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UN warns of huge cost of Mideast war to Arab countries

The number of jobs we will lose as a result of this conflict is around 3.7 million: UN's Al Dardari

● **Al Dardari, who is also a top UN official for the Arab region, said the countries of the oil-rich Gulf were shouldering the heaviest burden.**

● **He urged to seek out routes other than the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flowed pre-war.**

● **Dardari sounded the alarm over the expected impact on jobs**

● **Loss to the Arab region's GDP as a result of one month of fighting will be around six per cent...**

AFP | Amman, Jordan

The war sparked by the joint US-Israeli attack on Iran and which has spread across the Middle East has cost Arab countries \$186 billion, a top UN official said yesterday, as he called for an immediate halt to the fighting.

"We hope the fighting will stop tomorrow, as every day of delay has negative repercussions on the global economy," UN assistant secretary-general Abdallah Al Dardari told reporters in Amman.

"We estimate that the loss to the Arab region's GDP as a result of one month of fighting will be around six per cent... Six per cent of GDP means the region has lost around \$186 billion from its economy in a single month," he said.

Al Dardari, who is also a top UN official for the Arab region, said the countries of the oil-rich Gulf were shouldering the heaviest burden.

"The impact on GDP is very significant in the Gulf region, where it could reach \$168 billion, and in the Levant region, where it could reach around \$30 billion," he said.

The war that erupted with a US-Israeli attack on Iran on February 28 spread quickly across the region, as Iran launched retaliatory attacks targeting Gulf countries and Israel.

Lebanon and Iraq have been drawn into the fighting, with pro-Iran groups launching attacks of their own on Israel and US interests.

Al Dardari warned against the Gulf's economic dependence on oil, saying the crisis around the vital waterway of the Strait of Hormuz had proved the need to diversify.

He also said there was a need to seek out routes other than the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flowed pre-war.

"The Arab economy relies on



Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted a building adjacent to the highway that leads to Beirut's international airport

Israeli strikes hit Lebanon

AFP | Beirut, Lebanon

Lebanon said Israeli strikes hit near Beirut's main airport road yesterday, as the UN Security Council held an urgent meeting after three peacekeepers were killed in the south.

Israeli Defence Minister

Israel Katz said his country's military would occupy a swathe of southern Lebanon even after the current war against Hezbollah has ended.

Fresh Israeli strikes hit the country's south and near Beirut on Tuesday, the state-run National News Agency said.

One strike hit a building next to Beirut's main airport road after Israel's military warned it would strike a "Hezbollah facility" there.

The road is the main means of accessing the country's only international passenger facility. AFP TV images showed

plumes of smoke rising from the site on the edge of Beirut's southern suburbs, a Hezbollah bastion that has largely emptied of residents since the latest hostilities erupted, and where Israel said it struck Hezbollah "infrastructure" earlier in the day.

Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney denounced Israel's deployment of troops against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon as an "illegal invasion" that violates its "integrity and sovereignty".

UN aid chief Tom Fletcher told the Security Council that south Lebanon could become another occupied territory in the Middle East. "Given the trajectory that some Israeli ministers have described and given what we have seen in plain sight in Gaza, how will you protect civilians?" he asked.

virtually a single commodity; even countries that do not export oil depend on remittances from expatriates in oil-exporting countries and on aid from those same countries, while the oil-exporting countries them-

selves rely on a single product," he said.

"This fragility in the Arab economy is demonstrated by recent events, which prove that it is unsustainable."

Dardari sounded the alarm

over the expected impact on jobs in a region already wracked by inequality.

"We estimate that the number of jobs we will lose as a result of this conflict is around 3.7 million," he said.

"As for the impact on poverty, we expect that around four million more people in the region will fall, or have already fallen, below the poverty line this month as a result of the hostilities."

Netanyahu says Israel will continue to 'crush Iran's regime'

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that Israel would press ahead with its military campaign against Tehran, declaring that it would continue to "crush Iran's t**** regime". "The campaign is not over," he said in a televised state-

ment. "We will continue to crush the t**** regime."

Netanyahu's comments came shortly after Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country had the "necessary will" to end the war with Israel and the United States, but was seeking guarantees that the conflict would not be repeated.

Applying Israel's death penalty law would be a 'war crime': UN

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The United Nations' human rights chief yesterday condemned a newly approved Israeli death penalty law, warning that applying it in occupied Palestinian territory "would constitute a war crime."

In a statement, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk described the new law as "pa-

rticularly inconsistent with Israel's international law obligations".

"It raises serious concerns about due process violations, is deeply discriminatory, and must be promptly repealed," he insisted.

Turk stressed that "the death penalty is profoundly difficult to reconcile with human dignity", cautioning that "its application in a discriminatory manner

would constitute an additional, particularly egregious violation of international law".

"Its application to residents of the occupied Palestinian territory would constitute a war crime."

The U.N. rights chief also expressed alarm at another bill currently before the Knesset aimed at establishing a special military court exclusively to

prosecute crimes committed during and in the aftermath of Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack inside Israel, which sparked the war in Gaza.

"I urge the Knesset to reject this bill," Turk said, warning that "by focusing exclusively on crimes committed by Palestinians, it would institutionalize discriminatory and one-sided justice".