's security.

Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, the Ankara office director of the German Marshall Fund, said the relatively higher trust shown by the younger generation in Turkey toward international institutions is a reflection of their frustration with the conditions in Turkey.

"Economic challenges such as high inflation, eroding real earnings and unemployment, decreasing quality of education and the polarized political environment frustrate young people who are increasingly looking abroad for a way out," he told Arab News.

Support for Turkey's EU membership is high (58 percent) and even higher in the 18-24 age group (73 percent). However, the confidence that Turkey will become an EU member remains low, with average expectations for the accession timeline ranging between 10 to 15 years.

"In terms of realpolitik, both the Ukraine conflict and Syrian refugee crisis have definitely underlined to many policymakers in the EU about Turkey's geostrategically important location," Paul T. Levin, director at Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies, told Arab News.

"But this occurs against a deep unease with the current regime's foreign policy and poor democratic record. Both sides are in a sense thrust together by geography and events and are struggling to find ways to coexist and collaborate despite serious value divergences and a defunct EU accession process that puts a premium on these divergences."

The survey also revealed tendencies regarding other global actors and regions and showed that Russia's invasion of Ukraine obliged Turkey to reconsider its relationship with Russia and the West.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents want Turkey to play a more active role in the Middle East, Balkans and North Africa, while 59 percent would prefer Ankara to deal with its domestic problems first.

One-third of the respondents think Turkey should cooperate most closely with EU countries on international issues.

Galip Dalay, a fellow at the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies at the German

Institute for International and Security affairs, told Arab News that the increased public support for the EU accession bid and NATO reflects the pursuit in Turkey for democratization and more openness on the global scale.

Regarding the Ukrainian conflict, 44 percent of the respondents said Turkey should mediate between the parties, while 40 percent said Ankara should remain neutral.

“The survey clearly highlights that the Turkish public doesn’t want their country to be entangled in the war Russia is waging against Ukraine. The Turkish government’s policy of staying out of the conflict and attempting mediation has a strong public backing,” Unluhisarcikli of the German Marshall Fund said.

The survey also found that 58 percent of respondents consider the US its biggest threat, followed by Russia (31 percent, rising from 19 percent last year) and Israel (29 percent, rising from 24 percent in 2021).

“Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has significantly lowered the support to cooperate with Russia and increased the unilateralist tendencies rather than increasing support for cooperating with the US or the EU because pro-Russian sentiment in Turkey has always been another manifestation of being against the West,” said Unluhisarcikli.

When asked about how the conflict in Syria should be resolved, 50 percent of respondents said Syria’s territorial integrity should be maintained and the Assad regime replaced. But 21 percent said that Syria should go back to its status before the civil war under Assad’s leadership, with 17 percent believing that the Syrian opposition should have their own territory.

“The survey shows that roughly half of the Turkish public thinks that Assad should go and Syria’s territorial integrity should be maintained. This is also Turkey’s official policy. Those who support returning to the pre-war status quo under Assad’s leadership are less than 25 percent,” said Unluhisarcikli.

He added: “So I don’t think there is an expectation by the Turkish public to change the Syria policy. However, there is an increasing tendency to expect Turkey to solve its own problems rather than playing an active role in the neighborhood.”

In the meantime, 51 percent of respondents said Turkey and the EU had conflicting interests in the Syrian civil war.

With rising global risks around Turkey, which neighbors several conflict zones, Dalay said that the Turkish people will be inclined to take a cautious stance to minimize potential challenges.

“Despite the restrained approach of Turkish public opinion regarding the Syrian conflict, I don’t expect a quick normalization process with the Assad regime apart from some bilateral engagements at the intelligence and security levels,” he said.

Dalay believes that the dip in support for Russia and the enhanced trust in Brussels does not mean more leverage for Washington over Ankara.

“The reason is simple,” he said, “the EU is considered a domestic matter for Turkey thanks to its agency for uplifting the country’s democratic standards. However, the relationship with the US is often framed as a foreign policy and security matter where both sides have seen serious crises over the previous years. Therefore, the cautious stance in Turkey toward Washington is mostly linked with the traces that were left from the latest diplomatic blows.”



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Turkish, British, Italian defense ministers to discuss Ukraine in Istanbul
Greek, Turkish leaders seek common ground over Ukraine war

Saudi Arabia expresses support for humanitarian aid mechanism for Lebanon

Wed, 2022-04-13 20:58

BEIRUT: Saudi Arabia has expressed its support for the people of Lebanon and its desire to bolster ties between the two nations following the return of its envoy to Beirut.

Walid Bukhari, the Saudi ambassador to Lebanon, told Lebanese President Michel Aoun on Wednesday that “the Kingdom is keen on helping the Lebanese people during difficult circumstances and strengthening relations between the two countries.”

According to the president’s media office, the two men discussed bilateral relations and Bukhari told Aoun about “the mechanism of the Saudi-French joint fund aimed at providing humanitarian support and achieving stability and development in Lebanon.”

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf states recalled their ambassadors from Lebanon in October in protest against insulting statements made by former Information Minister George Qordahi regarding the war in Yemen.

Bukhari last met Aoun in March 2021. That meeting took place after a failed attempt to form a government led by former Premier Saad Hariri and the exchange of accusations of disrupting the process between Hariri and Aoun.

Since returning to Beirut, Bukhari has held talks with religious authorities, current and former prime ministers and interior ministers, foreign diplomats and other politicians.

Kuwaiti Ambassador Abdul-Al Sulaiman Al-Qenaai has also returned to Beirut. He said after meeting Prime Minister Najib Mikati on Wednesday that “restoring diplomatic relations and the return of ambassadors indicate the success of the Kuwaiti initiative.”

He added that both Lebanon and the Gulf states had mutually agreed that their long history was above everything else and that “what happened is in the past and the return of ambassadors will lead to further rapprochement and cooperation that benefit the brotherly countries.”

Wednesday’s developments coincided with the 47th anniversary of the start of the civil war in Lebanon. Hariri tweeted: “The suffering of the Lebanese is repeated in different forms.”

Meanwhile, the joint parliamentary committees were unable to approve a draft Lebanese capital control law on Wednesday.

Ibrahim Kanaan, chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, said: “We are making amendments to the current draft.”

Politicians have failed to pass the law since 2019 when Lebanon descended into a financial crisis that has paralyzed its banking system and frozen depositors out of their US dollar accounts.

Formal capital controls are a policy recommendation of the International Monetary Fund, from which Lebanon hopes to secure an aid package.

Lawmaker Bilal Abdullah said the draft contained “defects and needs amendments.”

He told Arab News: “The conditions of the IMF are harsh ... How will we face people if the flour and medicines are no longer subsidized? What is the point of competing for parliamentary seats in a bankrupt country?”

“Some people are preventing any progress toward the country’s recovery plan. However, some are forgetting that the country is bankrupt, and we must not stop negotiations with the IMF.”

Pressure is mounting on last week’s preliminary agreement between an IMF team and Lebanese authorities to implement the fund’s conditions to prevent a complete financial collapse.

The Depositors Outcry Association protested in Beirut against the draft capital control law. Alaa Khorshid, its head, said: “We cannot accept the theft of our money followed by the enactment of a law to protect the thieves.”

In another development, the US Department of State’s report about human rights in Lebanon referred to reliable information about “serious political interference with the judiciary and judicial affairs and imposing severe restrictions on the freedom of expression and media, including violence, threats of violence, arrests, unjustified prosecutions against journalists, censorship and the existence of laws criminalizing defamation, severe restrictions on internet freedom and the forced return of refugees to a country where their lives or freedom are threatened.”

The report mentioned “the presence of serious high-level and widespread official corruption” and added that “government officials enjoyed a measure of impunity for human rights abuses, including evading or influencing judicial processes.”

The report also cited “unofficial detention facilities by the terrorist Hezbollah party and Palestinian militias.”



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Saudi ambassador hits ground running on return to Beirut
Lebanon's grand mufti welcomes return of Saudi ambassador to Beirut

[UN Security Council welcomes transfer of power in Yemen, praises GCC contribution](#)

Wed, 2022-04-13 20:04

NEW YORK: The UN Security Council on Wednesday welcomed the peaceful transfer of power last week from Yemen's President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to a newly created Presidential Leadership Council that includes a broader array of political representatives.

They applauded the intention of the PLC to form a negotiating team for UN-led

talks and expressed hope that the development will enhance stability in the country and the prospects of an inclusive, Yemeni-led political peace settlement under the auspices of the UN, following a truce that was announced at the start of Ramadan.

The members of the Security Council noted the three-day visit to Sanaa by Hans Grundberg, the UN's special envoy for Yemen, that concluded on Wednesday. It was his first since his appointment to the post in August last year.

The Security Council called on the Houthi rebels to work with the envoy and engage with his efforts to achieve a permanent ceasefire and negotiate an inclusive political settlement. It again stressed the importance of a minimum of 30 per cent participation by women as part of any agreement, in line with a resolution adopted this year.

Speaking from Sanaa at the end of his visit, Grundberg said that despite alarming reported violations of the Ramadan truce, which came into effect on April 2, "we have seen a significant overall reduction in hostilities and no confirmed reports of airstrikes or cross-border attacks."

He added: "We have also seen badly needed fuel ships coming into the ports of Hodeidah, which I hope will contribute to resolving the fuel crisis you have been experiencing here in Sanaa. A steady flow of ships should be entering Hodeidah throughout the duration of the truce."

Intense work and preparations continue at Sanaa airport for the first commercial flights in six years, Grundberg said, and consultations on the reopening of roads in Taiz and other governorates have also already begun. However he warned that great challenges remain.

"We are relying on the parties' continued commitment and serious engagement in upholding the truce," he said. "Dialogue in good faith with each other is key and the parties need to make use of the United Nations-facilitated mechanisms we provided to support them in that regard."

Grundberg said that during his meetings with Houthi representatives he stressed the importance of capitalizing on the "unique potential" of the current truce.

"The truce offers some immediate humanitarian relief and a break from violence (and) an opening for creating a conducive environment for a political process to end the conflict, as well as for more durable measures to improve the humanitarian and economic situation and for ending the violence."

The Security Council also welcomed the announcement by Saudi Arabia and the UAE last week of a \$3 billion economic support package for Yemen, and an additional commitment by the Kingdom of \$300 million for the UN's humanitarian response in the country.

Members expressed "deep concern about Yemen's humanitarian crisis" and encouraged donors "to fully fund the UN humanitarian response plan and

support the government of Yemen's efforts to stabilize the economy."

They pledged their full support for the new Presidential Leadership Council in its efforts to address the urgent humanitarian and economic needs of the Yemeni people. They also commended the contributions of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its member states in supporting the cause of peace, promoting political dialogue and addressing the humanitarian crisis.



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[UN Security Council \(UNSC\)](#)

Saudi Cabinet renews call for global conference to support Yemen's economy
Saudi FM meets with UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen in Riyadh

[Charities in Morocco report Ramadan slump in public donations](#)

Author:

Wed, 2022-04-13 13:18

CASABLANCA: Ramadan in Morocco has traditionally been a time for increased acts of help and kindness toward the needy.

The distribution of food baskets, clothes, money, meals, and the organization of collective iftars normally abounds.

And while numerous initiatives are already underway in the country, this year charities have noticed a slump in public donations.

Appeals on social media platforms are fewer than usual and associations have witnessed a fall in collections.

Charity activist Ahmed Ghayet told Arab News En Francais: "We have noticed a significant drop in the collection of donations. Moroccans have been generous this year again, but less than before.

"The COVID-19 crisis, its economic repercussions, and the high cost of living have had an impact on charitable actions initiated during Ramadan. In addition, we have many more requests from people who live in precarious conditions and who have lost their jobs."

Ghayet's association, Marocains Pluriels, has launched a special Ramadan operation to hand out food baskets in the cities of Casablanca, Oujda, Rabat, Mohammedia, Fez, Marrakesh, Essaouira, and Agadir.

Twelve other charity groups have partnered in the project, now in its third edition, that distributes packages containing items such as flour, oil, sugar, lentils, chickpeas, dates, and milk.

"We favor donations in kind, in food staples. But donors can also contribute up to 200 Moroccan dirhams (\$20.30), which represents the price of a basket. The food is left in front of the beneficiary's door in order to preserve their dignity, as most beneficiaries do not ask for it. You know, Moroccans are worthy and many refuse to ask for charity," Ghayet said.

He noted that this year there had been increased generosity from Jewish Moroccans.

"I don't have a precise explanation, but I feel a closeness that has become greater and a mutual trust that has been consolidated in recent months. I get as many calls from Jews as from Muslims. It's like breaking down the barriers.

"Overall, Moroccans, whatever their faith, help each other and provide support to the most vulnerable, especially in this period when precariousness is felt more and more," he added.

And the Ramadan spirit of mutual aid is carried by the north African country's highest authority. Moroccan King Mohammed VI recently launched the Ramadan 1443 initiative in the old medina of Rabat, a national program run since 1998 by the Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity.

With a budget of 103 million dirhams, Ramadan 1443 will this year involve

giving food parcels to around 3 million people (approximately 600,000 households) living in 83 provinces and prefectures of the country, 77 percent of them from rural areas.

Since its launch, the national food support operation has spent more than 1.5 billion dirhams on providing aid for families.

Backing has also come from other countries, with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar among nations offering financial and food support to thousands of Moroccans and charities.

Despite this year's decrease in charity donations, Ramadan has once again seen solidarity, sharing, and mutual aid among Moroccans during difficult times.







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New carpets welcome worshippers at Two Holy Mosques during RamadanKSrelief distributes 2,600 Ramadan food packages for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh