

Israel bombs Beirut and Lebanon-Syria border, as UN declares basic foodstuffs “barely exist” in Gaza

Jordan shilton
13 November 2024

Israel carried out four major air strikes on the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital Beirut yesterday, as well as a series of strikes on bridges and other infrastructure on the Lebanon-Syria border. Coming as the Zionist regime continues to starve Gaza and the US military once again struck targets in Yemen, the attacks show that there is no let-up in the drive by Washington’s attack dog to redraw the map of the Middle East.

The four strikes targeted the suburbs of Haret Hreik and Burj al-Barajneh. The strikes flattened six residential buildings, but no official casualty figures were initially reported. After at least 78 people were killed in Israel Defence Forces (IDF) raids on Tuesday, the official death toll in Lebanon since October 8 stands at 3,365, with 14,344 wounded.

Defence Minister Israel Katz, who replaced Yoav Gallant after his firing by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week, vowed to continue to escalate the conflict in Lebanon. In a visit to the IDF’s Northern Command, Katz declared, “We will not make any ceasefire, we will not take our foot off the gas, and we will not allow any arrangement that does not include the achievement of the war’s goals.”

These include the disarming of Hezbollah, the pushing of its forces north of the Litani River, and the return of residents to towns and villages on Israel’s northern border, he added. The Defence Minister asserted that Israel would retain “the right to enforce” any ceasefire deal, i.e., the “right” to launch attacks inside Lebanon at will after a ceasefire is concluded.

On the ground, the IDF reported six casualties following a gun battle with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The clash reportedly occurred as Israeli forces sought to advance to the second line of villages inside the border.

Syrian state news agency SANA reported that the air

strikes near the border caused “significant damage” to infrastructure. According to the IDF, the attacks were aimed at smuggling routes used by Iran to transfer weaponry to Hezbollah. They come less than three weeks after Israel’s air strikes on Iran on October 26, which targeted military sites and were described by the *World Socialist Web Site* as a “dress rehearsal” for a region-wide war.

US Central Command also announced Wednesday that it struck numerous sites in Yemen on Saturday and Sunday, reportedly destroying weapons supplied to the Houthis by Iran.

American imperialism has backed Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians and subsequent war on Lebanon to the hilt, seeing them as components of its preparations for a region-wide war targeting Iran. Washington is pursuing the goal of consolidating its hegemony over the oil-rich region as part of a renewed redivision of the world, which encompasses the war on Russia in Ukraine and advanced preparations for war with China in the Asia-Pacific.

If Katz’s pledge to intensify the war in Lebanon is fulfilled, the likelihood that the conflict will spread throughout the energy-rich region will become ever greater. President-elect Donald Trump, who drastically escalated tensions with Tehran during his first term in office by abrogating the nuclear accord with Iran, has nominated Marco Rubio, a vocal anti-Iran hawk, as his secretary of state. At a campaign rally last month, Trump urged Israel to strike Iran’s nuclear sites at a time when the bourgeois-clerical regime in Tehran was warning that such a decision would lead to all-out war. In the end, Netanyahu chose the more limited, but nonetheless provocative, attack on October 26 that struck military sites.

Mike Huckabee, a staunch defender of the Zionist state's expansionist plans, is set to be Trump's ambassador to Israel. The second Trump administration is expected to give Netanyahu a free hand to expand settlements in the West Bank and intensify the genocide in Gaza. As Huckabee put it in 2017, "There is no such thing as a West Bank. It's Judea and Samaria. There's no such thing as a settlement. They're communities, they're neighbourhoods, they're cities. There's no such thing as an occupation."

Israel continued its bombardment of Gaza Wednesday, where 26 people were reported killed in a series of strikes throughout the day. One targeted the al-Mawasi district in the southwest, an ostensible "safe zone" where many displaced people are sheltering. Another strike on the Maghazi refugee camp killed five.

The UN's World Food Programme noted on X that markets across the enclave are "in decay," adding that basic staples "barely exist." It stated, "Fresh foods, eggs and meat barely exist and the prices of any food available have reached record highs." The UN's aid coordination office OCHA added that all attempts to gain Israeli approval for the delivery of supplies to northern Gaza since the beginning of November have been rebuffed.

In early October, Netanyahu's far-right regime adopted what is known as the "Generals' Plan," which calls for the denial of all food aid to northern Gaza and the treating of all civilians who remain as enemy combatants.

On Tuesday, the Biden administration defended Israel against criticism from aid organisations pointing to the abysmally low level of deliveries entering the enclave. Even though the Zionist regime is allowing just one-tenth of the 350 aid trucks into Gaza per day called for by the Biden administration last month, the State Department asserted Tuesday that Israel was not violating international humanitarian law by withholding food aid, and refused to place any restrictions on Washington's massive weapons deliveries.

The UN Security Council held a briefing the same day on the threat of famine in northern Gaza. It was requested by Guyana and Switzerland following a November 8 alert from the Integrated Food Phase Classification (IPC) stating that there is "a strong likelihood that famine is imminent within areas of the northern Gaza Strip." An earlier October 17 snapshot from the agency revealed that the entirety of Gaza is at risk of famine between November and April 2025 "under a worst-case scenario that has a reasonable chance of occurring."

"We are witnessing acts reminiscent of the gravest

international crimes," Joyce Msuya, interim head of the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, told Tuesday's Security Council meeting. She described Israel's ongoing siege of northern Gaza as "an intensified, extreme, and accelerated version of the horrors of the past year."

Head of the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Rein Paulsen told the Security Council that the number of people facing "catastrophic food insecurity," the highest classification on the IPC's food insecurity scale, would treble from the current level of 133,000 in the coming months. "Men, women, boys and girls are effectively starving as the conflict rages, with humanitarian organizations blocked from delivering assistance to those in need," Paulsen continued. "By the time famine has been declared, people are already dying of hunger, with irreversible consequences that can last generations."

An FAO release on the briefing noted that local food production has "collapsed": "nearly 70 percent of croplands—which contributed up to one-third of daily consumption—have been destroyed; over 70 percent of olive trees and orchards have been burned to the ground; agricultural infrastructure has been decimated; and 95 percent of cattle and more than half of sheep and goat herds, have died."

None of these horrors move the imperialist barbarians represented in the Security Council. They are dead set on continuing with their support for Israel's genocide and vicious attacks on anyone who protests it at home. The only social force capable of putting an end to this savagery is the international working class, mobilised on the basis of a socialist and internationalist programme for the abolition of capitalism, the root cause of genocide and imperialist war.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)