

Defense Department Conducts Recover, Repair Mission for Temporary Pier After Heavy Sea States



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The Defense Department is working to recover three of four vessels associated with its temporary humanitarian aid pier in Gaza after rough seas caused the motorized sections to run aground May 25, the Pentagon announced today.

The vessels, which are part of U.S. Central Command's Joint Logistics, Over-the-Shore capability – and which are used to stabilize the trident pier – broke free from their anchors and beached ashore after suffering a loss of power, Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh told reporters.

“As of today, one of the Army vessels that was beached on the coast of Israel near Ashkelon has been recovered. The second vessel that was also beached near Ashkelon will be recovered in the next 24 hours, and the remaining two vessels that were beached near the Trident pier are expected to be recovered in the next 48 hours,” Singh said, adding that the Israeli Navy is assisting in the recovery efforts.

The U.S is not authorizing any American boots on the ground in Gaza, and that is not hindering efforts to recover the three vessels, Singh said.

In addition to the JLOTS vessels running aground, high sea states and a North African weather system caused a portion of the trident pier to detach from the pier that is currently anchored into the Gaza coastline earlier today, resulting in

damage to the trident pier and necessitating a need to rebuild and repair it, Singh said.

Over the next 48 hours, U.S. forces will remove the pier from its anchored position on the coast and tow it back to the Israeli coastal city of Ashdod to begin repairs.

“The pier proved highly valuable in delivering aid to the people of Gaza. Thus, upon completion of the pier repair and reassembly, the intention is to re-anchor the temporary pier to the coast of Gaza and resume humanitarian aid to the people who need it most,” Singh told reporters, noting that, to date, over 1,000 metric tons of aid has been delivered to the pier for humanitarian organizations to distribute to Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Singh said, U.S. forces are currently loading humanitarian aid into vessels in Cyprus for transport to Gaza so that it can roll out immediately once the repaired pier is reattached to the shoreline in the coming days.

First announced March 8 of this year after President Joe Biden called on the military to lead the temporary humanitarian aid operation, the JLOTS pier became operational May 17.

When questioned as to whether the pier is durable enough to complete its mission, Singh said DOD is optimistic.

“I think, unfortunately, we had a perfect storm of high sea states and ... this North African weather system also came in at the same time, creating not an optimal environment to operate the JLOTS,” Singh said.

“But we believe that – given the time of year – we will be able to re-anchor this pier; and it will be able to be operational; and, hopefully, weather conditions won’t hinder it anymore.”

When further pressed as to whether the pier, which is budgeted

at roughly \$300 million, is worth the cost, Singh reiterated how much aid the pier was able to get into Gaza in just a short period of time.

“... t’s pretty important for the people that are suffering right now – that are in a dire humanitarian situation – to get whatever aid they can, by whatever means,” Singh said.

“We want to do everything possible to help; and it is our forces – our men and women – who are running toward the problem and doing everything they can to find a solution.”

Centcom anticipates repairs to the pier to take approximately one week.