

# POSTAL NEWS

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## 1. **Palestinians complain about non-delivery of mail to Gaza**

August 18, 2010

(JTA) -- Palestinian officials complained to Israel and the international community about the non-delivery of mail to the Gaza Strip.

In the Gaza Strip, Yosef al Mansi, the minister of communications in the Hamas-led government, called on the Universal Postal Union and international human rights groups to help end what he called Israel's "postal blockade" of Gaza.

Jalal Isma'il, director general of the Gaza Communications Ministry, said mail disruptions are not new in Gaza, but they have worsened recently. He said that for the past four months regular mail has been delayed and government mail has not been delivered.

Israel's coordinator of government activities in the territories, a branch of the Israeli Defense Ministry, said the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah needs to take action.

"The transfer of mail has been delayed recently due to the fact that a replacement has not yet been found for Sufian Abu-Zubda, the Palestinian Authority official responsible for mail transfer, who was arrested by the Israeli security forces," The Media Line, a news agency, quoted a statement from the coordinator as saying.

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## 2. **Hamas blames Israel for mail embargo**

By DAVID E. MILLER / THE MEDIA LINE

08/17/2010 18:47

Gaza gov't asks int'l community to intervene.

Talkbacks (12)

Israel is imposing a postal blockade on Gaza, officials in the Hamas government have claimed, calling on the international community to intervene.

Yousef Al-Mansi, Hamas Minister of Communications and Information Technology, called Monday for the Universal Postal Union and international human rights groups to intervene and pressure Israel into allowing mail to enter and exit the Gaza Strip.

"For the past four months mail delivery into the Gaza Strip has been disrupted," Jalal Isma'il, Director General of the Gaza Communications Ministry told The Media Line. "Regular mail has been delayed, and government mail has not entered at all."

Isma'il said that mail disruptions are not a new phenomenon in Gaza, but have worsened recently.

"We have sent letters to the Universal Postal Union, and there are talks with intermediaries to solve the problem," he added.

The Israeli Postal Service and Ministry of Communications both declined to comment on the matter.

The Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), a branch of the Israeli Defense Ministry, put the blame on the Palestinian Authority based in Ramallah.

"The transfer of mail has been delayed recently due to the fact that a replacement has not yet been found for Sufian Abu-Zubda, the Palestinian Authority official responsible for mail transfer, who was arrested by the Israeli security forces," a statement from COGAT read. "[He was not replaced] despite Israeli appeals to the Ministry of Civil Affairs in the Palestinian Authority and the Director General of the Palestinian Communications Ministry to receive a new contact person."

Sulaiman Al-Zuhairi, Deputy Minister of Communications in the Palestinian Authority rejected the Israeli explanation.

"We are ready to deliver mail to Gaza at any given moment," he told The Media Line. "We have sent [the Israelis] three names of people to wait at Erez [the Israeli border with the Gaza Strip] to receive the mail, but they refuse for security and other reasons. They are stalling."

"We are looking at other options, like using private companies to tackle the problem," Al-Zuhairi added.

The Media Line has learned that Israel has indeed received three names of candidates to replace the arrested Abu-Zubda, to be vetted by Israeli security. A decision on the matter is expected soon.

The Palestinian Deputy Minister viewed the mail delivery problems as part of a wider Israeli attitude towards Gaza.

"This is part of the policy of siege imposed on Gaza," he said. "As part of the blockade, Israelis are preventing not only the entry of mail, but of many products."

Meanwhile, the Canadian postal service advised its clients it could not deliver mail to the Gaza strip.

"All Gaza-bound mail accepted by Canada Post that is undeliverable will be returned to the sender as we do not know when mail service to the area will resume," read an official statement by Canada Post.

Responding to the Canada Post announcement, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers issued a statement in which it encouraged citizens to send their mail to Gaza aboard a Canadian ship destined to break the blockade this fall.

Denis Lemelin, National President of the Union of Postal Workers, described the initiative as a humanitarian one.

"As postal workers, we know very well that cutting off mail creates suffering and hardship for people, who are isolated from their loved ones," the statement read. "How many more abuses will the people of Gaza have to endure?"

"We are heartened by the growing international response to Israel's cruel treatment of the Palestinian people," Lemelin added.

In April 2008 the Canadian Union of Postal Workers decided to join the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign (BDS) against Israel; the first national union in North America to do so.

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### **3. It's time to dispel those Postal Myths the USPS is here to serve you!**

Submitted By Julie Joers Manager

Posted: Aug. 18, 2010

The U.S. Postal Service has delivered America's mail in snow, rain and dark of night. However, tough market conditions are creating new challenges for our business. Skeptics say we're not up to them. It's time to dispel common myths and assure the American people that we will continue to deliver the mail.

(Myth) The Postal Service wastes taxpayer dollars.

The Postal Service, an independent agency of the executive branch, operates as commercial entity. We rely on the sale of postage, mailing and shipping products and services for revenue. We have not received taxpayer subsidies for operations since 1982. And we're required by law to cover our costs.

(Myth) The Postal Service is inefficient.

Ten years ago, it took 70 employees one hour to sort 35,000 letters. Today, in that same hour, two employees process that same volume of mail. Although our nation's addresses have grown by nearly 18 million in the past decade, we've decreased the number of employees who handle the increased delivery load by more than 200,000.

But driving costs out of our system is our greatest testament to efficiency. Since 2002, the Postal Service has cut its costs by \$43 billion, including by \$6 billion in 2009. These savings have come through reducing workforce and overtime, renegotiating more than 500 supplier contracts, consolidating facilities, closing administrative offices, and cutting travel expenses and supply budgets.

We've also asked Congress to eliminate the statutory requirement that we deliver mail six days a week. Switching to five-day delivery would help us save more than \$3 billion a year while still delivering the mail.

(Myth)Mail is not reliable.

Independent quarterly surveys confirm that the Postal Service has achieved record reliability. In the third quarter of 2010, on-time overnight delivery of single-piece first-class mail was at 96 percent for the eighth straight quarter, an agency best.

We're not only punctual, we're trusted and secure. According to the Federal Trade Commission, as little as 2 percent of identity crimes occur through the mail. Theft of a wallet or purse is responsible for 5 percent — meaning your documents are safer in the mail than they are in your pocket. Trust its in the mail.

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#### **4. Postal dept introduces special Rakhi envelopes**

TNN, Aug 17, 2010, 09.54pm IST

LUDHIANA: To ensure timely delivery of Rakhis, the postal department is making a special arrangements, including Rakhi envelopes to separate letter boxes, in order to tackle the rush.

Made of durable and water-proof material, Rakhi envelopes, available in size 11 cm x 22 cm, are available at five post offices in the city. But they are light enough to keep the mail within the basic weight limit as far as possible.

Available in attractive designs pre-gummed with a peel-off strip mechanism for easy sealing, these envelopes are available at a price of Rs 10 each and customer has to use extra stamps along with this envelope as per weight.

Sources said to ensure the speedy delivery, the circle had made special arrangements for collection of the envelopes through postmen, through special letterboxes at important post offices. While special arrangement for sorting and transmission had been also made by engaging extra staff. These post offices had been placed at Miller Ganj post office, head post office, Focal Point post office and Central post office.

Senior superintendent JR Nur said that the envelopes were being introduced with the motive to identify the Rakhi envelopes with the normal mails so that Rakhis could be delivered safely and on time.

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## **5. Postal Service sets up shop at Office Depot stores**

By Ed O'Keefe

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Despite widespread opposition to closing post offices, the U.S. Postal Service is moving ahead with plans to expand its retail footprint into thousands of Office Depot stores.

The nation's second-largest retailer of office supplies has started selling postal products and services at almost 1,100 locations, offering Priority Mail and Express Mail services, Priority Mail flat-rate boxes, and postage stamps. The deal, in the works for more than a year, is the mail agency's first attempt to sell more than postage stamps under someone else's roof.

Susan Plonkey, a USPS senior vice president, said the deal will allow customers to compare prices between USPS and United Parcel Service products and services, which are also sold at Office Depot. "We're excited to extend some of the best shipping values in the country to Office Depot customers at a time and place that's convenient to them," she said.

The Postal Service provided Office Depot with training materials for its employees, USPS officials said. The partnership is open-ended, and no money changed hands.

USPS operates the nation's largest retail network, with about 36,000 post offices and stations. It is expected to post about \$7 billion in losses for the fiscal year that ends next month, and it wants permission from Congress to close locations and open smaller retail outlets in supermarkets, pharmacies and retailers such as Wal-Mart.

But 64 percent of Americans oppose closing post offices, according to a Washington Post poll conducted in March. Closing post offices is part of a broad postal reform plan that has stalled on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers are expected to consider elements of the proposals when they return from summer recess, aides said.

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