

# Iran's foreign minister cancels Austrian visit over Israeli flag

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ZURICH: Iran's foreign minister canceled a visit with his Austrian counterpart to show displeasure that Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's government had flown the Israeli flag in Vienna in a show of solidarity, the Austrian foreign ministry said on Saturday.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was supposed to meet Alexander Schallenberg but had called off the trip, a spokeswoman for Schallenberg said, confirming a report in newspaper Die Presse.

"We regret this and take note of it, but for us it is as clear as day that when Hamas fires more than 2,000 rockets at civilian targets in Israel then we will not remain silent," the spokeswoman said.

Hamas is the Islamist group that runs Gaza. Israel has pummeled Gaza with air strikes and Palestinian militants have launched rocket barrages at Israel in the worst escalation of violence in years.

In Tehran, foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told the semi-official news agency ISNA: "Mr Zarif did not consider the trip beneficial in these circumstances, and therefore the travel arrangements were not finalized."

The dispute comes during talks in Vienna to try to revive a 2015 accord with western powers in which Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for relief from sanctions. Former US President Donald Trump abandoned the deal in 2018, prompting Iran to begin violating its terms.

Kurz, who is firmly pro-Israel, had called flying the Israeli flag over the federal chancellery on Friday a mark of solidarity amid the violent clashes. But Abbas Araqchi, who heads the Iranian delegation at the Vienna talks, criticized the move.

"Vienna is the seat of (nuclear watchdog) IAEA & UN, and (Austria) so far been a great host for negotiations," Araqchi wrote on Twitter. "Shocking & painful to see flag of the occupying regime, that brutally killed tens of innocent civilians, inc many children in just few days, over govt offices in Vienna. We stand with Palestine."



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Official: Israel upgrading contingency plans for Iran attack  
Israel destroys media building in Gaza as conflict rages on

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## [10 members of family killed as Israel bombs Gaza house](#)

Author:

AP

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Sat, 2021-05-15 16:01

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip: Ten members of an extended family were killed in an Israeli airstrike early on Saturday on the western Gaza Strip, medics and witnesses said.

The eight children and two women were killed when a three-storey house in Shati refugee camp collapsed following an Israeli attack.

Several Israeli missiles targeted the house of Alaa Abu Hatab, 35, in the densely populated beach camp and adjacent buildings, killing four of his five children and his wife, in addition to his sister and four of her children.

A five-month-old infant survived the bombing, while Abu Hatab's daughter was severely injured and is in intensive care.

Muhammad Al-Hadidi, brother-in-law of Abu Hatab, said that his wife was visiting her brother's house with his five children. The children insisted they spend the night at their uncle's house to play with their cousins.

"At night, I heard the sound of the bombing, and I did not know that it was for the building that my wife and children were in. I received a call that told me that the Abu Hatab's house was targeted," Al-Hadidi told Arab News

"I went quickly to the place to find all my children with my wife, under the rubble," he said while crying.

Speaking outside Shifa hospital in Gaza City, Al-Hadidi said that he wanted "the unjust world to see these crimes.

"They were safe in their homes, they did not carry weapons, they did not fire rockets," he said of his children, who were killed "wearing their clothes for Eid."

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said that the death toll had reached 139, including 39 children and 22 women. More than 1,000 have been wounded.

Muhammad Al-Sayed, 30, the owner of a barber store beneath the bombed building, said: "The scene was terrible during the night."

"I have been working in the same place for 14 years. The scene was too painful for me. When I came to see it at night, I could not prepare myself to see the bodies being pulled out from the debris. Our lives have become cheap," he told Arab News.

The Israeli shelling continued in several areas of the Gaza Strip on Saturday.

Heba Al-Attar, 45, a resident, told Arab News: "All I think these days is when I am killed and our house is destroyed, how my three children will live without me if they survive this onslaught."

She added: "I feel scared every day, I can't sleep at night, I steal some sleep in the morning, life is tough here in Gaza."

However, Hiba hopes that international attempts to achieve peace will succeed.

"Now it is necessary to return to the cease-fire again. We want to preserve

what is left of us, and what remains of our homes and our children,” she said.

The Israeli army continued to bomb high-rise buildings in the Gaza Strip. It flattened Al-Jala'a Tower in the center of the city with several missiles.

The tower housed several offices of local, Arab and international media, including The Associated Press and Al-Jazeera TV.

An Israeli officer gave the owner of the tower an hour to evacuate it. The owner pleaded with the officer to give them 10 more minutes so that some journalists could go and retrieve their equipment from the building, but the Israeli officer refused.

With the destruction of the tower in Gaza City, the number of towers that have been destroyed by Israel reached four, three of which contained offices of various media institutions.



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Egypt sends ambulances to pick up wounded from GazaIsraeli military accused of using media to trick Hamas militants in Gaza

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# [Egypt sends ambulances to pick up wounded from Gaza](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Sat, 2021-05-15 08:30

CAIRO: Egypt sent 10 ambulances into Gaza on Saturday to pick up casualties of Israeli bombardments for treatment in Egyptian hospitals, medical and security sources said.

The ambulances entered Gaza at the Rafah crossing, which is otherwise closed for five days over the Eid Al-Fitr holiday and the weekend and is due to reopen on Monday.

A further five ambulances have been deployed to enter Gaza later and three Egyptian hospitals have been readied to provide treatment, the sources and local health officials said.



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Israeli military accused of using media to trick Hamas militants in Gaza  
Israel destroys media building in Gaza as conflict rages on

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## [UN chief appeals for halt to Israel-Gaza clash](#)

Author:

Fri, 2021-05-14 20:43

NEW YORK: UN chief Antonio Guterres appealed on Friday for an immediate halt to fighting between Gaza and Israel.

Secretary-General Guterres warned that the ongoing conflict could “unleash an uncontrollable security and humanitarian crisis and to further foster extremism,” not just in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel but also elsewhere in the Middle East region.

A UN spokesman added that Guterres urged the parties to allow mediation efforts to intensify and end the fighting more quickly.

Stephane Dujarric said the UN was “actively involved” in those mediation efforts.

Guterres, who said only a sustainable political solution would lead to lasting peace, also reiterated his commitment to support Palestinians and Israelis in resolving the conflict, through the Quartet of Middle East mediators – the UN, US, EU and Russia – on the basis of relevant UN resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.



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Save the Children urges end to Gaza violence as child deaths reach 31  
Palestinians flee as Israeli artillery pounds northern Gaza

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## [Save the Children urges end to Gaza violence as child deaths reach 31](#)

Fri, 2021-05-14 20:25

LONDON: Children's charity Save The Children has called for an immediate end to all hostilities in Gaza and Israel as the number of children killed by Israeli bombardment reaches 31.

"Save the Children is urging the international community to use its influence with parties to the conflict to seek an urgent path to de-escalation as fatalities in Gaza and southern Israel continue to soar," said a statement issued by the charity to Arab News on Friday.

"Save the Children can confirm that at least 31 schools and a health facility in Gaza have been damaged by Israeli airstrikes," it said.

In total, 33 children have now died in the violence – 31 in Gaza, and another two in Israeli territory.

The total death toll from the fighting, which continues to escalate, has now reached 126, including 119 Palestinians and seven Israelis. Hundreds more Palestinians have also been injured in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Gaza-based Mazen Naim, a communications officer at Save the Children, told Arab News: "I've been talking to my family, consistently checking in with my friends and colleagues – the situation is very bad everywhere.

"The 2 million people living in Gaza do not feel safe at all in any way. There are explosions and airstrikes and attacks everywhere. There was houses that were hit, even some of them with people inside. Families were wiped out."

Naim said that children will pay a "serious and lasting price" for the heaviest attack on Gaza in nearly a decade.

"Many children were alive yesterday that are not alive today. If this does not end, more children will be killed. If this continues, we could be looking at a huge humanitarian catastrophe," he said.

Not only are dozens of children being harmed physically, he added, but the fighting is causing lasting mental distress to the Gaza Strip's 800,000 children.

"Children are feeling fear, anxiety and sleeplessness. They are having nightmares at night – no one feels safe in any way, everyone is feeling like we could die at any moment.

"This might end soon, but they will still have nightmares for a long time. This will affect their personality, and their ability to cope and communicate. It will affect their education. Every time they will hear a loud noise – a door shutting, for example – they will have these memories brought back to them."

Studies show that a large number of people still suffer from mental health issues rooted in previous violent flare-ups in Gaza and elsewhere, Naim said.

Densely populated Gaza has languished for over a decade under an Israeli blockade that has prevented the territory from developing its economy and has eroded critical infrastructure.



The healthcare system, in particular, suffers from a chronic lack of funding, a problem exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and compounded by the sudden influx of seriously injured people.

“The health system in Gaza was actually suffering because of the 14-years blockade on Gaza, but also from a shortage of staff, shortage of medical supplies and the coronavirus crisis,” said Naim.

“And now with this conflict happening, there’s a shortage of hospital beds, a shortage of drugs, and nobody knows when more supplies can enter the territory.”



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Palestinians flee as Israeli artillery pounds northern GazaWar kills over 100,000 babies a year: Save the Children