

## GAZA OFFENSIVE Anti-Muslim incidents in US hit record high in 2023

Reported discrimination and attacks against Muslims and Palestinians reached a record high in the US in 2023, driven by rising Islamophobia and bias as Israel's offensive in Gaza raged late in the year, data from an advocacy group showed yesterday.

Complaints totaled 8,061 in 2023, a 56 percent rise from the year before and the highest since the Council on American-Islamic Relations began records nearly 30 years ago.

About 3,600 of those incidents occurred from October to December, CAIR said.

Human rights advocates have similarly reported a global rise in Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian bias and antisemitism since the latest eruption of conflict in the Middle East.



Palestinian emergency personnel recover a casualty at the site of an Israeli airstrike on a building in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. The US said Monday that it had expressed concerns to Israel about its planned offensive in Gaza's crowded southern city of Rafah, and that Israel had pledged to "take these concerns into account".

PHOTO: AFP

## Fire at Istanbul apartment block kills 29

Five arrested

AFP, ISTANBUL

A fire killed at least 29 people in a 16-storey residential building in Istanbul yesterday, the governor of Turkey's economic capital said.

"The number of people who lost their lives in the fire... in Gayrettepe of Besiktas district has increased to 29," Governor Davut Gul's office said in a statement, referring to the Istanbul neighbourhood.

"One person hurt in the fire was still being treated in hospital," it added. The fire began at 12:47 am (0947 GMT), the office said, and was only brought under control by firefighters hours later.

Television images showed flames and a column of thick smoke rushing from upper-storey windows.

The number of people reported killed and hurt rose throughout the afternoon in a string of statements from governor's office, as more victims succumbed to their injuries.

The blaze had broken out during construction work in the first and second floors below ground, which housed a nightclub, Gul told reporters.

"An investigation has been opened into the fire in Gayrettepe," Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya posted on X. Five people have been arrested at the scene in connection with the blaze.

# Gaza situation 'beyond catastrophic'

Says UN agency chief as everybody in the Palestinian enclave looking for food

AFP, Jerusalem

Dominic Allen, the head of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) covering Gaza, said he was "terrified" of what could happen if the Israeli offensive goes on any longer.

He told AFP the situation was "beyond catastrophic" with gaunt and starving people spending their days searching for food, and medicine running desperately low.

The British-born official, who spent a week in the besieged Palestinian territory last month, said even when aid got through



**People are on the verge of famine right now in Gaza. This is caused by a huge backlog in supplies and assistance.**

the border, there were still major problems getting it to those who need it most, particularly women and girls.

"What I saw across the Gaza Strip is beyond catastrophic. I have been to Gaza many times before this war, and what I saw (this time) was truly heartbreaking. Gaza is dust," Allen said.

"Everybody we drove by and many we spoke to were gaunt, starving, hungry and looking frail. Everybody was looking for food. We're really worried about pregnant women and breastfeeding women."

Doctors and midwives at the Al-Sahaba Maternity Hospital (the only one functioning in the north) said women are giving birth to smaller babies caused by malnutrition, dehydration and fear.

"They're telling us anecdotally that they are seeing no normal-sized babies being delivered in Gaza, an increase in the number of stillborns and neo-natal deaths as well," Allen said.

"Delivery rooms are overwhelmed. A midwife described women giving birth on the floor because they were at maximum capacity. They're having to use thread for umbilical ties."

The British-born official also said UNFPA has had a number of suppliers denied entry into Gaza at checkpoints and screenings. Access to the north is very challenging... many UN missions to the north have been denied over past months.

"People are on the verge of famine right now in Gaza. This is caused by a huge backlog in supplies and assistance," he said.

About delivering medicines to the Gaza Strip, Allen said: "We brought what they needed the most, the anaesthetics, the oxytocin (and other items that need to be kept cold) and put them in the back of our armoured vehicle and deliver them by hand to the hospital."

"They're asking for fuel. Their hospitals are running on fumes. One said if a patient needs surgery, they have to take a canister of gasoline or diesel (with them) to run the generator in the operating theatre. They lack some of the most basic items to help support and give safe birth care for mothers and babies."

Asked about Israel's planned offensive in Rafah, Allen said: "Every person I spoke to in Rafah is so fearful about what will come next for a potential ground incursion in Rafah (in the south)."

The unprecedented Israeli campaign has killed at least 32,916 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza yesterday.

## Pak ruling coalition wins Senate polls

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's ruling coalition seized a majority in Senate polls yesterday, unofficial results showed, after the election commission delayed the vote in a province controlled by loyalists of jailed ex-premier Imran Khan.

Polls for half the Senate's 96 seats are held every three years, elected by lawmakers from Pakistan's four provincial assemblies and the lower house of parliament.

Early results returned by provincial election commissions showed the ruling coalition had taken most of the seats that were up for grabs.

Eighteen senators from Punjab and Balochistan stood unopposed.

The results will be confirmed by the central election commission in the coming days.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) are expected to appoint the leader of the Senate, after securing the most seats.

So far they have not played a major role in the government, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party, taking only the presidential role for party patriarch Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of assassinated premier Benazir Bhutto. The vote in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly was postponed due to a delay in reserved seats for women and religious minorities being appointed, the EC said.

## Biden, Xi hold talks over phone to manage tension

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden and Xi Jinping spoke yesterday in a new bid to manage tensions between the United States and China, with top US officials to head shortly to Beijing, officials said. The telephone conversation was the two leaders' first direct interaction since a summit in November in California that saw a marked thaw in tone if not the long-term rivalry between the world's two largest economies. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen -- who have both voiced a willingness to find areas to work with China even while maintaining pressure -- will soon visit China. Yellen will leave in the coming days, while Blinken will travel in the coming weeks, a senior US official said. "Intense competition requires intense diplomacy to manage tensions, address misperceptions and prevent unintended conflict. And this call is one way to do that," the official said on condition of anonymity. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said that the two leaders had a "candid and in-depth exchange" on issues of common concern. Xi has solidified power at home and taken a tough approach in Asia, with a crackdown on freedoms in Hong Kong.

## SYRIA CONSULATE STRIKE Iran vows revenge on Israel Death toll rises to 13

AFP, Tehran



Iran yesterday warned its arch foe Israel that it will retaliate for an airstrike that killed seven Revolutionary Guards, two of them generals, and destroyed its consular annex building in the Syrian capital. Israel declined to comment on Monday's strike in Damascus, which fuelled Middle East tensions already

inflamed by the Gaza war and violence involving Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Iranian state media said 13 people were killed in the strike in which, according to Tehran's ambassador, Israeli F-35 fighter-jets fired six missiles that levelled the five-storey consular building adjacent to the embassy.

## CHINESE DRONE INCURSION Frontline island on alert: Taiwan

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan said yesterday that soldiers on one of its tiny frontline islands just off China's mainland were on heightened alert following provocations by Chinese civilian drones. Beijing claims democratic Taiwan as its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring the self-ruled island under its control. In addition to military pressure from Chinese warplanes and vessels that maintain a near-daily presence around the island, Taiwan has faced intrusions from civilian and unidentified drones that surveil and harass its troops. Taiwan's military said in a statement that soldiers stationed on Erdan island had been required to "increase their vigilance in surveillance" in response to "Chinese netizens frequently using drones to provoke". Erdan, which lies just five kilometres (three miles) from the Chinese coast, is part Taiwan's frontline Kinmen Island chain.

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Tender Notice No. 28.05.0000.231.07.030.24.230 Date: 02.04.2024

### e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of the following goods:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of goods	Tender last selling date & time	Tender closing/opening date & time	Procurement method
1.	967511	Supply of various AC and related services	16.04.2024, 13.00	17.04.2024, 10.15	LTM (NCT)
2.	967546	Supply of different goods for the National seminar 2023-2024 and related services	16.04.2024, 13.10	17.04.2024, 10.30	LTM (NCT)
3.	967681	Supply of refill of Gas Cylinder and related services	16.04.2024, 14.00	17.04.2024, 10.45	LTM (NCT)
4.	967718	Supply of repair of computer items and related services	17.04.2024, 14.15	18.04.2024, 10.15	LTM (NCT)

for any information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)) no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

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Memo no: 12.21.0000.007.03.41.23.4420 Date: 31 March 2024

### e-GP: Re-Tender Notice No. 20 (2023-2024)

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below:

Sl No	Package no.	Tender ID & Ref No	Description of goods	Tender Documents Last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing date & Time	Tender Opening date & Time
02.	PN GD-04	967950 & IRN : 41	Field Equipment 04 (Four) Items.	15.04.2024 10:00	15.04.2024 14:00	15.04.2024 14:00

The interested persons/firm may visit the website [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) to get the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP system portal is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP Help Desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Project Name: "Production of micro-propagated sapling of BARI Kola-1, BARI Kola-5 and G-9 banana varieties through tissue culture technique and Dissemination"

**(Md. Younus Ali)**  
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Deputy Director (In-Charge)  
On behalf of Director General