

► Hamas reportedly absent amid high tensions in the region

New cease-fire talks start as Gaza death toll passes 40,000

By Zhao Yusha and Shen Sheng

A new round of Gaza cease-fire talks was held in the Qatari capital Doha on Thursday afternoon, while Hamas officials did not join the talks, media reported. Hamas' absence from a new round of Gaza cease-fire talks has dashed hopes that they may yield some substantial results, and the failure to reach a deal increases the risk of Iran striking Israel to avenge the killing of a Hamas leader in Tehran last month, said observers.

The Palestinian death toll from Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip since the outbreak of the current round of Israeli-Hamas conflict began on October 7 has surpassed 40,000, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Hamas said on Wednesday it would not take part in the cease-fire talks, but an official briefed on the talks said mediators were expected to consult with the Palestinian group afterwards, per Reuters.

This round of talks is based on a three-phase proposal that US President Joe Biden laid out in a national address on May 31 calling for a cease-fire, the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners and detainees and the reconstruction of Gaza, media reported.

Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, believes that the prospects for the talks' success seem dim, as all the problems that needed to be resolved in previous negotiations between Hamas and Israel have not been resolved, and new obstacles are emerging, adding pressure to the talks.

Iran this week rejected calls from some Western countries to refrain from retaliation against the assassination in Tehran of Ismail Haniyeh last month, just hours after an Israeli strike in Beirut killed a senior commander of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the US is sending

more troops and military hardware to the Middle East to defend Israel from a possible attack from Iran, and has recently approved \$20 billion in arms sales to Israel.

Experts said the failure to reach a deal this time also increases the likelihood of potential retaliatory strike by Iran against Israel for the killing of the Hamas leader. Ahead of the talks, top Hamas official Osama Hamdan told the AP that the Palestinian militant group is losing faith in the US' ability to mediate a cease-fire in Gaza.

The US has recently increased pressure on Israel to reach a cease-fire deal in Gaza, but Washington's overall policy toward the country remains supportive and is unlikely to change in the short term, Zhu Yongbiao, director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies at Lanzhou University, told the Global Times. He said this biased stance has downgraded the US' authority and status in mediating a cease-fire deal in Gaza.

Xi, Lula exchange congratulations on 50th anniversary of China-Brazil ties

By Li Yawei

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Thursday exchanged congratulatory messages on the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Brazil, with experts saying that the two sides are expected to continue promoting exchanges in all areas underpinned by economic and trade cooperation.

China is ready to work with Brazil to take the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties as a new starting point to jointly promote the building of a China-Brazil community with a shared future, Xi said in his congratulatory message to Lula, the Xinhua News Agency reported on Thursday.

China and Brazil, both major developing countries and key emerging markets, are like-minded good friends and partners that join hands and move forward together, Xi said.

For his part, Lula said over the past half century, the friendship between Brazil and China has been strengthened, and cooperation has become increasingly diversified, according to Xinhua.

Brazil-China ties are becoming increasingly important for building the multipolar order, as well as a more just and effective global governance, Lula said, adding that bilateral ties play an underpinning role in the stability and predictability of the two countries and the world.

Lula said at an event on Wednesday that he will discuss a "long-term strategic partnership" with China later this year, Reuters reported.

The close ties between China and Brazil span many years, and Lula's remarks indicate that Brazil is looking to extend and advance the relationship with China, Dong Jingsheng, deputy director of Peking University's Latin America Research Center, told the Global Times on Thursday.

"The economies of the two sides enjoy considerable complementarity, making it possible to provide favorable conditions to advance the cooperation in other fields of the two countries," Dong noted. He also believed that trade and economic relations serve as the foundation of the relationship between China and Brazil, as well as China's cooperation with other countries in Latin America, which in turn encourages political trust and people-to-people exchanges.

The development of China-Brazil ties contributes not only to the economic and social development of the two countries, but also facilitates the engagement of Global South countries, analysts said, noting that this injects momentum into the transformation of the international system and the reform of the global governance system.

► Spaceship lift-off



In this photo released by Roscosmos space corporation, the Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket booster with Progress MS-28 cargo spaceship lifts off from the launch pad at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan on August 15, 2024. The docking of the Progress MS-28 cargo ship to the Russian segment of the International Space Station is scheduled for August 17. Photo: VCG

Chinese Embassy in UK responds to reports about new embassy project

The UK government had given its consent to the Chinese government to purchase the Royal Mint Court in London for the use as the new Chinese embassy premises, and the embassy personnel are in the process of applying for planning permission, the Chinese Embassy in the UK responded to media reports that China has resubmitted its planning application for the new embassy project to the Tower Hamlets Council.

Some British media out-

lets reported that China has revived plans to build a "super embassy" just miles from Westminster in London, and called it "an early test of the new government's approach to China."

A spokesperson from the Chinese Embassy in the UK said on Thursday that the Chinese government purchased the Royal Mint Court in London six years ago for use as the new Chinese embassy premises. The UK government had given its consent to this. Now

the Embassy is in the process of applying for planning permission, said the spokesperson.

The Chinese government reportedly bought the land for roughly \$327 million in 2018 but had an initial proposal rejected in 2022 by the Tower Hamlets Council citing safety and security concerns.

The spokesperson said that the resubmitted planning application has taken into full consideration the UK's planning policy and guidance as

well as opinions of all relevant parties, putting forward a high-quality development scheme.

The Chinese Embassy in the UK is committed to promoting the friendship between the Chinese and British people and the development of bilateral relations between the two countries. Building the new embassy at an early date would help embassy staff better perform such responsibilities, the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson also not-

ed that host countries have the international obligation to support and facilitate the building of the premises of diplomatic missions. Both China and the UK have the need to build a new embassy in each other's capital, and the two sides should provide facilitation to each other.

Global Times

Page Editor:
wangqig@
globaltimes.com.cn

