

Workers accused by Israel of joining Oct. 7 attacks

Donors pause U.N. Gaza relief funding

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

Germany, Britain and at least four other countries said Saturday that they were suspending funding for the United Nations agency that provides food, water and essential services for Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, many of whom have been described as being on the brink of starvation after 16 weeks of war between Israel and Hamas.

The countries joined the United States, which said Friday that it would withhold funding for the group, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, or UNRWA, after a dozen of its employees were accused by Israel of participating in the Oct. 7 attacks.

The United Nations has not made public the details of the accusations against the UNRWA employees, who have been fired, but a senior U.N. official briefed on the accusations called them “extremely serious and horrific.”

The Israeli military said in a statement Saturday that its intelligence services had compiled a case “incriminating several UNRWA employees for their alleged involvement in the massacre, along with evidence pointing to the use of UNRWA facilities for terrorist purposes.” It did not elaborate on what that involvement entailed.

In announcing the pause in funding, the United States, the agency’s largest donor, said it was reviewing the allegations “and the steps the United Nations is taking to address them.”

The governments of Australia, Canada, Finland and Iceland also said they were suspending funding for the agency.

Philippe Lazzarini, the head of UNRWA, called the suspension “collective punishment” for Gaza and warned that if funding were not restored it would adversely affect its humanitarian assistance program.

“It is shocking to see a suspension of funds to the agency in reaction to allegations against a small group of staff,” he said in a statement, “especially given the immediate action that UNRWA took by terminating their contracts and asking for a transparent independent investigation.”

For months, U.S. intelligence agencies have been aware of vague allegations that some among UNRWA’s 13,000 employees may have been working with Hamas or even potentially involved in the Oct. 7 terror attack. It was only this past week, U.S. officials said, that the United Nations and Israel shared detailed, specific intelligence with the State Department and White House, including the names of the individuals who were fired.

U.S. officials said the tough U.S. statement and action to withhold funding from the aid agency were not a result of any formal review of the Israeli intelligence by U.S. spy agencies. Officials said that the U.N. aid agency’s decision to fire the individuals was proof that the information provided by the Israelis was compelling.

Some donor countries, like Ireland and Norway, said the agency’s work was too important to cut off.

Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin wrote on social media that UNRWA’s staff members had provided lifesaving assistance “at incredible personal cost.”

Norway said that accusations against the staff members, if true, were “completely unacceptable” but that the agency was the “most important humanitarian organization” in Gaza and, like Ireland, vowed continued support.

“We need to distinguish between what individuals may have done and what UNRWA stands for,” the Norwegian delegation to the Palestinian Authority said on social media.

Israel’s accusations against the 12 U.N. employees are the latest episode of decades-long friction between Israel and UNRWA.

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RETURN TO NOTO



Passengers arrive at Noto Airport in Wajima, Ishikawa Prefecture, on Saturday morning. All Nippon Airways resumed its flights to and from the airport on the same day, almost a month after a magnitude 7.6 earthquake hit the region on New Year’s Day. **Story: page 2** KYODO

’70s bomber worked for contractor

Fugitive lived in Kanagawa for years under false identity

KYODO

A man, thought to be the suspect on a wanted list for one of a series of terrorist bombings in the 1970s, lived in Kanagawa Prefecture as an employee of a building contractor for decades under a false name, investigative sources said Sunday.

The man, who has been hospitalized with terminal cancer and last week confessed to being Satoshi Kirishima, a member of an extreme left-wing group, lived under the name Hiroshi Uchida, the sources said.

The man does not possess a health insurance card or driver’s license and has been receiving cancer treatment at a hospital in the city of Kamakura at his own expense.

Police are investigating how he settled in Kanagawa Prefecture and whether anyone helped him survive on the run, the sources

said. The police posted photographs of the man at various public locations such as police stations in their efforts over the years to trace his whereabouts.

According to the sources, the man initially claimed to be Hiroshi Uchida at the hospital when he was admitted earlier this month.

He has terminal stomach cancer, and his condition had worsened to the point he had to crouch down in pain on the street, the sources said, adding that, when he was hospitalized, a colleague at the building firm he had worked at was with him.

The man identified himself as Satoshi Kirishima on Thursday. Due to his deteriorating health condition, the police are expected to send the case to prosecutors without arresting him.

While the Tokyo police’s Public Security Bureau is questioning the man, it will likely take time to determine his identity through DNA testing and other measures.

His physical features, including his height, seem to match those of the bombing suspect the police have been chasing.

According to the sources, the man was

Talks fail to nudge Beijing toward Red Sea breakthrough

JESSE JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

Top U.S. and Chinese officials wrapped up two days of talks Saturday that focused on improving the superpowers’ relationship, though Washington appeared to have fallen short — at least for now — in getting Beijing to do more to pressure Iran to halt Houthi attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met for more than 12 hours over two days in Bangkok, a senior U.S. official told reporters, as the two rivals looked to build on an agreement reached between their leaders during a November summit in California to reopen lines of communication on a number of fronts and work together on common interests.

The U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the two counties had agreed to work toward a phone call in the spring between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

“The two sides are committed to continuing this strategic channel of communication and agree to pursue additional channels of communication not just at the Cabinet level, visits in both directions, but also a telephone call between the two leaders at some point in the coming months,” the official said.

But the U.S. fell short in a bid to nudge China to use its economic sway with Iran to persuade Houthi rebels in Yemen to end their attacks against ships in the Red Sea. Iran helps fund the Houthi militia and supplies it with weapons.

Though neither side’s readouts of the meeting went into detail about their discussions on the issue, the senior U.S. officials told reporters that Sullivan had underscored “the importance of Beijing using its substantial leverage with Iran to call for an end ... to these dangerous attacks.”

The official pointed to the “substantial quantities of Iranian oil” that China buys, saying that the U.S. characterizes the economic relationship “as giving Beijing leverage over Iran to some extent.”

Chinese officials told the U.S. side that they had asked their Iranian counterparts to help rein in attacks on ships in the Red Sea by the Houthis, with media reports saying that

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High-end medical services attract affluent Chinese tourists | **INSIGHTS, PAGE 3**

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How climate friendly is the Japanese diet?

Daily food decisions are a balancing act for consumers conscious of health and emissions

TOMOKO OTAKE
STAFF WRITER

These days, it’s not uncommon to see calorie totals on restaurant menus in order to cater to health-conscious diners.

But throughout December, Masaka, a vegan restaurant in Tokyo’s Shibuya Ward, was catering to customers concerned about another issue by having an unusual set of numbers listed on its lunch menu: the rate of carbon dioxide emissions cuts for their dishes compared with meat-based alternatives.

Masaka showed that its set meal of a vegan version of fried chicken, rice and soup saved 20.2% in emissions compared with a meat-based set of the same portion. Emissions savings for the *gyōza* dumpling combo were 14.5%, while the *mapo* tofu set saved 25.7%.



Mayu Suzuki, a spokeswoman for Bird Feather Nob, the company that runs the restaurant, said the disclosure of such information was well received by its customers, with a survey of over 110 visitors showing more than 90% of them supported the initiative.

“I know that people who come to our restaurant are generally more environmentally

Greenhouse gas emissions from food amount to a third of all human-caused emissions. REUTERS

conscious than average customers, but even then, the fact that this many people replied in the positive makes us feel it was worth the effort,” Suzuki said.

In recent years, food and agriculture have come to be recognized as a major contributor to climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions from food — from its cultivation and transport to distribution, preparation and waste disposal — amount to a third of all human-caused emissions. Beef production is among the biggest contributors.

Recognition of the issue is growing. For example, December’s edition of the COP climate conference devoted a whole day to the food system’s impact on global warming and the need to transform it for the first time in its history. A total of 159 countries signed a declaration on sustainable agriculture, resilient food systems and climate action.

The U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also unveiled the first step of a road map for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of “zero hunger” without breaching 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming, with regional and country-level action

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