

Jordanian King Blames Israel for Provoking Palestinians

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*The King of Jordan, **Abdallah II**, spoke with UN **Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** and said that the repeated Israeli actions and provocations against the Palestinian people have led to the current escalations. The royal court wrote on Twitter on Monday that Israeli actions are pushing the region towards more tension.*

Jordan and Israel have a peace treaty signed between them and successfully lasting for 27 years. King Abdullah II said that there is no alternative to a political solution of a just and comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution and guarantee the establishment of an independent, sovereign, and viable Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The King drew attention to Sheikh Jarrah, a neighborhood in East Jerusalem, of Palestine refugees, who lost both their original homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict. In 1956, these refugee families moved into Sheikh Jarrah with the support of the Jordanian government and material assistance from the UN following their displacement. They have resided in their homes for nearly seventy years, but are now at risk of being displaced by the Israeli government in a forced eviction which is ethnic cleansing.

Jordan’s **Queen Rania** is Palestinian, and the population is overwhelmingly ethnically Palestinian.

Ambassador Munir Akram, Pakistan’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations:

“The solidarity required by our Palestinian brothers today is a solidarity based on principle. Israel has no business to be in the occupied territories of Palestine; to be in E-Jerusalem; to attack Gaza; to launch fascist movements, lynching and killing Palestinians.”

The Gaza-based Hamas movement said its actions were a response to the Israeli policy of forced displacement of Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem and the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli forces last week, followed by Israel missing a Hamas deadline to withdraw its forces from the mosque compound.

Israeli airstrikes and artillery barrages on Gaza killed at least 198 Palestinians, including 93 women and children, between last Monday and Sunday evening, with more than 1,000 wounded. In Israel, at least 10 were killed, including two children.

Israeli officials and society are surprised at the brutal clashes between Jews and Israeli-Arabs. 21% of the population of Israel is made up of non-Jewish citizens who are Palestinian Christians and Muslims. Israel had hoped their Arabs had forgotten their Palestinian ethnicity while living since 1948 in Israel, but the civilian suffering in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank awakened their solidarity with their countrymen and has now fanned fears of civil war.

Fr. Ibrahim Faltas, of the Franciscan order, and director of the Christian schools of the Holy Land, said

“We are on the verge of a civil war” while we are witnessing “helpless in the face of unprecedented man against man violence” that explodes “with all the anger on both sides, young Israelis and young Arabs.”

Faltas blames the violence on the failure of the 1967 resolutions and the indifference of the international community, and suggests we are now faced with an angry population, on both sides, trying to obtain justice, but in the absence of an impartial judge.

Cars have been burned, people lynched, houses burned, stones thrown and places of worship attacked in Haifa, Nazareth, Ramle, Lod, Cana, Askelon Tel Aviv, Nablus, Bethlehem, Jenin, Bethany, and Hebron. Faltas said,

“It’s a real war between Jewish settlers and Israeli Arabs, in Israeli cities, and the same is happening in the occupied areas of the West Bank”.

General strikes are planned for Tuesday in Arab towns within Israel and Palestinian towns in the West Bank.

Egypt is looking to repeat its successful mediation which resulted in a ceasefire in the 2014 conflict between Israel and Gaza. Egypt also has a peace treaty with Israel, successfully lasting 42 years. Egypt, Jordan, and the rest of the Arab world are committed to a two-state solution for Palestine, in line with the UN resolutions.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed for a ceasefire in Sunday’s UN Security Council meeting, the third in a week. However, the US blocked a joint statement calling for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which was the third such block by the US. The unsuccessful negotiations were led by Norway, China, and Tunisia, with China previously urging the US to be fair, but the US chose to be the sole dissenting voice on the issue.

The US Biden administration approved the potential sale of \$735 million in precision-guided weapons to Israel, and the US Congress is expected to approve the deal, regardless of the raging conflict, and significant loss of civilian lives.

US **Secretary of State Antony Blinken**, said while in Denmark yesterday, that while the US was not demanding a ceasefire, they were ready to help should Israel and Hamas come to an end in hostilities. US President Biden, and Blinken, are determined to steer clear of any US involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, instead of wanting to focus on Russia

and China issues.

On Saturday, Biden spoke with Israeli **Prime Minister Netanyahu** and stated the US supports Israel's right to self-defense and focused on the Israeli civilians killed by rocket attacks, despite the Palestinian civilian deaths being 20 times more than Israeli. Left-leaning Democrats have complained that Biden did not use the call to urge a ceasefire.

Senator Bernie Sanders has criticized Israeli's attack on Gaza. He tweeted on Sunday,

"The devastation in Gaza is unconscionable. We must urge an immediate ceasefire. The killing of Palestinians and Israelis must end. We must also take a hard look at nearly \$4 billion a year in military aid to Israel. It is illegal for US aid to support human rights violations."

Americans marched in support of Palestine in cities across the US over the last weekend. Younger Americans are demanding human rights for Palestinians, and are aware of the Human Rights Watch report of April 27 labeling Israel an Apartheid state. While the older American generations were comfortable with turning a blind eye to the suffering in Palestine, the younger generation who are the leaders of tomorrow are demanding justice.

Multiple Israeli military strikes may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity according to Amnesty International who has asked the International Criminal Court to open an investigation on residential strikes without prior warning.

"Under international humanitarian law, all parties must distinguish between military targets and civilian objects and direct their attacks only at military objectives. When carrying out attacks, parties must take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians," said **Saleh Higazi**, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

An Israeli airstrike on Saturday destroyed a 12-story building in Gaza which was home to the Associated Press and Al Jazeera news agencies. Israel faced global condemnation and accusation of preventing the freedom of the press. Israeli officials claimed the building housed terrorist assets, but Netanyahu provided no evidence of that, and Blinken also said he had not seen any evidence that Hamas was in the building.

The Abraham Accords normalized relations between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain in 2020. At the time, Israel was at peace under Netanyahu, and his only big problem was avoiding conviction in a corruption trial and possible jail sentence. Recently, the Israeli police, under Netanyahu's direction brutally cracked down on peaceful unarmed protesters in East Jerusalem protesting ethnic cleansing. That escalated into the current conflict with rockets met with airstrikes, and the Israeli citizenry divided.

The Trump administration had encouraged Netanyahu to pursue agreements with Arab countries, instead of solving its domestic conflict with Palestinians. Further agreements with Arab countries now look impossible, and the current conflict has brought a renewed sense of unity among Arabs from Yemen to Morocco.

In a last-ditch effort to cling to power, and fend off the corruption cases against him, Netanyahu sought allies among the Israeli far-right, which is insisting on further land grabs and ethnic cleansing, and that was the spark that ignited the current conflict. In the end, Netanyahu's self-preservation tactic may be the straw that broke the camel's back.

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