

## ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

### Turkey, Qatar slam 'double standards'

AFP, Doha

The foreign ministers of Turkey and Qatar yesterday accused the international community of "double standards" in its reaction to escalating conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Qatar's top diplomat Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said the two governments -- both Western allies -- "reaffirm our complete rejection of responding to the crisis with double standards when it comes to human life".

"It is not permissible to condemn the killing of civilians in one context and justify it in another," Al-Thani said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said: "The failure of some American and north European countries to condemn and prevent the destruction ... constitutes a very serious double standard and plays a destabilising role."



A woman walks carrying an infant in the playground of a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) agency that has been converted into a shelter for displaced Palestinians in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, amid the ongoing battles between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'This way I will recognise them'

Gaza families wear ID bracelets to avoid burial in mass graves

REUTERS, Gaza

With so many bodies, Palestinians in Gaza are burying the unidentified dead in mass graves, with a number instead of a name, residents say. Now some families are using bracelets in the hope of finding their loved ones should they be killed.

The El-Daba family has tried to reduce the risk of being struck down during the heaviest-ever Israeli bombardment of Gaza. Israel launched the air strikes after Hamas attacked Israeli towns on October 7 in a rampage that killed 1,400 people and hostages were taken.

Ali El-Daba, 40, said he had seen bodies ripped apart by the bombing and were unrecognisable.

He said he decided to divide his family to prevent them from all dying in a single strike. He said his wife Lina, 42, kept two of their sons and two daughters in Gaza City in the north and he moved to Khan Younis in the south with three other children.

El-Daba said he was preparing for the worst. He bought blue string bracelets for his family members and tied them around both wrists. "If something happens," he said, "this way I will recognise them."

Other Palestinian families were also buying or making bracelets for their children or writing their names on their arms.

Mass burials have been authorised by local clerics. Before burial, medics keep pictures and blood samples of

the dead and give them numbers.

The Israeli military has told people to leave the north of the Gaza Strip, one of the most densely populated places in the world, and head south because it is safer. But air strikes have hit across the Hamas-ruled enclave.

An Israeli military spokesperson said: "The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) has been encouraging residents of the northern Gaza Strip to move southward and not to stay in the vicinity of Hamas targets within Gaza City."

"But, ultimately, Hamas has entrenched itself among the civilian population. So wherever a Hamas target arises, the IDF will strike at it in order to thwart the terrorist capabilities of the group."

## India to resume some visa services in Canada

REUTERS

India will resume some visa services in Canada with effect from October 26, its High Commission said yesterday, in a move that could reduce tensions caused by the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in Canada.

India last month suspended new visas for Canadians and asked Canada to reduce its diplomatic presence after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cited what he said was credible evidence of a potential link between Indian agents and the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen, in a Vancouver suburb in June.

Canada subsequently withdrew 41 diplomats. India denies any connection to the shooting.

Yesterday, the Indian High Commission said it had decided to resume issuing some categories of visas after reviewing the security situation and taking into account recent Canadian measures, which it did not enumerate.

It said it would resume issuing standard entry visas as well as business, medical and conference visas.

On Sunday, Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar said visa services to Canada could resume if India sees progress in the safety of Indian diplomats in Canada.

It had attributed the suspension to "safety and security considerations" -- a point the media statement underscored.

"If we see progress in safety of our diplomats in Canada, we would like to resume issuance of visas there," Jaishankar said.

## MELTING GLACIERS, SEVERE HEAT UN report warns of catastrophic risks to Earth systems

AFP, Washington

are moving dangerously close to the brink of multiple risk tipping points that could destroy the very systems that our life depends on," said Zita Sebesvari, the report's lead author.

For example: underground water reservoirs represent an essential freshwater resource around the world and today



The Interconnected Disaster Risks Report identifies thresholds it calls "risk tipping points," defined as "the moment at which a given socioecological system is no longer able to buffer risks and provide its expected function" -- after which the risk of catastrophe increases significantly.

It focuses on six areas that connect the physical and natural world with human society: accelerating extinctions, groundwater depletion, mountain glacial melt, space debris, unbearable heat and an "insurable" future.

"As we indiscriminately extract our water resources, damage nature and biodiversity, and pollute both Earth and space, we

mitigate half of the losses of agriculture caused by droughts, which are being exacerbated by climate change.

But aquifers themselves are now depleting faster than they can be naturally replenished: Saudi Arabia has already crossed the groundwater risk tipping point while India isn't far behind.

In the case of accelerating extinctions, the report highlights the cascading effects of extinctions throughout food chains.

"The gopher tortoise, which is threatened with extinction, digs burrows that are used by more than 350 other species for breeding, feeding, protection from predators and avoiding extreme temperatures," the report said.

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24th October 2023,  
2.00 am

TO  
28th October 2023,  
5.00 pm

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