

# Macron holds talks with Mahmoud Abbas, will discuss Gaza situation with Netanyahu

Thu, 2021-05-13 19:10

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron is concerned by the escalation of violence between Israelis and Palestinians and called for a “definite reset” of negotiations between the two sides, the French presidency said on Thursday.

Palestinian militants fired more rockets into Israel’s commercial heartland on Thursday as Israel kept up a punishing bombing campaign in Gaza and massed tanks and troops on the enclave’s border.

Other world leaders also called for calm, with US President Joe Biden saying Thursday he hoped fighting “will be closing down” sooner rather than later.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also appealed in a video call for an end to the fighting.

“The main goal is to stop violent acts from both sides and ensure the safety of the civilian population,” the Kremlin said in a statement.



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Israeli troops mass at Gaza border amid rocket fire, air strikes and clashes in Israel  
IC to hold emergency meeting to discuss Jerusalem and Gaza, at request of Saudi Arabia

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## **[UAE allows Pfizer COVID-19 dose for emergency use in 12-15 year olds](#)**

Thu, 2021-05-13 18:18

The UAE has approved the Pfizer and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in children aged 12-15, the government said on Thursday, having already permitted its use for 16 years and above.

The UAE's health ministry approved its use, the government's Twitter account said. The US Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday approved the use of the vaccine in children as young as 12.



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UAE urges locals, residents to book COVID-19 vaccination

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## [UN peace envoy warns of 'all-out war' as Israeli bombardment of Gaza continues](#)

Author:

Wed, 2021-05-12 22:05

GAZA CITY: The UN's Middle East peace envoy on Wednesday warned of "all-out war" unless there was an "immediate ceasefire" as Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip saw a dramatic rise in the Palestinian death toll.

Loud explosions continued throughout the day as Israel pounded Hamas targets and forces in Gaza responded by launching hundreds of rockets deep into

Israeli territory.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said that at least 56 people had so far been killed, including 14 children, five women, and an elderly man, while more than 335 had been injured.

In a statement, Tor Wennesland, UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, said: "Cease fire immediately. We are escalating toward an all-out war. Leaders on all sides must take responsibility for de-escalation.

"The cost of the war in Gaza is devastating and paid for by ordinary people. The UN is working with all parties to restore calm. Stop the violence now."

Palestinian and Israeli reports said efforts were being made by Egypt, the UN, and a number of other countries to restore calm and return to the ceasefire agreement.

The bloodshed was triggered by weekend unrest at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, which is sacred to both Muslims and Jews.

Military exchanges have escalated over recent days, sparking international pleas for an end to the violence.

On Wednesday, Israel targeted a number of Hamas government buildings and houses, private cars, agricultural plots, and military training sites belonging to the movement and Islamic Jihad were also hit.

Bombing was stepped up following the destruction of two residential towers in Gaza City, and Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, retaliated by firing a barrage of rockets toward Tel Aviv and Beersheba. The commander of the Gaza brigade, Basem Issa, along with others were reported to have been killed during the strikes.

The Islamic Jihad announced that a number of its leaders belonging to its missile unit, most notably Muhammad Abu Al-Ata, died when an apartment in the center of Gaza City was hit.

Al-Qassam Brigades and Al-Quds Brigades fired hundreds of rockets toward Tel Aviv and Beersheba – cities far from Gaza that had not previously been targeted.

Mother-of-three Sherine Awad, 38, told Arab News: "The terror and fear do not stop. After the towers were hit, I moved from my apartment because it is in a high-rise. I moved to my friend's house with my children, but last night a house was bombed near the place I took shelter in.

"This is not life. We cannot bear all this. The bombing does not stop, and the terrifying sounds are nonstop. My children are in a state of fear and shock. Our life has taken a U-turn from what was planned for the Eid reception."

The streets of Gaza City were mostly empty on Wednesday except for some pedestrians and cars, while most of the shops remained closed barring some

grocery stores.

Ahmed Al-Kahlout, a grocer on Nasr Street, told Arab News that on the last day of Ramadan people still needed supplies and “fear does not prevent them from buying food.

“There are deaths, but people in their homes want to eat. This is not the first time Gaza has faced an escalation, but this time it is the most severe since the 2014 war,” he said.

Despite both sides in the conflict threatening further bombing, Palestinians in Gaza are hoping the latest round of bloodshed and destruction will end soon.

“We hope this will end. It will definitely end, but when? Nobody knows. Hopefully, it will be soon,” Awad said.



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Israel destroys tower block, kills Hamas commander as Gaza civilian death toll mounts

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# El-Sisi: Egypt's water rights 'will not be violated'

Author:

Wed, 2021-05-12 22:00

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has said that Egyptians' concerns over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) are "legitimate" and warned that Egypt will not give up its water rights.

"I appreciate your concern about the dam crisis, and I share this concern with you and consider it a healthy phenomenon that stems from Egyptians' fear and love for their country, but I call on Egyptians to be patient," he said, adding that negotiations will take time.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration of several projects, El-Sisi said that pressure is being applied to solve the crisis through negotiations.

"Our rights will not be violated," he added.

Cairo has witnessed intense diplomatic activity recently, with Jeffrey Feltman, US envoy to the Horn of Africa, and Felix Tshisekedi, president of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the current session of the African Union, holding talks in an effort to reach a settlement.

Talks over the filling and operation of the dam between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have come to a halt.

Earlier, Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry's spokesman, Dina Mufti, expressed hopes that negotiations will resume following Tshisekedi's efforts to break the deadlock.

Feltman called for a "profitable solution" for all parties involved.

Ethiopia began work on the 1.8-kilometer dam in 2011. Egypt fears the GERD will threaten its water supply from the Nile, while Sudan is concerned about the dam's safety and its own water flow.

Both Cairo and Khartoum are calling for a binding and comprehensive deal that guarantees the rights and interests of all three countries.



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Egypt: Ethiopia refuses mediation to solve Renaissance Dam crisisEgypt hopes to resume talks with Ethiopia on Grand Renaissance Dam

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## [US sends diplomat to try to quell Israeli-Palestinian violence](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1620842891970056900

Wed, 2021-05-12 21:14

WASHINGTON: The United States dispatched a senior diplomat on Wednesday to urge Israelis and Palestinians to calm the worst flare-up in violence between them in years.

The violence has appeared to catch the Biden administration off guard as it pursued other priorities.

In remarks welcomed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Secretary of State Antony Blinken defended Israel's right to protect itself and condemned

rockets fired by Hamas, the Islamist group that controls the Gaza Strip. He also said Israel had a particular obligation to avoid civilian casualties. Israel said it killed 16 members of the Hamas armed wing in Gaza in a barrage on Wednesday. At least 56 people have been killed in Gaza since violence escalated on Monday, according to the enclave's health ministry. Six people have been killed in Israel, medical officials said.

The military action follows unrest involving Israeli police and Palestinian protesters near Al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem.

Blinken, who spoke by telephone to Netanyahu, said he had sent Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Hady Amr to meet with both sides.

"He will urge, on my behalf and on behalf of President (Joe) Biden, a de-escalation of violence."

Biden has yet to name an ambassador to Israel, a post his predecessor Donald Trump had filled before his inauguration. Other top state department officials handling the region are still awaiting approval from the Senate. Deflecting suggestions that the long-standing conflict has not been a priority, Blinken repeatedly described the administration as "fully engaged."

"We are deeply engaged across the board. State Department, White House, senior officials, with the Israelis, Palestinians and other countries and partners in the region to call for and push for de-escalation," Blinken said. A senior State Department official, asked if Biden would speak with Netanyahu, said further "high level engagement" from Washington was to be expected.

In his remarks, Blinken drew a distinction between "a terrorist organization, Hamas that is indiscriminately raining down rockets in fact targeting civilians, and Israel's response, defending itself."

However, he added: "I think Israel has an extra burden in trying to do everything they possibly can to avoid civilian casualties, even as it is rightfully responding in defense of the people."

Netanyahu's office said: "Prime Minister Netanyahu thanked Blinken for the US support for Israel's right to self-defense, a right that the secretary of state reiterated in this call."





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Israel declares curfew in Arab-Jewish town hit by violence UK PM urges Israel, Palestinians to 'step back from the brink'