

Aid system for Gaza ‘geared to fail’: UN

AFP, United Nations

The UN agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) warned Monday that the limited number of aid trucks entering Gaza were insufficient to meet the “unprecedented humanitarian needs” in the territory.

“The handful of convoys being allowed through Rafah is nothing compared to the needs of over two million people trapped in Gaza,” UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini told the UNSC, referring to the sole border crossing between Gaza and Egypt.

Israel has unleashed a massive bombing campaign on Hamas run Gaza after gunmen stormed across the border on October 7, killing 1,400 people, mostly civilians, and seizing 230 hostages, according to Israeli officials.

The strikes have flattened thousands of buildings and killed over 8,000 people, also mostly civilians.

Yemen’s rebels claim drone attack on Israel

AFP, Sanaa

Yemen’s Iran-backed Huthi rebels fired drones towards Israel yesterday in retaliation for its war against Hamas, a senior official from the group said.

“These drones belong to the state of Yemen,” Abdelaziz bin Habtour, prime minister of the Huthi government, said when asked about the launch towards Eilat in Israel.

The Huthis, who seized Yemen’s capital Sanaa in 2014 and control large swathes of the country, are “part of the axis of resistance” against Israel and are fighting with “words and drones”, he added.

Israel’s military earlier reported a “hostile aircraft intrusion” that set off warning sirens in the area of Eilat, a resort town on the Red Sea.

“There is no threat in this region and no danger,” Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari told a separate televised briefing.

Israel blamed the Huthis for a similar drone attack on Friday in which its aircraft intercepted “hostile targets” headed for southern Israel.

Six people were lightly injured in neighbouring Egypt when debris hit a building in the Sinai resort of Taba, just across the border from Eilat.

INDIA’S MANIPUR

Armed militants kill police officer, ambush convoy

REUTERS, Guwahati

Armed militants shot dead a senior police officer and wounded two others in separate attacks in India’s Manipur yesterday, officials said, the latest episodes of violence in the restive state where ethnic clashes have killed at least 180 people this year.

A police spokesperson said militants opened fire at a sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) while the officer was overseeing the construction of a helipad in Moreh, a trading town on the border with Myanmar.

Ethnic clashes erupted in the northeastern state on May 3 as members of the majority Meitei ethnic group and minority Kuki tribal fought over sharing government benefits and quotas in jobs and education.

Sporadic violence has continued since the peak of the clashes, despite tens of thousands of extra security personnel being deployed, marking a rare security failure for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government in a state ruled by his Bharatiya Janata Party.

The police spokesperson said militants that attacked the senior official belonged to the Kuki community. No arrests have been made so far. The Meitei make up 53 percent of Manipur’s population, while the Kuki account for 16 percent.

In a separate incident, militants ambushed a security convoy near village Sinam in Tengnoupal district injuring two policemen. “Both the injured were shifted to a local hospital with multiple bullet injuries,” a senior police official told Reuters by telephone.



Palestinians transport bodies of people killed by Israeli forces during Israel’s ground invasion, on a donkey-drawn cart, near a hospital in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS Attacks on US forces risk conflict with Iran

AFP, Washington

Repeated attacks on American troops in the Middle East risk drawing the United States into a conflict with Iran even as Washington strives to prevent fighting between Israel and Hamas from spiralling into a regional war.

The United States has blamed the spike in rocket and drone attacks – at least 14 in Iraq and nine in Syria since October 17 – on Iran-backed forces, and carried out strikes last week in Syria on sites the Pentagon said were linked to Tehran.

Washington has massive firepower at its disposal but its military response to the attacks has so far been limited to those strikes – which the Pentagon said did not appear to have caused casualties – in a potential bid to head off a broader conflict.

“We are concerned about all elements of Iran’s threat network increasing their attacks in a way that risks miscalculation, or tipping the region into war,” a senior US defense official said Monday.

“Everybody loses in a regional war, which is why we’re working through partners, with allies, working the phone lines, increasing posture to make clear our desire to prevent regional conflict,” the official said.

Washington says the attacks on its troops are separate from the current Israel-Hamas conflict that began earlier this month when the group carried out a shock cross-border attack from Gaza that Israeli

officials say killed more than 1,400 people.

But Iran said Monday that the attacks on US forces are the result of “wrong American policies” including support for Israel, whose retaliatory bombardment has killed more than 8,300 people, according to the Gaza health ministry.

There are roughly 2,500 American troops in Iraq and some 900 in Syria as part of efforts to

US Iran escalation due to spillover from the Israel-Hamas war,” either at Tehran’s direction or because its proxies decide to on their own, said Jeffrey Martini, a senior defense researcher at RAND.

Iran has proxy forces in both Iraq and Syria that have repeatedly targeted American troops in the past – something that had stopped prior to recent events due to Washington reaching “an



prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State jihadist group, which once held significant territory in both countries.

The damage from the recent attacks on those forces has been limited so far – 21 American personnel suffered minor injuries and a contractor died of a cardiac event while sheltering during a false alarm – but there is significant potential for things to get worse.

“There is substantial risk for

informal understanding with Iran on reducing regional tensions,” Martini said.

Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the current situation differs from past spates of attacks because “all of Iran’s proxies seem to be getting into the act simultaneously,” increasing “the likelihood of something going wrong.”

GAZA WAR Open hatred of Jews surges globally

REUTERS, London

In Los Angeles, a man screaming “kill Jews” attempts to break into a family’s home. In London, girls in a playground are told they are “stinking Jews” and should stay off the slide. In China, posts likening Jews to parasites, vampires or snakes proliferate on social media, attracting thousands of “likes”.

These are examples of incidents of antisemitism, which have surged globally since the attack by Hamas gunmen on southern Israel on October 7 and subsequent war on the group launched by Israel in the Gaza Strip.

“This is the scariest time to be Jewish since World War Two. We have had problems before, but things have never been this bad in my lifetime,” said Anthony Adler, 62, speaking outside a synagogue where he had gone to pray in Golders Green, a London neighbourhood with a large Jewish community.

Adler, who runs three Jewish schools, temporarily closed two of them after October 7 because of fears of attacks on pupils, and has beefed up security at all three.

“The biggest fear is that there will be a random attack on our community, on our families and our children,” he said.

No ceasefire in Gaza, no votes

Muslim Americans tell Biden

REUTERS, Washington

Muslim Americans and some Democratic Party activists say they will work to mobilize millions of Muslim voters to withhold donations and votes towards President Joe Biden’s 2024 reelection unless he takes immediate steps to secure a Gaza ceasefire. The National Muslim Democratic Council, which includes Democratic Party leaders from hotly contested states likely to decide the election, such as Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania, called on Biden to use his influence with Israel to broker a ceasefire by 5:00 pm ET (2100 GMT) yesterday. In an open letter entitled “2023 Ceasefire Ultimatum,” the Muslim leaders pledged to mobilize Muslim voters to “withhold endorsement, support, or votes for any candidate who endorses the Israeli offensive against the Palestinian people.” “Your administration’s unconditional support, encompassing funding and armaments, has played a significant role in perpetuating the violence that is causing civilian casualties and has eroded trust in voters who previously put their faith in you,” the council wrote. Former US Representative Keith Ellison, Minnesota’s attorney general and the first Muslim elected to Congress, and Representative Andre Carson of Indiana are the organization’s founding co-chairs. The letter is the latest sign of growing anger and frustration in Arab and Muslim American communities about Biden’s failure to condemn Israel’s attacks on the Gaza Strip.

India opposition accuses govt of trying to hack MPs’ iPhones

REUTERS, New Delhi



Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi yesterday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government of trying to hack into senior opposition politicians’ mobile phones, after they reported receiving warning messages from Apple. Some of the lawmakers shared

screenshots on social media of a notification quoting the iPhone manufacturer as saying: “Apple believes you are being targeted by state-sponsored attackers who are trying to remotely compromise the iPhone associated with your Apple ID”. “Hack us all you want,” Gandhi told a news conference in New Delhi, in reference to Modi. “But we (opposition) will not stop questioning you.” Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw expressed concern at the lawmakers’ statements and said the government had asked Apple to join its investigation into the matter. The company said it did not attribute the threat notifications to “any specific state-sponsored attacker”. State-sponsored attacks were evolving over time. Detecting them “relies on threat intelligence signals that are often imperfect and incomplete,” it said. “It’s possible that some Apple threat notifications may be false alarms, or that some attacks are not detected,” Jairam Ramesh, spokesperson for Gandhi’s Congress party, called Apple’s clarification a “long winded non-denial” of a security breach. In 2021, India was rocked by reports that the government used Israeli-made Pegasus spyware to snoop on scores of journalists, activists and politicians, including Gandhi.

French police open fire on woman making ‘threats’

AFP, Paris

French police yesterday shot and seriously wounded an unarmed woman who was making threats at a train station in Paris during morning rush hour, police and prosecutors said..

According to witnesses the woman, who was completely veiled, shouted “Allahu Akbar” (“God is Greatest”) and “made threats”, a police source said, adding that “police fired because they feared for their safety”.

After passengers on a train alerted police, agents managed to “isolate” the woman at the Bibliotheque Francois Mitterrand station which was evacuated, the source said.

She “refused to follow police orders” and threatened “to blow herself up”, the prosecutor’s office said. A police officer then fired a single shot, inflicting a life-threatening injury to her abdomen.



A bulldozer is being used to demolish houses of Afghan refugees, during an operation by local authorities at a refugee camp in Islamabad, Pakistan yesterday. More than 10,000 Afghans living in Pakistan rushed to the borders yesterday, just hours before a deadline for 1.7 million people to leave Pakistan voluntarily or face arrest and deportation.

PHOTO: AFP