

Iran won't send forces to confront Israel Says foreign ministry

AFP, Tehran
Iran will not deploy forces to Lebanon or Gaza to confront Israel, its foreign ministry said yesterday, as Israeli strikes target its allies in the region.

"There is no need to send extra or volunteer forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran," said foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani, adding that Lebanon and fighters in the Palestinian territories "have the capability and strength to defend themselves against the aggression".

Israel has in recent days been mounting heavy air strikes in Lebanon against the so-called "axis of resistance", a network of Iran-aligned militant groups in the region, including in Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

"We have not received any request in this regard from any side, on the contrary, we are informed and are sure that they do not need the help of our forces," Kanani told reporters in Tehran.

Kanani nonetheless vowed that Israel "will not remain without reprimand and punishment for the crimes it has committed against Iranian people."



Palstinians carry a wounded man at the site of an Israeli strike on a residential building in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 41,615 people have been killed in the offensive, now in its 12th month. PHOTO: REUTERS

Two-thirds of Gaza buildings damaged: UN

AFP, Geneva
Two-thirds of the buildings in the Gaza Strip have been damaged or destroyed since the Gaza offensive began in October 2023, the United Nations said yesterday.

Updating its damage assessment, the UN Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) said very high-resolution imagery collected on September 3 and 6 showed a clear deterioration. "This analysis... shows that two-thirds of the total structures in the Gaza Strip have sustained damage," UNOSAT said.

"Those 66 percent of damaged buildings in the Gaza Strip account for 163,778 structures in total," it said. The last assessment, based on images from early July, determined that 63 percent of structures in Gaza had been damaged.

100,000 fled Lebanon for Syria due to Israeli strikes

Says UN refugee head, warns 'the outflow continues'

AFP, Geneva
Some 100,000 people have fled to Syria from Lebanon due to Israeli air strikes, a figure that has doubled in two days, the United Nations' refugee head said yesterday.

"The number of people who have crossed into Syria from Lebanon fleeing Israeli airstrikes -- Lebanese and Syrian nationals -- has reached 100,000," Filippo Grandi said on X.

"The outflow continues," he warned. He said his UN refugee agency (UNHCR) was "present at four crossing points, alongside local authorities and (the Syrian Red Crescent) to support new

arrivals". The mass displacement into war-torn Syria began a week ago, on September 23, the UNHCR told AFP on Saturday.

Israel has widened its attacks in recent days to include Lebanon as well as the Gaza Strip, targeting Iran's regional ally, Hezbollah.

Strikes on Hezbollah targets in Lebanon killed its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, on Friday.

In the last week, Israeli bombardment has killed more than 700 people in Lebanon, including 14 paramedics over a two-day period, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

By Friday, 30,000 people had crossed

into Syria, according to the UNHCR. Its representative in Syria, Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, said around 80 percent were Syrian nationals and 20 percent Lebanese.

"Most are women and children, although some males have crossed. About half are children and adolescents," he told reporters.

He stressed the fleeing people were "arriving in a country that has been suffering from its own crisis and violence for more than 13 years, as well as from economic collapse".

"People fleeing the bombing arrive in Syria exhausted, traumatised and in desperate need of help," he added.

Biden approves \$567m in defense support for Taiwan

REUTERS
US President Joe Biden on Sunday approved \$567 million in defense support for Taiwan, the White House said, the latest move by the United States to boost the island's military in the face of rising tensions with China.

The United States is Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier even in the absence of formal diplomatic ties. China has repeatedly demanded Washington stop selling weapons to Taipei, which it claims as its territory.

In a statement, the White House said Biden had delegated the Secretary of State the authority "to direct the drawdown of up to \$567 million in defense articles and services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training, to provide assistance to Taiwan".

It provided no further details. In April, Biden signed a hard-fought bill into law that provides billions of dollars of new US aid to Ukraine for its war with Russia, as well as for Israel and Taiwan.

Taipei has complained of delayed US arms deliveries, including for upgraded F-14 fighter jets. China, which views democratically-governed Taiwan as its own territory, has ramped up military and political pressure over the past five years to assert its claims, which Taipei strongly rejects.

Macron wanted to punish Britain for Brexit: UK ex-PM



AFP, London
French President Emmanuel Macron was a "positive nuisance" during acrimonious Brexit negotiations and wanted to punish the UK for leaving the EU, former British prime minister Boris Johnson has claimed.

In the latest excerpts from his memoir "Unleashed" due to be published next month, Johnson said the French leader saw Brexit as "a terrible snub to the EU and to his view of the world".

Johnson argues in the book, being serialised by the Daily Mail newspaper, that Macron tried to "put his Cuban-heeled bootie into Brexit Britain" over various issues during the protracted divorce talks.



Rescuers disembark a migrant in serious health condition at the port of La Restinga on the island of El Hierro, Spain yesterday. Rescue crews yesterday renewed the search for at least 48 migrants missing since their boat capsized off Spain's Canary Islands at the weekend, killing nine people. PHOTO: REUTERS

Taliban blame Pakistan after 'capture of key IS fighters'

AFP, Kabul
Taliban authorities captured "key members" of the Islamic State group responsible for recent deadly attacks across Afghanistan, a spokesman said yesterday, blaming neighbouring Pakistan for harbouring the organisation.

Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said "special forces" apprehended "key members of the insurgent group" which claimed a Kabul suicide bombing that killed six people this month.

He said the suicide attacker "infiltrated Afghanistan" from a training camp in Pakistan, while others arrested in a series of raids had also "recently returned" from there.

Japan's incoming PM Ishiba calls polls for Oct 27

REUTERS, Tokyo
Japan's incoming prime minister, Shigeru Ishiba, said yesterday he will call a general election for October 27 following his victory in one of the closest ever leadership races for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

The poll, which will come a year early and ahead of the US presidential election in November, will decide which party controls parliament's lower house. Lawmakers there will meet today to confirm him as the country's next prime minister.

"It is important for the new administration to be judged by the people as soon as possible," Ishiba said at a press conference at LDP headquarters in Tokyo.

Japanese shares fell more than 4 percent in early trading yesterday as the yen strengthened and Japanese government bonds jumped in reaction to the leadership win by Ishiba, who is seen as a monetary policy hawk.

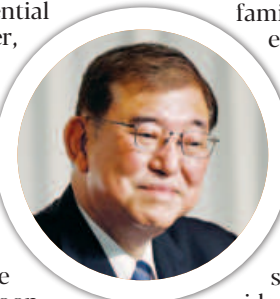
Ishiba yesterday began picking

government and party officials who will contest the upcoming polls with him.

So far those include two rival candidates in the leadership race, Katsunobu Kato as finance minister and Yoshimasa Hayashi to stay on as chief cabinet secretary, a pivotal post that includes the role of top government spokesman, two sources familiar with the appointments earlier told Reuters.

A close Ishiba ally, Takeshi Iwaya, a former defence chief, will take over as foreign minister, while Gen Nakatani will return to the defence ministry, a position he held in 2016, said the sources, who asked not to be identified because they are not authorized to speak to the media, confirming earlier media reports.

Yoichi Muto, a former junior minister, will take charge at the economy, trade and industry ministry, a separate source said. Not included in his picks, however, is Sanae Takaichi, the hardline conservative he beat by 215 votes to 194 on Friday in the closest leadership election in almost seven decades.





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