

## 25 held after attack on UN peacekeepers Says Lebanon

AFP, Beirut

Lebanese authorities yesterday said that more than 25 people have been arrested following an attack on a United Nations convoy that wounded two peacekeepers, including the force's outgoing deputy commander.

UN and Lebanese officials have condemned Friday's attack, which came as Hezbollah supporters blocked the road to the country's only international airport for a second night over a decision to bar two Iranian flights from landing.

The UN Interim Force in Lebanon has demanded a "full and immediate investigation" after one of its vehicles was set on fire in the attack, which wounded outgoing deputy force commander Chok Bahadur Dhakal, who was heading home to Nepal after completing his mission.

## ROHINGYA 'GENOCIDE' Argentine court issues warrants for Myanmar officials

AFP, Buenos Aires

An Argentine court has issued arrest warrants for the head of Myanmar's military junta and former officials including Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi over alleged "genocide and crimes against humanity" targeting the Rohingya minority group.

The court ruling, seen by AFP on Friday, was issued in response to a complaint filed in Argentina by a Rohingya advocacy group.

It was filed under the principle of "universal jurisdiction" by which countries can prosecute crimes regardless of where they occurred if, like genocide or war crimes, they are considered sufficiently serious.

Warrants were issued for military and civilian officials including current junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, ex-president Htin Kyaw, and former elected civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi in her capacity as "state counsellor" from 2016 to 2021, when she was ousted in a coup.

In that time, she has been accused by detractors of doing little to stop the abuse of Rohingya.

Hlaing is also under investigation by the International Criminal Court, while the International Court of Justice -- the UN's highest tribunal -- is examining a complaint of "genocide" against Myanmar.

The Rohingyas, mainly Muslims, are originally from Buddhist majority Myanmar where, according to Amnesty International, they have been subjected to a regime akin to apartheid.

Beginning in 2017, many have been forced to flee persecution and violence to richer and predominantly Muslim Malaysia, or to refugee camps in Bangladesh, where about a million of them live.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the 2021 coup that sparked renewed clashes with ethnic rebels and saw the formation of dozens of "People's Defense Forces" now battling the junta.

In her ruling issued Thursday, Judge Maria Servini said the allegations listed in the complaint "constitute crimes that violate human rights recognized in various international criminal law instruments, subscribed to by most countries in the world."

They included "internationally known crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity, committed by the political and military authorities in power in that country," she added.



Former Palestinian prisoners, released as part of the sixth hostage-prisoner exchange, are welcomed by friends and relatives upon arriving at the European Hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Defying truce, Israel still destroying Gaza homes

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Israel has destroyed dozens of homes in Rafah, southern Gaza, despite the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, satellite imagery analysis conducted by Al Jazeera's fact-checking agency, Sanad, has revealed.

The crossing between Egypt and Gaza at Rafah, which has served as a critical lifeline into the enclave for decades, was closed by Israel in May 2024.

Since seizing control of the border area, in breach of its 1979 peace agreement with Egypt, Israel has been digging in the Philadelphia Corridor, a 14-km (8.7-mile) strip of land along the boundary between Egypt and Gaza.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has emphasised the importance of remaining in the corridor, despite the illegality.

According to Sanad, the images, taken between January 19 and 21, show the Israeli army to have built sand fortifications across the Rafah crossing.

Additionally, the agency said, a new military outpost has been established just to the north of the crossing.

The army has also constructed a 1.7 km (1.1-mile) road surrounding the crossing, running parallel to the sand fortifications.

Israeli forces have also kept thousands of Rafah residents from their homes, Israeli vehicles shooting at dozens of people trying to go home, injuring and killing them.

Israel, in essence, is constructing a "buffer zone that allows you to push any kind of fighters or, in technical terms, any hostile within an otherwise friendly environment away from you", Palestinian defence analyst Hamze Attar said.

As part of the ceasefire, which began on January 19, Israel agreed to reduce its forces in the area before completely withdrawing its troops by the 50th day of the agreement.

However, analysis carried out

on satellite images taken between January 19 and February 1 shows the Israeli army has continued construction in the area, demolishing and bulldozing 64 buildings within the city of Rafah, specifically in the as-Salam, Idari, and Tel Zaarab neighbourhoods.

The demolitions occurred only 700 metres from the Egyptian border. At the same time, Sanad also

Meanwhile, Hamas expects



200,000 people sheltering in the al-Mawasi Khan Younis area and other locations across Gaza, unable to come home.

According to him, initial estimates indicate that 90 percent of Rafah's homes have been damaged, with approximately 52,000 units suffering various degrees of destruction.

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