

Egypt: Israel, Hamas Extend Cease-Fire

CAIRO (AP) — Israel and Hamas agreed to extend a temporary cease-fire for five days, Egyptian and Palestinian officials announced Wednesday, permitting the sides to continue to negotiate a substantive deal to end the war in Gaza.

Yet even as the extension was announced just minutes before a previous truce was set to expire at midnight, violence spiked, with Palestinian militants firing five rockets at Israel and Israel targeting sites across the Gaza Strip in response. It was not clear if the fighting was isolated or might shatter the truce.

Egypt's foreign ministry and the head of the Palestinian negotiating team announced the extension, which began at midnight local time. A spokesman for Israel's prime minister had no immediate comment.

The cease-fire extension is meant to grant both sides additional time to negotiate a longer-term truce and a roadmap for the coastal territory.

"We have agreed on a cease-fire for five days," said Azzam al-Ahmad, the head of the Palestinian delegation to the Cairo talks. He noted that there had been "significant progress" but that disagreements remained over the wording regarding security arrangements, reconstruction efforts for the Gaza Strip and the permissible fishing area.

Ukraine Death Toll Spikes

DONETSK, Ukraine (AP) — A rebel-held city in eastern Ukraine came under intensified shelling Wednesday as the U.N. revealed that the death toll from the fighting between government troops and separatists has nearly doubled in the last two weeks.

A spokeswoman for the U.N.'s human rights office, Cecile Pouilly, said the organization's "very conservative estimates" show the overall death toll has risen to at least 2,086 people as of Aug. 10, up from 1,129 on July 26.

Pouilly said at least 4,953 others have been wounded in the fighting since mid-April.

While the humanitarian crisis reaches critical stage in at least one major Ukrainian city, trucks apparently carrying some 2,000 tons of aid have lain idle at a military depot in Russia. Moscow insists it coordinated the dispatch of the goods, which range from baby food and canned meat to portable generators and sleeping bags, with the international Red Cross, but Ukraine says it's worried the mission may be a cover for an invasion.

A spokesman for local authorities in the main rebel-controlled city of Donetsk told *The Associated Press* on Wednesday that rocket attacks over the previous night had increased in intensity.

AP Journalist, Translator Killed In Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Six people — including an Associated Press video journalist — were killed Wednesday when leftover ordnance believed to have been dropped in an Israeli airstrike blew up in the Gaza Strip.

Simone Camilli and his Palestinian translator, Ali Shehda Abu Alash, were covering the aftermath of the war between Israel and Islamic militants in Gaza when they were killed. The blast occurred as Gaza police engineers were trying to defuse unexploded ordnance fired by Israel.

Four police engineers also were killed, police said. Three people, including AP photographer Hatem Moussa, were badly injured.

Moussa told a colleague that they were filming the scene when an initial explosion went off. He said he was hit by shrapnel and began to run when there was a second blast, which knocked him out. He woke up in a hospital and later underwent surgery before he was transferred to a hospital in Israel for more advanced care.

Police officials in Gaza said the blast took place at a special site set up in the northern town of Beit Lahiya where authorities have collected unexploded ordnance to be defused. The cause of the blast was not immediately known.

Study Questions The Need To Cut Salt

A large international study questions the conventional wisdom that most people should cut back on salt, suggesting that the amount most folks consume is OK for heart health — and too little may be as bad as too much. The findings came under immediate attack by other scientists.

Limiting salt is still important for people with high blood pressure — and in fact, a second study estimates that too much sodium contributes to up to 1.65 million deaths each year. The studies both have strengths and weaknesses, and come as the U.S. government is preparing to nudge industry to trim sodium in processed and restaurant foods.

The first study's leader, Dr. Salim Yusuf of McMaster University's Population Health Research Institute in Hamilton, Ontario, urged keeping an open mind.

"There are those who have made a career out of promoting extreme sodium reduction that will attack us," he said. It's better to focus on healthy lifestyles and overall diets instead of a single element, "and that is something everyone can rally around."

No one should view this as permission to eat more salt, he said, adding that "most people should stay where they are."

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Protests Turn Violent In St. Louis Suburb

BY JIM SUHR AND JIM SALTER
Associated Press

FERGUSON, Mo. — Protests in the St. Louis suburb rocked by racial unrest since a white police officer shot an unarmed black teenager to death turned violent Wednesday night, with people lobbing molotov cocktails at police who responded with smoke bombs and tear gas to disperse the crowd.

Ferguson Police Chief Thomas Jackson, who has been the public face of the city torn by Saturday's death of 18-year-old Michael Brown, told reporters earlier in the day that the St. Louis County investigation of the shooting could take weeks to complete. In the meantime, he said, his department welcomes Justice Department training on racial relations in the suburb, where two-thirds of the 21,000 residents are black while all but three of the police force's 53 officers are white.

"Unfortunately, an undertow (of racial unrest) has bubbled to the surface," said Jackson. "Race relations is the top priority right now."

While Jackson said he wanted to mend fences with the community, protesters were on the streets of Ferguson again Wednesday, facing heavily armed police who, at times, trained weapons on them

from an armored truck. Two reporters said they were detained by police while working at a McDonald's in the area. And the situation became more tense after nightfall, with police ordering people to go home and then using smoke bombs and later tear gas after some people threw molotov cocktails at them.

Earlier, Wesley Lowery of *The Washington Post* and Ryan Reilly of *The Huffington Post* said they were handcuffed and put into a police van after officers came in to quickly clear the fast-food restaurant where they were doing some work. The Post reported that Lowery said that, at one point, he was slammed against a soda machine and plastic cuffs were put on his wrists. The reporters were subsequently released without any charges.

Martin D. Baron, the Post's executive editor, issued a statement saying "there was absolutely no justification for his arrest" and that the organization was appalled by the conduct of the officers involved.

Jackson did not immediately return a cellphone message Wednesday night from *The Associated Press* seeking comment.

Police have said the shooting happened after an officer encountered 18-year-old Michael Brown and another man on the street. They say one of the men

pushed the officer into his squad car, then physically assaulted him in the vehicle and struggled with the officer over the officer's weapon. At least one shot was fired inside the car. The struggle then spilled onto the street, where Brown was shot multiple times. In their initial news conference about the shooting, police didn't specify whether Brown was the person who scuffled with the officer in the car and have refused to clarify their account.

Jackson said Wednesday that the officer involved sustained swelling facial injuries.

Dorian Johnson, who says he was with Brown when the shooting happened, has told a much different story. He has told media outlets that the officer ordered them out of the street, then tried to open his door so close to the men that it "ricocheted" back, apparently upsetting the officer. Johnson says the officer grabbed his friend's neck, then tried to pull him into the car before brandishing his weapon and firing. He says Brown started to run and the officer pursued him, firing multiple times. Johnson and another witness both say Brown was on the street with his hands raised when the officer fired at him repeatedly.

UN: Iraq Humanitarian Crisis At Highest Level

BY VIVIAN SALAMA AND
SAMEER N. YACIOUB
Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The United Nations on Wednesday announced its highest level of emergency for the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, where hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes and tens of thousands had been trapped on a desert mountain by the advance of Islamic militants across the north of the country.

But after a U.S. Army Special Forces team was flown atop Sinjar Mountain to assess the situation Wednesday, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told reporters that far fewer refugees were stranded and it was far less likely the U.S. would undertake a rescue mission. Hagel said air-drops of food and water had sustained the refugees and

that airstrikes on Islamic State group militants had allowed many to escape.

U.S. officials said only several thousand Iraqi refugees remained on Sinjar Mountain, and Hagel said they were in relatively good condition.

The U.N.'s declaration of a "Level 3 Emergency" will trigger additional goods, funds and assets to respond to the needs of the displaced, said U.N. special representative Nickolay Mladenov, who pointed to the "scale and complexity of the current humanitarian catastrophe."

Since June, Iraq has been facing an onslaught by the Islamic State group and allied Sunni militants across much of the country's north and west. In recent weeks, the crisis has worsened as the militant fighters swept through new towns in the north, displacing members of the minority Christian and Yazidi

religious communities, and threatening the neighboring Iraqi Kurdish autonomy zone.

Tens of thousands of Yazidis fled the advance to take refuge in the remote desert Sinjar mountain range. The U.S. and Iraqi military have dropped food and water supplies, and in recent days Kurds from neighboring Syria battled to open a corridor to the mountain, allowing some 45,000 to escape.

The U.N. said it would provide increased support to those who have escaped Sinjar and to 400,000 other Iraqis who have fled since June to the Kurdish province of Dahuk. Others have fled to other parts of the Kurdish region or further south. A total of 1.5 million have been displaced by the fighting since the insurgents captured Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, in June and quickly swept over other parts of the country.

The United States has been carrying out airstrikes in recent days against Islamic State fighters, helping fend back their advance on Kurdish regions. At the same time, Iraq's central government in Baghdad has been mired in political turmoil, after the president nominated a Shiite politician, Haider al-Abadi, to form the next government, putting him on track to replace embattled Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Al-Maliki on Wednesday said he will not relinquish power until a federal court rules on what he called a "constitutional violation" by President Fouad Massoud. "Holding on (to the premiership) is an ethical and patriotic duty to defend the rights of voters," al-Maliki said in his weekly address to the nation, insisting his actions were meant to "protect the state."

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