



'Does not require permission'

U.S. Lebanon envoy says Israel free to defend self

Liza Rozovsky and Jack Khoury

The new United States ambassador to Lebanon, Michel Issa, stated on Thursday that Israel "does not require the permission of the United States" to defend itself.

"Israel assesses its own security needs and will take whatever measures it deems necessary to protect its citizens," the ambassador told Haaretz.

Issa added that the administration in Washington is in full contact with the Lebanese government and is "strongly urging them to implement their own historic decision to disarm Hezbollah."

According to the new ambassador, the U.S. commitment to this decision "is essential for restoring the authority of the Lebanese state and safeguarding the country's future."

He added that "disarming Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations in Lebanon, as well as ending Iran's proxy activities more broadly, is a key step to ensuring peace in Lebanon and across the region."

Issa declined to comment on the likelihood of diplomatic talks between Israel and Lebanon, or on the possible outlines of such a process.

Issa's remarks came just



Ambassador Michel Issa
Anwar Amro/AFP

Ahead of Pope's Lebanon visit

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days after Israel assassinated Hezbollah's chief of staff, Haytham Abu Ali Tabatabai, in the Dahiyeh district of Beirut. On Friday, the organization's secretary-general, Naim Qassem, threatened retaliation for the assassination.

At a memorial event for Tabatabai, Qassem said: "It is our right to respond, and we will determine the timing." He added that "the assassination of Tabatabai is a blatant aggression," describing the assassination as an attempt "to damage morale and sow confusion."

Meanwhile, the Lebanese Army showed journalists a discovered Hezbollah tunnel at Zibqin Valley in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese army has intensified its efforts in areas along the border with Israel, in the volatile area that witnessed the 14-month war between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group. In August, six army experts when trying to dismantle Hezbollah munitions.

According to the reports, one of the tunnels, used by Hezbollah in the past, contained what appeared to be a small medical clinic, a ventilation system, power cables, water tankers and large amounts of canned food.

Issa assumed his post about two weeks ago and is also serving as the acting U.S. special envoy to the region, replacing Tom Barrack. Alongside Issa, Morgan Ortagus, a former deputy to Steve Witkoff, returned to the Lebanese arena a few months ago, concurrently with her work on the U.S. delegation to the UN.

This week, Ortagus visited Paris and met with Anne-Claire Legendre, adviser to French President Emmanuel Macron on Middle Eastern affairs.

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Gaza City on Saturday. Hamas' health ministry reported that 354 people have been killed in the Strip since the October 10 cease-fire.

Abdel Kareem Hana/AP

Gaza health ministry says Palestinian death toll in Israel-Hamas war surpassed 70,000

Jack Khoury and Nir Hasson

Over 70,000 people have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war on October 7, 2023, the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry said Saturday.

According to the Health Ministry's data, 70,100 Gaza residents have been killed and 170,983 wounded

since the war began.

Since the cease-fire went into effect on October 10, 354 people have been killed and 906 wounded by Israeli fire, according to the ministry.

In addition, the remains of 606 people who were killed before the cease-fire took effect have been retrieved from under the rubble of buildings and identified. Many more pre-

viously recovered bodies were only identified and recorded by the ministry after the cease-fire began.

According to data from the Gaza Health Ministry and UNICEF, strikes by the Israeli military have killed two juveniles a day on average since the cease-fire began.

The ministry's tally includes only those killed directly by Israeli military

2 Gazan children reported killed

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fire, not people who died of starvation or from diseases exacerbated by the war.

The data published by the Health Ministry regarding the people killed

and wounded in the Gaza Strip has been examined since the start of the war by many international organizations, governments, media outlets and researchers, who all hold broad agreement that the data is reliable.

To date, Israel has not released data that contradicts the reports. In recent

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Border cops filmed killing surrendering Palestinians claim self-defense

Jack Khoury, Rawan Suleiman and Josh Breiner

Three Border Policemen who were questioned on Friday over their involvement in the documented killing of two seemingly unarmed Palestinian suspects, said the shooting was an act of self-defense.

The Justice Ministry de-

partment that investigates allegations of police misconduct opened an investigation on Friday, after footage circulated of an officer shooting Palestinians at close range in the West Bank city of Jenin on Thursday. The three undercover combat officers were questioned on suspicion of killing and opening fire against orders.

"We felt an immediate and tangible threat to our lives," they said in their interrogation. The Palestinians were local militants, the Israel Defense Forces said after the incident.

According to the officer's statements, the shots were fired after the two

suspects refused to strip naked during their arrest and then put their hands in their pockets. One of them tried to flee back into the building, they said.

In footage published by Egyptian news channel Al-Ghad, two Palestinians were seen leaving a build-

ing in Jenin's Jabal Abu Dahia neighborhood on Thursday, with their hands raised in the air. After the officers take control, the Palestinians can be seen lying on the ground at the entrance to the building.

In the video, one of the Palestinians can be seen

entering the building, before an officer shoots them to death at close range. It is unclear from the footage whether the Palestinian did this of his own accord or was ordered to do so.

The three officers were released under limited conditions on Friday evening after eight hours of questioning and were barred from contacting those in-

involved in the case.

According to several sources, the three are experienced and relatively veteran combat soldiers in the unit. One is around 25 while the other two are around 30, and all three have been involved in dozens of military operations.

On Thursday, the IDF and the police said in a statement that "the inci-

dent is under review by the commanders on the ground, and will be transferred to the relevant professional bodies."

According to the police and the IDF, the two Palestinians, who belonged to a terror organization in the city, had thrown explosive devices and fired at Israeli

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Haaretz exposé

Probe finds out-of-control police going after nonviolent protesters



Gililot police station commander Yaniv Volvovic, left.

Eyal Toug

Josh Breiner and Bar Peleg

Detaining people at a protest, arresting them and even humiliating them has become almost routine in today's Israel, whether it's a teacher who calls the national security minister a Kahanist and is then handcuffed and stripped, or pro-

testers who torch garbage cans and receive treatment that, until recently, was reserved for the worst criminals. Once upon a time – just over a year ago – this trend was already accelerating. Then came the arrest of three women who were placing flyers in the synagogue where then-Knesset Foreign Affairs and Secu-

rity Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein prays. It drew the lead headline. It was even surprising.

The three women were subsequently released, their names were cleared, and an investigation by the Justice Ministry's department for the investigation of police officers – known by its Hebrew acronym

Mahash – was opened (and closed), and a claim for damages was filed against the police, which is still ongoing at the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court. But the bigger story is what isn't known and hasn't yet been reported. Haaretz has obtained the details of the Mahash investigation into the affair, which began in October 2024. They show the scale of the efforts and resources invested in the police campaign against the public that dares to protest.

In the afternoon of Friday September 13, 2024, three detective squads were called from their homes by the commander of the Gililot police station, Deputy Superintendent Yaniv Volvovic. At that time, three women – Idit Alexandrovich, 47, Shimrit Bourla, 60, and Rama Enav, 64, all residents of Herzliya – were being brought to the station. The police called it "extreme protest activity," which may be why they were handcuffed and shackled. The suspicion: They broke into the synagogue and placed flyers saying

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J. Scott Applewhite/AP

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13 Syrians killed, 6 IDF soldiers injured in clash in southern Syria

Jack Khoury and Yaniv Kubovich

Israel said six army reservists were wounded in clashes with local armed groups in the southern Syrian village of Beit Jinn on Friday, as Syrian authorities reported at least 13 people killed in Israeli attacks.

The incident left three soldiers seriously wounded, the army said, including two officers.

Syrian officials said at least 13 people were killed

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An IDF Humvee attacked in southern Syria on Friday.

Ali Ahmed al-Najjar/Reuters

UN panel cites 'de facto' Israeli policy of torturing Palestinians

Nir Hasson

This article includes descriptions of torture and sexual violence.

The United Nations Committee against Torture expressed concern in a report published Friday that Israel subjects Palestinian prisoners and detainees to torture.

The report issues sharp criticism of Israel regarding the violation of its obligations under the Convention against Torture, to which it

is a signatory, based on information from numerous sources, including Palestinians, the Israeli government and international and Israeli organizations.

The conditions listed in the report include cruel and degrading punishment, sexual abuse and sexualized forms of torture, poor sanitary conditions and systematic denial of medical care. The committee also determined that the Israeli justice system violates

its obligations to prosecute suspects of torture.

In its report, the committee criticized the term "unlawful combatants," a status that is not recognized in international law and denies Palestinian prisoners the rights of criminal detainees or prisoners of war.

According to the report, Israel refuses to provide information to the detainees' families "regarding their

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