



Morocco intervenes after record migrant influx to Spanish enclaves

Shattered Australia is becoming a 'hermit nation', warn experts

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GAZA CITY: Palestinian mourners gather around bodies of members of the Abu Hatab and Al-Hadidi families during a funeral procession in Gaza city. —AFP photos

Bereaved Gaza father clutches wounded boy

'No one left but you': Al-Hadidi loses wife and other sons in Zionist air strikes

GAZA CITY: Inside a Gaza hospital, Mohammad Al-Hadidi cradled his baby boy Omar—his only surviving child after Zionist air strikes killed his wife and four other sons in the night. "I have no one left in the world but you," the 37-year-old father said. After the strikes, rescue workers pulled the five-month-old from the arms of his dead mother early Saturday, one of his tiny legs fractured in three places.

All his other children—Suhayb, 13, Yahya, 11, Abderrahman, 8, and Osama, 6 — perished in the bombing along with their mother Maha Abu Hattab, 36. "They've gone to find God, we don't want to stay around here for much longer," the bereaved father said, sobbing. "We will meet them soon, you and I. Oh God, let it not be too long." Sitting on the edge of a hospital bed, Hadidi carefully kissed his child's cheek.

In his arms, Omar rested peacefully, his right leg poking out of his romper in a plaster cast. Under a crown of tiny brown curls, his eyelids were bruised dark and swollen, and his face covered in scratches.

'Begged to stay the night'
Saturday's strikes hit at the conclusion of Eid Al-Fitr, usually a time of joy when Muslim families gather to mark the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. On Friday, Omar's mother had taken him and his brothers to visit their cousins nearby in the Shati refugee camp outside Gaza City where they all lived. "The kids put on their Eid clothes, took their toys and headed off to their uncle's house to celebrate," Hadidi said.

"They called in the evening to beg to stay the night and I said OK," Hadidi then paused to gather himself as he recalled what would become a fateful night.

I slept "at home alone... (and) woke up suddenly to the sound of bombing," he said. Soon a neighbor called to say a Zionist missile had hit his brother-in-law's home. "I hurried over as fast as I could, but when I got there the home was rubble, and rescue workers were pulling out bodies." His sister-in-law and four of her children were also

among the dead.
A video widely shared on social media shows Hadidi clutching his son to his chest, overwhelmed that he had survived.

'God was preparing us'
Hadidi gently touched his son's face. "All my other sons breastfed, except for Omar who refused from day one," he said wistfully. "God was preparing us and we had no idea." Zionist air raids have killed 200 people including 59 children in the besieged coastal enclave since last Monday.

Hadidi accused the Jewish state of deliberately targeting children. "What have they done to deserve being bombed without any warning to evacuate the home?"

But human rights groups have repeatedly condemned strikes that have killed women and children in the overcrowded territory of some two million inhabitants. The Gaza-based Mezan Centre for Human Rights says 341 residential units have been damaged in the



GAZA CITY: A nurse holds Omar Al-Hadidi, who was pulled alive from under the rubble while seven other family members perished, at Al-Shifa Hospital, after Zionist air strike struck Al-Shati Refugee Camp without advance warning during the night.

aerial bombardment. Even with air strikes ongoing, Hadidi said he was waiting for his baby to be declared well enough for him to take him home. "I will care for him and bring him up on my own," he said. —AFP

With Iran's help, Hamas can muster ample firepower

PARIS: Hamas can count on abundant stocks of rockets and other weaponry in its ongoing conflict with Zionist entity, with the Palestinian militant group boasting an even deeper and more effective arsenal than in previous standoffs. Analysts say Hamas is able to fire more frequently and further into Zionist state compared with past conflicts over Gaza, partly due to backing from Iran.

Here is a look at Hamas' arsenal, how it has evolved in recent years and what effect it has on the current conflict. What has this conflict shown us? The Islamist movement, in power in Gaza despite a Zionist blockade for nearly 15 years, has surprised Tel Aviv and other Jewish cities with the violence and frequency of its strikes.

More than 3,000 rockets have fallen on Zionist state in the past week, a pace aimed at overwhelming Zionist Iron Dome missile defense system. For the first time, Hamas used the Ayyash 250 missile, which has a range of 250 kilometers (155 miles).

"The most impressive fact of this war is just how many rockets they managed to fire in a short period of time and simultaneously," said Fabian Hinz, an independent analyst who focuses on missiles in the

Middle East. "Hamas's firepower, both in terms of number of rockets and their reach, far surpasses earlier escalations, and Zionist retaliation has been swift and devastating," said the International Crisis Group (ICG).

"Militarily, occupation forces were caught off guard by Hamas' expanded operational capacity to fire so many rockets at once and at such distant targets," it added.

Who is supplying arms to Hamas?

Until a few years ago, Sudan supported the Palestinians, notably through arms assembly units smuggled through Egypt. But the 2020 peace agreement between Sudan and the Zionist entity following the ousting of its leader Omar Al-Bashir brought the arrangement to an end.

Syria under President Bashar Al-Assad also supplied rockets in the past. But now Iran is by far the most significant supporter of the Palestinian groups. "Support for regional actors has become a prime pillar of Iran's military posture," the International Institute for Strategic Studies said in a report last month. "Iran's proliferation activity has focused on the Syrian regime and non-state actors in Gaza, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and



Rockets are launched towards Zionist state from the southern Gaza Strip. —AFP

Yemen," it added.
A closely-followed weapons expert who remains anonymous, but publishes findings on Twitter as Calibre Obscura, told AFP the Iranian approach was not just about transferring weapons. "They are about transferring know-how, design templates and best practice," said the analyst.

The rockets "are designed especially for proxy forces to be simply manufactured and easily to be put together with simple tools".

How deep are Hamas' stocks?

According to experts contacted by AFP, Hamas could count on an already considerable strike force of 12,000-13,000 rockets before the present conflict began. Production

capacities are difficult to evaluate. "They don't want to be in a situation where they are going to run out of missiles in two weeks so I expect the stocks have been underreported," said Calibre Obscura.

"They definitely have substantial stocks. I think they are prepared for an extended period of time." "Hamas has a long history of rocket manufacturing themselves and they've proven to be sensible, inventive, creative with engineering big rockets," said the analyst. In the past Hamas even managed to obtain unexploded British World War I munitions from a vessel that sank off Gaza, the analyst noted. Analysts warn that any Zionist ground offensive into Gaza would trigger a fresh spiral of violence. —AFP

Erdogan says Biden has 'bloody hands' for backing Zionists

ANKARA: Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday said US President Joe Biden had "bloody hands" because of his support of the Zionist entity in the raging conflict in the Gaza Strip. The Turkish president's comments in a nationally televised address represented one of his strongest attacks on Biden since his arrival in the White House in January.

Erdogan had spent the past few months trying to mend relations with Washington and reaching out to other Western allies after a year of sharp disputes. But he lashed out at Biden directly in a furious nationally televised address. "You are writing history with your bloody hands," Erdogan said.

"You forced us to say this. Because we cannot stay silent on this anymore." Erdogan has gained support across the Middle East by championing the Palestinian cause during his 18-year rule. He accused the Jewish state last week of waging "terrorism" and vowed to rally the world to Gaza's defense.

"Today we saw Biden's signature on weapons sales to Zionist entity," Erdogan said on Monday in reference to US media reports of a new arms shipment approved by the Biden administration. "Palestine territories are awash with persecution, suffering and blood, like many other territories that lost the peace with the end of the Ottomans. And you are supporting that," Erdogan told Biden. He also lashed out at Austria for flying the flag of the Jewish state in a sign of "solidarity" with the Jewish state last week. "I condemn Austria for hanging the terror state's flag," Erdogan said. "The Austrian state seems to be trying to make Muslims pay the price for (its role) in the Holocaust." —AFP