

After Weeks Of Unrest, Palestinian Leader Appeals For Calm

BY JOSEF FEDERMAN
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called Tuesday for calm after several weeks of heightened unrest with Israel, saying his people had no interest in any further “escalation” and urging renewed dialogue.

The comments marked the Palestinian leader’s strongest attempt yet to restore calm after the worst outbreak of fighting in months, and came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to take even tougher measures to quell the violence.

The clashes erupted three weeks ago at the start of the Jewish new year and have turned more violent in recent days. Four Israelis were killed last week in shooting and stabbing attacks in Jerusalem and the West Bank, while Israeli forces have killed

four Palestinians, including a 13-year-old boy, amid violent protests.

Both Abbas and Netanyahu are dealing with precarious domestic situations as they try to find a way out of the crisis.

Netanyahu is under heavy pressure, particularly from hard-liners in his governing coalition, to respond with a tough crackdown. Abbas, fed up with years of diplomatic paralysis and unpopular with his public, does not want to appear to be caving in to Israeli pressure. Yet neither man has an interest in seeing the violence spin out of control.

Speaking to senior officials of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Abbas said he has told the Israelis that the Palestinians don’t want “military and security escalations.” He said the message had been delivered to Palestinian security forces and activists but added that, “at the same time, we

will protect ourselves.”

Abbas also said he was ready to renew dialogue with Israel, a topic that could come up during a gathering of international Mideast envoys from the U.S., Europe, Russia and the United Nations in Jerusalem on Oct. 14.

Clashes took place in several places across the West Bank on Tuesday.

In Qalandia, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, demonstrators hurled burning tires, rocks and a firebomb at Israeli forces, injuring one riot police officer, the Israeli military said. It said troops opened fire with rubber bullets and small .22-caliber rounds, shooting demonstrators in the legs. Clashes also erupted in the West Bank cities of Bethlehem, Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin and Hebron.

The Palestinian Red Crescent medical service said 39 people were wounded, including a 17-year-old boy

who was in serious condition after being shot in the abdomen.

Israeli police said a crowd of demonstrators in Jaffa, a largely Arab area of Tel Aviv, clashed with police Tuesday night, throwing rocks at cars and police officers, injuring two officers.

But in a sign that things might be calming, there were no major incidents of violence in Jerusalem, police said.

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s office said he was “profoundly alarmed” by the violence and called for “urgent action” by both sides to ease tensions.

Israel has already beefed up its forces in Jerusalem and the West Bank in recent weeks and is under intense domestic pressure to do more. Thousands of Israelis, including three Cabinet ministers in his own party, demonstrated outside

the prime minister’s residence on Monday night, demanding tough action.

On Tuesday, Netanyahu visited the site of a West Bank shooting where an Israeli settler and his wife were killed last week as they were driving and promised additional measures “to break this wave of terror like we broke previous waves of terror.”

Speaking at a nearby army base, he instructed the military to “change the way of thinking” about Palestinian attackers and said Israel will deploy ground and aerial cameras along major West Bank roads to help prevent further such attacks.

Netanyahu also alluded to recent criticism from West Bank settler leaders and their allies that he is not doing enough to guarantee their security.

Search For Answers In Ship Sinking

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — On board the 790-foot El Faro when it set out on its doomed voyage into the path of Hurricane Joaquin were five Polish workers whose job was to prepare the engine room for a retrofitting.

Could that work have caused the loss of power that led to the U.S. container ship’s sinking?

The vessel’s owners say they don’t believe so, but the question — along with the captain’s decision to plot a course near the storm — will almost certainly be part of an investigation launched Tuesday by the National Transportation Safety Board into the disaster near the Bahamas that may have claimed 33 lives.

“We don’t have all the answers, I’m sorry for that. I wish we did,” Anthony Chiarello, president and CEO of ship owner Tote Inc., told reporters. “But we will find out what happened.”

The 41-year-old El Faro was scheduled to be retired from Caribbean duty and retrofitted in the coming months for service between the West Coast and Alaska, said Phil Greene, another Tote executive.

General Recommends Keeping Troops

WASHINGTON (AP) — The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan recommended on Tuesday that President Barack Obama revise his plan and keep more than 1,000 U.S. troops in the country beyond 2016, just days after a deadly U.S. airstrike “mistakenly struck” a hospital during fierce fighting in the north.

Gen. John F. Campbell told Congress that conditions on the ground have changed since Obama announced his plan in 2014 to cut the current U.S. force of 9,800 to an embassy-based security contingent of about 1,000 in Kabul post-2016. Obama has vowed to a war-weary nation to end the U.S. war in Afghanistan and get American troops out by the time he leaves office in January 2017.

Campbell said, however, that Afghanistan remains engaged in a violent battle against the Taliban, military operations in Pakistan have pushed fighters, including those linked to al-Qaida, into eastern and northern Afghanistan and the emergence of Islamic State fighters has further complicated the conflict.

Campbell, the top commander of U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan, said that dropping to 1,000 troops would leave the United States with limited ability to train and assist the Afghan forces and even less capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations. He said the different options he has provided to his superiors are for troop levels beyond a normal embassy presence of about 1,000.

Campbell refused to discuss the numbers of troops he is recommending. But when Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, asked Campbell if he thought the president should revise his troop withdrawal plan, Campbell replied: “I will stomp my foot. Yes, sir.”

Generation Of Palestinians Drives Unrest

SURDA, West Bank (AP) — A new generation of angry, disillusioned Palestinians is driving the current wave of clashes with Israeli forces: Too young to remember the hardships of life during Israel’s clampdown on the last major uprising, they have lost faith in statehood through negotiations, distrust their political leaders and believe Israel only understands force.

The recent re-election of hard-liner Benjamin Netanyahu to a fourth term as prime minster has only deepened the sense of paralysis.

Some young Palestinians say they want to emulate those killed or wounded in confrontations or attacks on Israelis — like Mohammad Halabi, the 19-year-old law student from the West Bank who stabbed to death two Israelis in a bloody rampage in Jerusalem’s Old City over the weekend before being shot dead by police.

“We are all impressed with what he has done,” said Malik Hussein, a 19-year-old friend and fellow law student at Al-Quds University near Jerusalem. “The day after the attack, university students took to the streets and clashed with Israeli soldiers. Mohammad’s way is the only way to liberate Palestine.”

Despite such fervor and a rise in violence, it’s not clear if conditions are ripe for a new uprising against the Israeli military occupation that began in 1967 when Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem.

Shooter’s Mother Wrote About Guns

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The mother of a gunman who killed nine people and himself at an Oregon community college allowed her troubled son to have guns and acknowledged in online posts that he struggled with autism, but she didn’t seem to know he was potentially violent.

The online writings by Laurel Harper date from a year ago to nine years ago and offer fresh insight into the gunman, 26-year-old Christopher Harper-Mercer, and his relationship with his mother.

The Associated Press didn’t speak with Harper about the online postings; a knock on her door went unanswered Tuesday, and her phone’s voicemail box was full. However, the postings included an email address that is linked to Harper.

She and Harper-Mercer shared an apartment outside Roseburg. Investigators have recovered 14 firearms — six found at Umpqua Community College, where the killings occurred, and eight at the apartment. Neighbors of the mother and son in California, where they lived before moving to Oregon in 2013, have said the two went target shooting together.

Investigators say Harper-Mercer’s mother has told them the son was struggling with some mental health issues.

Clinton, Sanders Showing Differences

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton is beginning to draw contrasts with her chief Democratic rival, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, as they approach their first presidential primary debate next week.

Following the mass shooting in Oregon, Clinton quickly laid out her plan to address gun violence, an issue where Sanders has been at odds with some Democrats and fellow liberals.

In New Hampshire, Clinton points out distinctions in their respective college affordability plans. And before Democratic audiences, she speaks of her deep ties to the White House and party — a contrast, though she doesn’t mention it, with Sanders. He’s the longest-serving independent in Congress, and one who considers himself a democratic socialist.

While Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump and some of his rivals have gone after each other by name, Clinton, Sanders, former Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley and the rest of the Democratic field have engaged in a more civil contest for their party’s nomination.



JEFF SINER/CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/TNS
Kerry Caslow, from left, Andrew Robinson and Adam Carpenter with the U.S. Geological Survey work with an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler on the Waccamaw River on Tuesday, Oct. 6. The ADCP is a hydroacoustic current meter similar to a sonar, attempting to measure water current velocities over a depth range using the Doppler effect of sound waves scattered back from particles within the water column.

South Carolina Cleans Up, But Worries Remain Amid Floods

BY JAY REEVES
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Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The family of Miss South Carolina 1954 found her flood-soaked pageant scrapbook on a dining room floor littered with dead fish on Tuesday, as the first sunny day in nearly two weeks provided a chance to clean up from historic floods.

“I would hate for her to see it like this. She would be crushed,” said Polly Sim, who moved her 80-year-old mother into a nursing home just before the rainstorm turned much of the state into a disaster area.

Owners of inundated homes were keeping close watch on swollen waterways as they pried open swollen doors and tore out soaked carpets. So far, at least 17 people have died in the floods in the Carolinas, some of them drowning after trying to drive through high water.

Sim’s mother, known as Polly Rankin Suber when she competed in the Miss America contest, had lived since 1972 in the unit, where more than 3 feet of muddy

water toppled her washing machine and turned the wall-board to mush.

“There’s no way it will be what it was,” said Sim. “My mom was so eccentric, had her own funky style of decorating, there’s no way anyone could duplicate that. Never.”

Tuesday was the first dry day since Sept. 24 in South Carolina’s state capital, where a midnight-to-6 a.m. curfew was in effect. But officials warned that new evacuations could come as the huge mass of water flows toward the sea, threatening dams and displacing residents along the way.

Of particular concern was the Lowcountry, where the Santee, Edisto and other rivers make their way to the sea. Gov. Nikki Haley warned that several rivers were rising and had yet to reach their peaks.

“God smiled on South Carolina because the sun is out. That is a good sign, but ... we still have to be cautious,” Haley said Tuesday after taking an aerial tour. “What I saw was disturbing.”

“We are going to be extremely careful. We are watching this minute by minute,” she said.

Georgetown, one of America’s oldest cities, sits on the coast at the confluence of four rivers. The historic downtown flooded over the weekend, and its ordeal wasn’t over yet.

“It was coming in through the kitchen walls, through the bathroom walls, through the bedroom walls, through the living room walls. It was up over the sandbags that we put over the door. And, it just kept rising,” Tom Doran said, bracing himself for the next wave. “If I see a hoard of locusts then I’m taking off.”

In Effingham, east of Columbia, the Lynches River was at nearly 20 feet on Tuesday — five feet above flood stage. Kip Jones paddled a kayak to check on a home he rents out there, and discovered that the family lost pretty much everything they had, with almost 8 feet of standing water in the bedrooms.

“Their stuff is floating all in the house,” Jones said. “Once the water comes in the house you get bacteria and you get mold.”

In downtown Columbia, about 200 workers rushed to

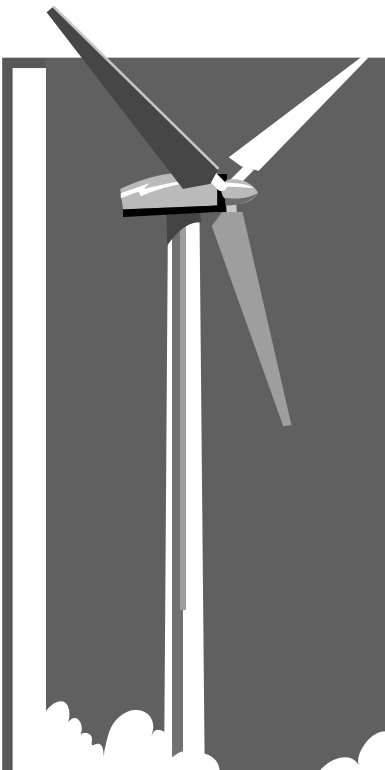
fix a breach in a canal that is threatening the city’s water supply to its 375,000 customers. The city’s main intake valve is in the canal, and the water level was steadily dropping, Columbia Utilities Director Joey Jaco said.

Crews planned to work into Wednesday morning, sinking a barge and piling bags of rocks and sand on top to try and block the hole in the canal, Jaco said.

If the water gets below the intake valve, there is less than a day’s supply in a reservoir.

“We need to make sure we get this dam constructed very soon to make sure we stay above a minimal level,” Jaco said.

Haley said it was too soon to estimate the damage, which could be “any amount of dollars.” The Republican governor quickly got a federal disaster declaration from President Barack Obama, freeing up money and resources. South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Republican presidential candidate, promised not “to ask for a penny more than we need” and criticized other lawmakers for seeking financing for unrelated projects in disaster bills.



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The meetings well be held at:

- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13:**
Yankton • 2:00 p.m. • Minerva’s Conference Center (1607 SD Hwy 50)
Vermillion • 7:00 p.m. • Holiday Inn (1200 N. Dakota St.)
- WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14:**
Wessington Springs • 2:00 p.m. • Springs Inn (201 E. Main)
Oacoma • 7:00 p.m. • Community Center (100 E. 3rd St.)

- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15:**
Madison • 2:00 p.m. • Dakota Prairie Playhouse (820 N. Washington Ave)
Sioux Falls • 7:00 p.m. • Best Western Ramkota (3200 W. Maple)

Please call 605-271-0578 for more information.