

US okays more ammo for Israel

AGENCIES

The United States has allowed Israel, waging an offensive in the Gaza Strip, to tap a local US arms stockpile in the past week to resupply it with grenades and mortar rounds, a US defense official said yesterday.

The munitions were located inside Israel as part of a program managed by the US military and called War Reserves Stock Allies-Israel (WRSA-I), which stores munitions locally for US use that Israel can also access in emergency situations.

Israel, however, did not cite an emergency when it made its latest request about 10 days ago, the defense official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Additional Israeli requests for US-manufactured ammunition were also being processed in the United States, the official said. The official did not offer further details on quantities or costs of ammunition already supplied or requested.

Israel's embassy in Washington declined comment about the resupply request, including whether it asked for the ammunition because of its operations in Gaza.

Separately, US lawmakers were working in Congress to provide millions of dollars in additional funding for Israel's "Iron Dome" missile shield.

The US Senate Appropriations Committee added \$225 million for Iron Dome to a spending bill intended mainly to provide money to handle an influx of thousands of Central American children across the US-Mexico border.



Land for gas

Merkel, Putin discussed secret deal to end Ukraine crisis

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Germany and Russia have been working on a secret plan to broker a peaceful solution to end international tensions over the Ukraine.

The Independent can reveal that the peace plan, being worked on by both Angela Merkel and Vladimir Putin, hinges on two main ambitions: stabilising the borders of Ukraine and providing the financially troubled country with a strong economic boost, particularly a new energy agreement ensuring security of gas supplies.

More controversially, if Merkel's deal were to be acceptable to the Russians, the international community would need to recognise Crimea's independence and its annexation by Russia, a move that some members of the United Nations might find difficult to stomach.

Sources close to the secret negotiations claim that the first part of the stabilisation plan requires Russia to withdraw its financial and military support for the various pro-separatist groups operating in eastern Ukraine. As part of any such agreement, the region would be allowed some devolved powers.

At the same time, the Ukrainian President would agree not to apply to join Nato. In return, President Putin would not seek to block or interfere with the Ukraine's new trade relations with the European Union under a pact signed a few weeks ago.

Second, the Ukraine would be offered a new long-term agreement with Russia's Gazprom, the giant gas supplier, for future gas supplies and pricing. At present, there is no gas deal in place; Ukraine's gas supplies are running low and are likely to run out before this winter, which would spell economic and social ruin for the country.

A spokesman for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said they had no knowledge of such negotiations taking place. However, the spokesman said he thought it highly unlikely that either the US or UK would agree to recognising the Russian control over Crimea. There was no one available at the German embassy's press office yesterday.

Russia is still the EU's third-biggest trading partner with cross-border trade of \$460b (£272b) last year, and the latest sanctions being introduced by the EU towards Russian individuals and banks will hurt European countries more than any other – particularly Germany.

That was May 2007 - Tony Blair

US House to sue Obama

AFP, Washington

The Republican-led House of Representatives voted Wednesday to sue President Barack Obama for allegedly overstepping his powers, a move swiftly denounced by his Democratic allies as a cynical election-year stunt.

By a party-line vote of 225 to 201, the House voted to resort to the unprecedented move of taking the president to court for not having stringently followed the letter of the law while implementing his signature "Obamacare" health care reform bill.

The measure, which would empower House Speaker John Boehner to start the legal proceedings, is meant to rein in a president beset by power, the top House Republican said from the floor of the chamber.

"This isn't about Republicans or Democrats. It's about defending the Constitution that we swore an oath to uphold, and acting decisively when it may be compromised," Boehner said.



law.

Obama, for his part, has been derisive in dismissing the suit, making it a punchline again during a speech in Kansas City, Missouri.

"Instead of suing me for doing my job, I want Congress to do its job and make life a little better for the Americans who sent them there in the first place," he said to cheers and applause from a supportive crowd.

"And by the way," he added, "you know who's paying for this suit they're going to file? You."

The move toward a lawsuit is the latest sign of extreme gridlock and discord in Washington, with the two major political parties constantly at loggerheads, and Obama and his congressional opponents unable to work together to pass and enact legislation.

The discord is heightened by the fact that mid-term elections to replace the entire House and a third of the US Senate are just a few months away.

The suit is seen by some analysts as a Republican strategy to pique the interest of voters who might otherwise be unmotivated to go to the polls during November's legislative vote.

Ebola fear grows

EU, Asia on alert over possible outbreak

APP, London

Fears that the west African Ebola outbreak could spread to other continents grew with European and Asian countries on alert and a leading medical charity warning the epidemic was out of control.

Meanwhile, Sierra Leone yesterday declared a state of emergency as the country struggled to contain the deadly Ebola epidemic.

The impoverished country, along with neighbouring Guinea and Liberia, is struggling to contain an epidemic that has infected 1,200 people and left 672 dead across the region since the start of the year.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said the crisis gripping Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone would only get worse and warned there was no overarching strategy to handle the world's worst outbreak of the disease.

Hong Kong announced quarantine measures for suspected cases while the EU said it was ready to deal with the threat. Meanwhile, Thai health authorities said they had ordered all hospitals to monitor patients for any symptoms, particularly nationals or foreign tourists who had been in the outbreak area.

Ebola can kill victims within days, causing severe fever and muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and, in some cases, organ failure and unstoppable bleeding.

Pope's top 10 tips for happiness

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Pope Francis's secrets to happiness:

1. "Live and let live." Everyone should be guided by this principle.

2. "Be giving of yourself to others."

People need to be open and generous toward others, because "if you withdraw into yourself, you run the risk of becoming egocentric. And stagnant water becomes putrid."

3. "Proceed calmly" in life.

4. A healthy sense of leisure.

The Pope said "consumerism has brought us anxiety", and told parents to set aside time to play with their children and turn off the TV when they sit down to eat.

5. Sundays should be holidays.

Workers should have Sundays off because "Sunday is for family," he said.

6. Find innovative ways to create dignified jobs for young people.

If they have no opportunities they will get into drugs" and be more vulnerable to suicide.

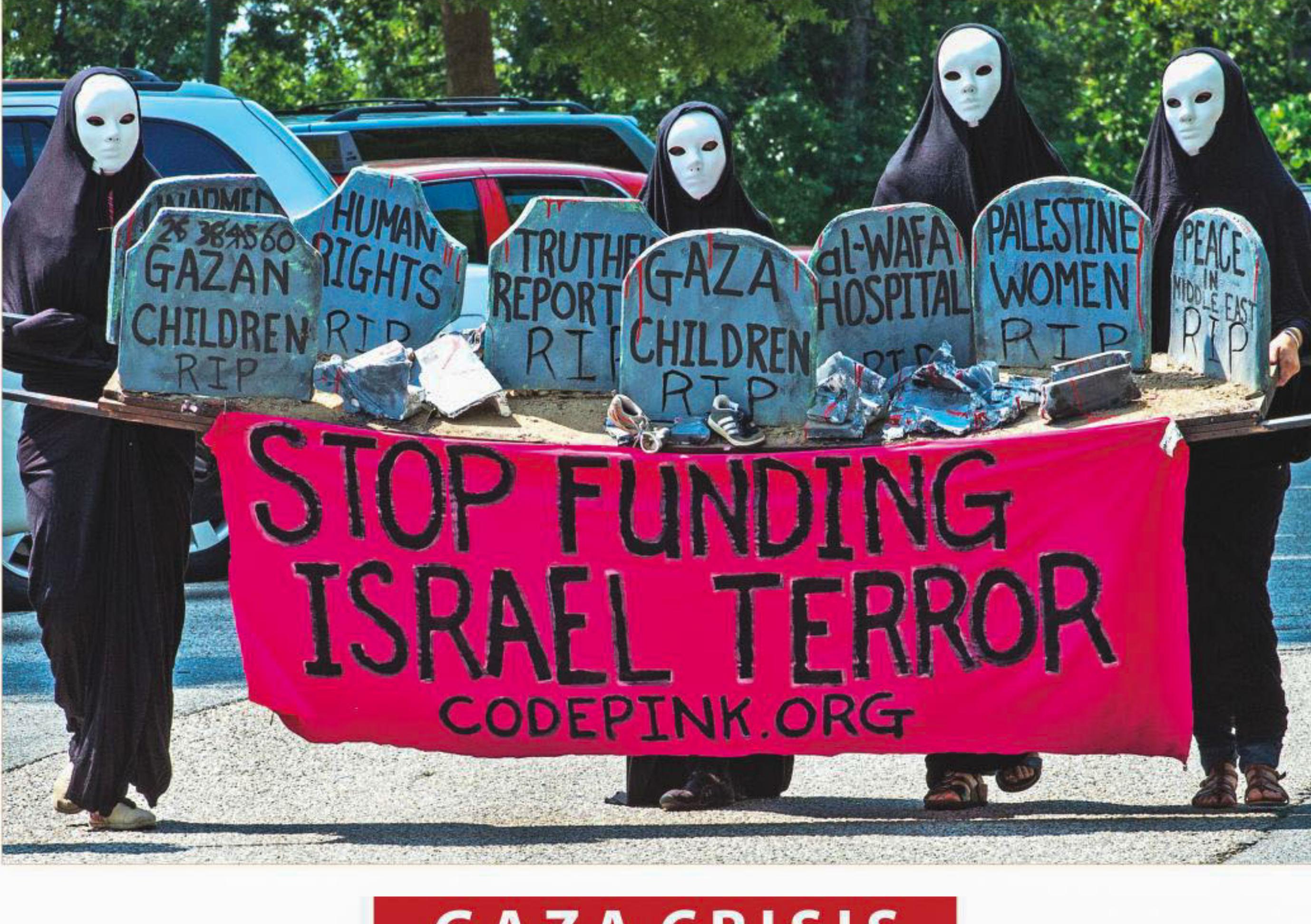
7. Respect and take care of nature. "I think a question that we're not asking ourselves is: 'Isn't humanity committing suicide with this indiscriminate and tyrannical use of nature?'"

8. Stop being negative. "Need to talk badly about others indicates low self-esteem."

9. Don't proselytise; respect others' beliefs. "We can inspire others through witness so that one grows together in communicating. But the worst thing of all is religious proselytism, which paralyses: 'I am talking with you in order to persuade you,' No."

Each person dialogues, starting with his and her own identity. The church grows by attraction, not proselytizing."

10. Work for peace. "We are living in a time of many wars. The call for peace must be shouted. Peace sometimes gives the impression of being quiet, but it is never quiet, peace is always proactive."



GAZA CRISIS

From left, clockwise: Members of Code Pink hold a vigil of civil disobedience and conduct a "die-in" in front of the Israeli Embassy in Washington, protesting the deaths of Palestinians in Gaza; an Israeli soldier carries a shell as he and his comrades prepare their Merkava tanks for new Gaza assault; A group of Palestinian artists have turned the current fighting in Gaza into a symbol of hope and resistance by transforming photographs of rocket explosions; and people carry a injured man after a Israeli shell landed a market place in Gaza. Israel mobilised 16,000 additional reservists yesterday to bolster forces fighting in Gaza as Washington gave its ally the go-ahead to raid stocks of emergency US weapons stored on Israeli soil.

PHOTO: AFP

Israel defying int'l law: UN

Navi Pillay says attacks on schools, hospitals are deliberate, not accidental

AFP, Geneva

UN human rights chief Navi Pillay yesterday slammed what she said was Israel's "deliberate defiance" of international law during the Gaza conflict.

Pillay lambasted the country's attacks on homes, schools, hospitals and United Nations facilities which are sheltering 250,000 civilians in Gaza.

"There appears to be deliberate defiance of obligations that international law imposes on Israel," the South African told reporters.

Pillay said that repeated calls to respect the laws of war had gone unheeded during the latest crisis and previous spikes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"The same pattern of attacks is occurring now on homes, schools, hospitals, UN premises. None of this appears to me to be accidental," she said.

She spoke a day after Israeli shells slammed into a UN school in Jabalia refugee camp which was sheltering some 3,300 homeless Gazans, killing 16 people.

Israel has accused Palestinian Islamists Hamas and other militants of hiding out among the civilian population and using UN facilities and other

sites to store weapons and launch rocket attacks.

Pillay said that under international law, civilian facilities should not be attacked, but can lose their protected status if used for military purposes.

Even then, she said, due warning must be given before an attack, in order to allow civilians to be evacuated.

"It is completely unconscionable that the proportionality and precaution that international law requires is being ignored," said Pillay.

She also criticised Israel's strikes on Gaza's power plant, as well as water and sewerage systems.

Last week, the UN Human Rights Council voted to open an inquiry into the Gaza offensive, despite fierce opposition from Israel and the United States.

"We cannot allow impunity. We cannot allow this lack of accountability to go on," Pillay said on Thursday, calling into question domestic investigations by Israel into abuses.

"I join the world in condemning the aggression that is taking place in Gaza, and particularly the killing of civilians. This is wrong and it will always be wrong," she added.

As of Thursday, the 25th day of the Gaza conflict, 1,422 Palestinians had been killed -- three-quarters of them civilians, Gaza officials said.

Fifty-six Israeli soldiers have also died, while cross-border rocket fire has killed two Israeli civilians and a Thai migrant worker.

The UN human rights chief has repeatedly condemned the actions not only of Israel but also the indiscriminate Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli communities.

UN LAUNCHES APPEAL FOR AID

Meanwhile, Israel's 24-day-old Gaza offensive has spawned a humanitarian crisis of monstrous proportions, prompting an UN appeal for aid.

"UNRWA urgently seeks \$60 million (44.8 million euros) to respond to the immediate shelter, food, health and psycho-social needs of affected families; to replenish emergency stocks; and to prepare for carrying out vital interventions that will be required immediately upon cessation of military activities," its website said.

UNRWA's spokesman in Gaza, Chris Gunness, broke down in tears Wednesday when Al-Jazeera television interviewed him after 16 people died in the shelling of a UN school in Gaza.

"The rights of Palestinians, even their children, are wholesale denied and its appalling," Gunness said in a voice choked with emotion, before burying his face in his hands and sobbing uncontrollably.

Int'l experts reach MH17 crash site

AFP, Rozspine

Explosions rang out near the crash site of downed flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine yesterday as international investigators arrived for the first time in nearly a week after Kiev announced a surprise one-day halt to its offensive against rebels.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's parliament yesterday voted not to accept the resignation of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, meaning he will remain at the helm of the strife-torn ex-Soviet state. Yatsenyuk dramatically announced his resignation last week in protest at the collapse of his ruling coalition, sparking fears of a political crisis.

A small team of Dutch and Australian experts accompanied by international monitors reached the vast site of the doomed Malaysia Airlines jet after days of fierce fighting between government forces and rebels had stopped them reaching the area.

Ukraine's military had earlier announced a "day of quiet" across the entire east after a plea from UN chief Ban Ki-moon to halt fighting in the area of the crash, where remains from some of the 298 victims lie festering in the sun some two weeks after the jet was shot down over rebel territory.

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Despite the brief lull, the death toll continued to climb, with Ukraine's army saying 11 soldiers were killed over the past 24 hours and local authorities saying that clashes in the rebel stronghold of Lugansk left three civilians dead in the same period.



After four years and five months, only empty egg cases were left behind.



and again and again, past the point that anybody expected she'd persist."



The previous brooding record was held by a giant red shrimp, which protects its eggs for 20 months.

female octopus's life.

He added she quite possibly ate nothing for the whole 53 months.

Dr Robison believes the icy temperature at these depths - about 3C - is what governs the extraordinary brooding routine.

The previous record for the longest known brooding time was 20 months, and belonged to a giant red shrimp.

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Boehner told his fellow lawmakers that Obama violated the country's founding document by not adhering rigidly to the wording of the law when implementing the health reform

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