

# UN toughens sanctions

US cites 'all options' against more N Korea provocations

AFP, United Nations

The UN Security Council has ordered tightened sanctions on North Korea over its failed rocket launch and warned of new action if the isolated state stages a nuclear test.

The 15-member council -- including the North's closest ally China and nuclear-armed Pakistan -- "strongly condemned" the launch in a statement that highlighted "grave security concerns" in Asia.

The move came as Pyongyang reportedly said it would not allow International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to examine its nuclear programme -- a key part of a deal reached with the US in February that would have seen the transfer of thousands of tonnes of much-needed food aid to the impoverished state.

At a meeting in New York on Monday the Security Council ordered new "en-tities and items" to be added within two



weeks to the sanctions committee list created after North Korea staged nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

It also ordered the sanctions committee to revise the individuals and North Korean firms subject to asset freezes under the international measures.

North Korea said its rocket launch was

to put a weather satellite into orbit, but the United States and its allies said it was an attempt to test a missile launcher.

"The Security Council expresses its determination to take action accordingly in the event of a further DPRK (North Korean) launch or nuclear test," said the statement.

Meanwhile, the United States and its allies will look at "all options" if North Korea follows its botched rocket launch with further provocations, a US military commander said yesterday.

Asked about a possible strike on the North's missile base or nuclear test sites, he said: "I don't think it would be really appropriate for me to comment on how we pursue any future military operations, but I can tell you that with the alliance we are potentially looking at all options."

Japanese and South Korean analysts and officials say satellite imagery showing preparations at the North Korean town of Punggye-ri -- where nuclear blasts were staged in 2006 and 2009 -- suggest a test could be imminent.

## US eases sanctions on Myanmar

AFP, Washington

The United States yesterday eased certain financial restrictions on Myanmar to encourage democratic reforms.

The Treasury Department put into place new regulations in line with an April 4 announcement by Hillary Clinton, who sought to reward reformers who permitted by-elections swept by the long-repressed opposition.

The department's Office of Foreign Assets Control said that it would no longer restrict Americans from financial transactions in Myanmar if they are working for projects that "meet basic human needs" or promote democracy.

However, restrictions would remain in place against individuals, a statement said.

# Nuke talks don't exempt Iran from attack: Israel Tehran vows to defend territorial integrity

AGENCIES

Israel's defense minister yesterday said that Israeli military action against Iran remains an option even while nuclear negotiations are under way, and voiced strong doubts whether the talks would succeed.

Ehud Barak has said that Iran could soon enter a "zone of immunity" against Israeli attack as it puts its nuclear installations deep underground, comments that raised international concern that a strike could be nearing.

In the interview, he reiterated Israeli fears that the negotiations between Iran and a group comprising the United States, Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany could drag on and waste what he described as "precious time".

On Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to open a rift with Washington over the talks by saying that a five-week break between the Istanbul meeting and the next session in Baghdad on May



Ehud Barak

23 gave Iran a "freebie" to continue enriching uranium.

US President Barack Obama, responding to Netanyahu's accusations, said "so far at least we haven't given anything away" and that it had been made clear to Iran that "the clock is ticking" and there could be no "stalling process".

Israel and the West fear Iran's nuclear program is aimed at producing atomic weapons. Iran says it is enriching uranium for peaceful purposes.

Meanwhile, Iran yesterday vowed to respond with force to any threats to its territorial integrity adding that it would prefer to cooperate with its Arab neighbours to maintain security in the Gulf.

The armed forces and the army will inflict heavy regret and shame in case of any aggression against Iranian lands and interests," President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told military commanders and personnel on the occasion of Iran's annual Army Day.

## SYRIA CRISIS UN observers see tough job ahead

AFP, Damascus

UN military observers acknowledged that they face a "difficult" job firming up a shaky ceasefire in Syria as five civilians were killed in fresh violence as it entered its sixth day.

Colonel Ahmed Himmiche, a Moroccan officer who heads a six-strong advance team preparing for the deployment of a 30-strong mission, said the observers would move forward one step at a time.

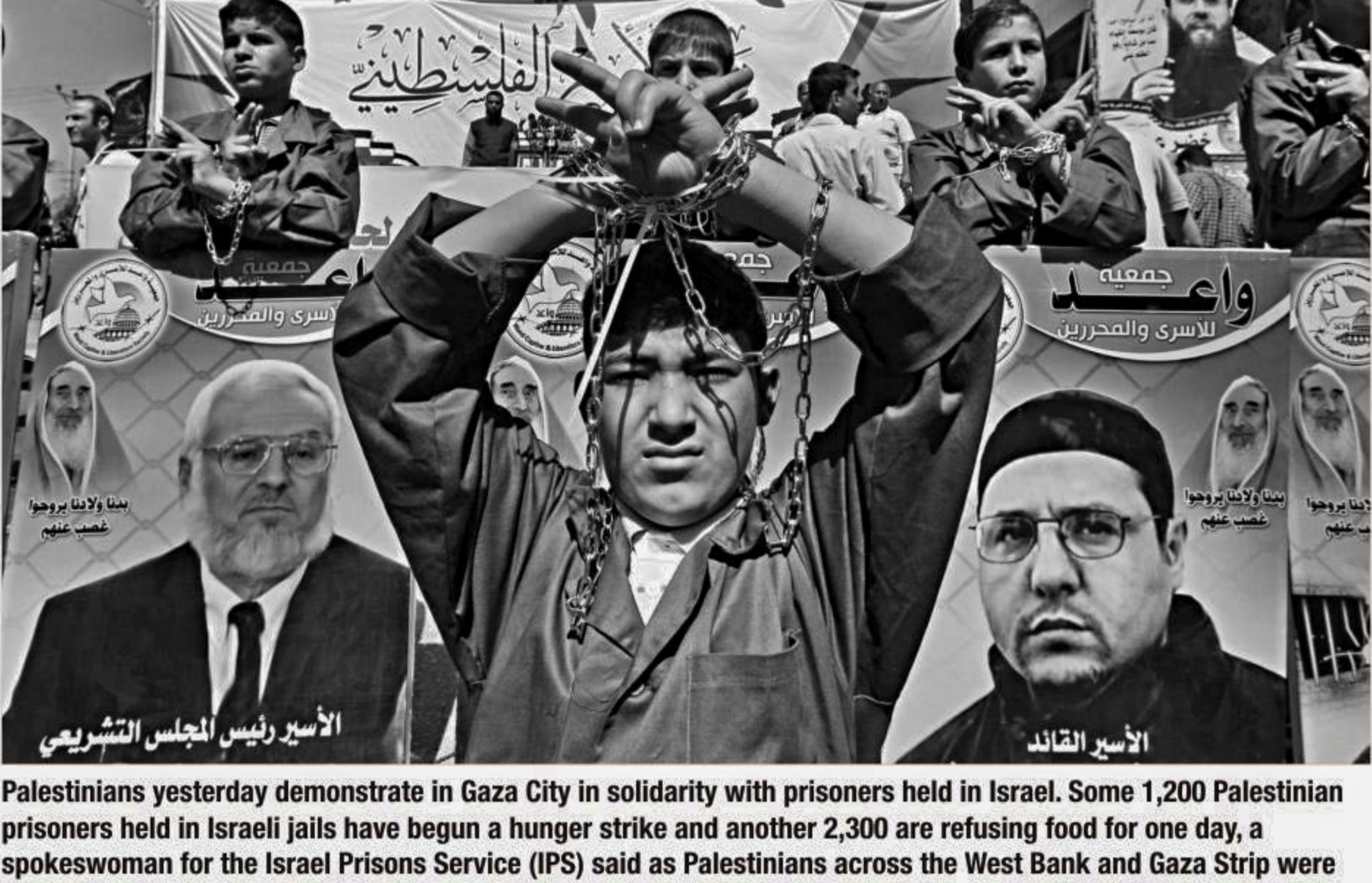
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the United States was still "hoping for the best" but was discussing with other powers what to do in the event the peace plan collapses.

Her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov pointed the finger at the opposition -- 11 of 35 people killed in violence on Monday were soldiers -- and called on its foreign supporters to put pressure on the rebels to honour the hard-won truce.

UN chief Ban Ki-Moon called on regime forces to exercise "maximum restraint" and the opposition to "fully cooperate."

Three of the five dead yesterday were killed in regime shelling of Idlib, a northwestern province close to the border with Turkey where there is a strong presence of rebel fighters, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Two more were killed and dozens wounded in a bombardment of the Basr al-Harir district of Daraa province, south of Damascus, cradle of the 13-month-old uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime, the Britain-based watchdog said.



Palestinians yesterday demonstrate in Gaza City in solidarity with prisoners held in Israel. Some 1,200 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails have begun a hunger strike and another 2,300 are refusing food for one day, a spokeswoman for the Israel Prisons Service (IPS) said as Palestinians across the West Bank and Gaza Strip were marking Prisoners' Day in solidarity with the 4,700 Palestinian inmates of Israeli jails.

PHOTO: AFP

## US to press Pakistan over Haqqani network

AFP, Washington/Islamabad

The United States has said that it will continue to press Islamabad to "squeeze" the al-Qaeda linked Haqqani network, as Afghanistan blamed the Pakistan-based group for the latest brazen attacks in Kabul.

Declaring "there were indications of Haqqani involvement" in the weekend attacks in the Afghan capital, secretary of state Hillary Clinton said that she had pressed Pakistan to "squeeze" the Haqqani network when she visited Islamabad last October.

"I will continue to make that point, and press it hard," Clinton was quoted by Fox News as telling reporters in the Brazilian capital Brasilia, where she described the Pakistan-based outfit as a "determined foe".

Afghan Interior Minister Bismillah Mohammadi had told newsmen in Kabul that one of the militants arrested during the latest attacks on the Afghan capital and three other cities had told the authorities that al-Qaeda-linked Haqqani network was behind the assaults.

The secretary of state said she had spoken to her Pakistani counterpart Hina Rabbani Khar to urge her for a commitment to work closely for peace and stability in Afghanistan and also discussed the recent terrorist attacks in Kabul.

The telephonic talks between Hillary and Khar come a day ahead of a crucial meeting of Pakistan's top civilian and military leadership, who are expected to take a final decision on re-opening of logistic supply lines to Nato troops in Afghanistan.

## Australia mulls early exit from Afghanistan

AFP, Sydney

Australia said yesterday it would bring its troops home from Afghanistan a year earlier than planned with most soldiers withdrawn in 2013 after significant security gains over the past 18 months.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard will take her rollout timetable to a Nato summit in Chicago next month with her announcement coming a day ahead of Nato foreign and defence ministers meeting in Brussels to fine-tune their own troop withdrawals.

The UN Security Council on Monday condemned "in the strongest terms" a coordinated insurgent assault on Kabul that marked the biggest militant attack on the city in a decade of war.

Australia has some 1,550 troops stationed in the strife-torn country and has so far lost 32 soldiers in the conflict.

## AFP, New York Times, Politico win Pulitzers

AFP, New York

Agence France-Presse and the news websites Huffington Post and Politico each won their first Pulitzer Prizes Monday as the prestigious journalism awards highlighted global issues and online reporting.

The New York Times took awards for explanatory reporting for David Kocieniewski's reporting on tax loopholes; and for international reporting for Jeffrey Gettleman's coverage of famine and conflict in East Africa.

The Pulitzers, which date back to 1917, began allowing online-only publications to compete three years ago.

David Wood of The Huffington Post won the national reporting prize "for his riveting exploration of the physical and emotional challenges" facing American soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, the committee said.

Politico's Matt Wuerker won the award for editorial cartooning, satirizing the partisan conflict that engulfed Washington in 2011.

The award for investigative reporting was shared by Matt Apuzzo, Adam Goldman, Eileen Sullivan and Chris Hawley of the Associated Press and Michael Berens and Ken Armstrong of The Seattle Times.

The AP was recognized for reporting on the New York Police Department's clandestine spying program that monitored daily life in Muslim communities.

Besides journalism, the Pulitzer Board, made up of journalists from around the country and representatives of Columbia University, also bestows awards for literature, drama and music. No award was given this year for fiction for the first time since 1977.

## Gaddafi son may face Libya trial

BBC ONLINE

The International Criminal Court could soon drop its demand that Saif al-Islam Gaddafi be transferred to the Hague for trial, officials told the BBC yesterday.

They say the son of former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi could be tried inside Libya under ICC supervision.

The argument over who should try him has been going on ever since his capture in November last year.

The ICC has indicted him for crimes against humanity, but Libya insists he be tried on its soil.

The Libyan justice ministry says a deal is being finalised under which Gaddafi would be tried in Libya but with security and legal supervision provided by the international court.

Describing the suggested arrangement as groundbreaking for the ICC, the official acknowledged concerns that 39-year-old Saif al-Islam could face the death penalty in Libya.

The ICC's chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo is due to visit Libya this week.

## Breivik boasts of Norway massacre

BBC ONLINE

The man who killed 77 people in bomb and gun attacks in Norway last July yesterday boasted of his actions in a statement at his trial in Oslo.

"I have carried out the most spectacular and sophisticated attack on Europe since World War II," Anders Behring Breivik told the court.

Breivik said he would do it all again and asked to be acquitted.

Although he admits the bombing and attack on a youth camp, he has pleaded not guilty to terror and mass murder.

"These acts are based on goodness, not evil," he said, adding that he had toned down his rhetoric out of concern for the victims.

As he closed his statement, pressed by the judge Breivik said that he acted to defend Norway against immigration and multi-culturalism.

He also implied that he drew inspiration for his strategies from al-Qaeda and added that he had not expected to survive the day.

As the day began, the court was briefly adjourned and one of three lay judges dismissed for saying last July that Breivik should face the death penalty.

On Monday, prosecutors played harrowing recordings of the events and described the fate of each victim in detail.

Throughout the evidence, Breivik remained emotionless, although he shed tears when the court played a 12-minute anti-Islam video which he had posted online on the day of the carnage.

Breivik detonated a bomb in a van parked outside government offices in Oslo on 22 July, killing eight people. He then travelled to Utoeya where, dressed as a police officer, he shot dead a further 69 people who were attending a youth camp run by the governing Labour party.



Anders Behring Breivik

## 4-party set to expand

FROM PAGE 20

about the new alliance today at a press conference at Diplomatic Engineers Institution auditorium in the capital's Karkarai.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Kalyan Party, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JaGPa), National People's Party (NPP), Bangladesh Labour Party, National Democratic Party (NDP), Bangladesh NAP, Muslim League, Islamic Party and National Awami Party (NAP-Bhasani) are joining the alliance, BNP sources said.

Khaleda Zia at the opposition's March 12 rally issued a 90-day ultimatum to the government to reinstate the caretaker system.

The alliance led by Khaleda will be expanded, the BNP chief said at the rally, adding that the new alliance comprising 16

political parties would announce tougher agitation programmes on July 11 as the ultimatum expired.

The opposition leaders last night in a meeting finalised the name of the expanded alliance.

The new alliance is intended to make the movement a success, NPP Chairman Sheikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu told The Daily Star.

"We will jointly participate in the next election under a non-party caretaker government and if we win, we will continue as an alliance to form the government," he said.

At present, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), and Khilafat Majlis are members of the BNP-led alliance.

The four-party alliance

was formed in 1999 to strengthen the movement against the then Awami League-led government. In 2001 election, the BNP-led alliance won a landslide victory but got a drubbing in 2008 election.

Jatiya Party led by Anwar Hossain Manju had joined the BNP-led alliance during the 2007 political turmoil but did not continue.

Parties joining the opposition have proposed names for the new alliance while the BNP high command prefers Sammilito Gonotantrik Jote to other suggestions.

However, the invitation card for today's press conference mentioned the alliance as "16-party alliance". Khaleda Zia will formally declare the name of the new alliance today, party sources said.

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