



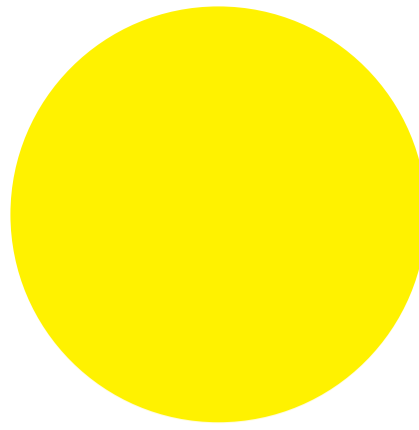
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# Iran Daily



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## Four nations agree on roadmap to mend Turkey-Syria ties



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (2nd L) hosts a meeting with his counterparts Mevlut Cavusoglu of Turkey (R), Faisal Mekdad of Syria (2nd R) and Hossein Amir-Abdollahian of Iran in Moscow on May 10, 2023. **AFP**

### International Desk

Turkey, Syria, Iran and Russia agreed on Wednesday to set up a roadmap to improve relations between Damascus and Ankara after more than a decade of strained ties between the two neighbors. The foreign ministers of the four countries agreed to task their deputies with putting together the roadmap, in coordination with the defense ministers and security services of the four countries, a joint statement said. The meeting marked the highest-level contact between Ankara and Damascus since the start of the foreign-backed war over a decade ago.

"The ministers noted the positive and constructive atmosphere of the exchange of views and agreed to continue high-level contacts and technical talks in the quadripartite format in the coming period," the statement said. The statement added that they called for more international aid to Syria, not only to help the country's struggling population but also "in the interests of voluntary, safe, and dignified" refugee returns and postwar reconstruction. Turkey severed its relations with Syria in March 2012, a year after the Arab country found itself in the grip of deadly violence waged by foreign-backed militants.

Addressing the meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said any political solution for issues related to Syria must take into consideration Syria's full sovereignty over its territory, adding that Turkey can play a key role in this regard. He said Syria's neighbors, especially Turkey, can cooperate with the Arab country so that it would be able to gain full control over its national sovereignty "because it will be in favor of Syria's stability and security and is also in line with security and border stability of the neighboring countries." The top Iranian diplomat added that the deployment

of the Syrian Army on the borders and the establishment of security in cooperation with the neighbors can allay the security concerns of Ankara and other neighboring countries and prevent the activities of terrorists and separatists. "We deeply believe that these two countries can put the past behind them and, by looking to the future, resolve their bilateral issues through dialogue and deepening cooperation based on good neighborliness," he said. Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad also said that Syria and Turkey "share goals and common interests." He said that "despite

all the negatives over the past years," Damascus saw the talks as an opportunity "for both governments to cooperate with the help and support of our friends, Russia and Iran." Yet Mekdad added that the Syrian government's "main goal" was to end all "illegal" military presences in the country, including that of Turkish forces. The agreement comes a week after Syria and Arab governments meeting in Jordan agreed to establish a roadmap of their own to resolve Syria's lengthy war and bolster ties. Syria has been returning to the Arab fold and slowly restoring ties with its neighbors.

### Conditions ripe for Turkey-Syria reconciliation



By Seyyed Reza Sadrolhosseini  
Regional affairs expert

The trilateral meeting of foreign ministers from Iran, Turkey, and Russia in Moscow aimed at resolving the Syrian-Turkish conflict is a significant development in

West Asia. The objective is to provide regional security and prevent the presence of transregional countries. Several positive developments pertaining to the meeting have recently unfolded in the region including the Riyadh-Tehran rapprochement, the normalization of ties between Saudi Arabia and Syria, the return of Syria to the Arab League, the four-way meeting in Moscow, and the concern and anger of the US and Israel over these events. These developments have surprised many important global analysts, especially since the speed with which they occurred was such that many global media outlets are lagging behind in their coverage and analysis.

In particular, addressing the situation of Syria is progressing at a faster pace than it did the past five years owing to the ongoing Moscow meeting between the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Russia. However, the meeting is a continuation of the previous meetings known as "Astana," which were brokered by Iran and Russia.

These positive developments indicate the prospects for the future of the West Asian region. The revival of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia was the beginning, and if the efforts to normalize relations between Turkey and Syria are to succeed, security-building processes based on strengthening regional cooperation would be completed. **Page 3** >

### Iran's monthly non-oil exports to neighboring countries up 7%

#### Economy Desk

A spokesman for Iran's Chamber of Industry, Mine and Trade said Iran's non-oil exports to neighboring countries have risen seven percent in the first Iranian calendar month, compared to the same period last year. Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi said that more than ten million tons of goods, worth \$3.64 billion, were exported, while nearly 1.83 million tons, worth \$1.87 billion, were imported from 15 neighboring countries in the same period, according to IRNA. Latifi said that official statistics show that Iran's trade balance in the first

Iranian calendar month reached a positive \$558 million.

Latifi said Iraq with the purchase of \$609 million, Turkey with \$550 million, the UAE with \$320 million, Pakistan with \$116 million, Afghanistan with \$115 million, Oman with \$89.4 million, and Russia with \$60 million are the top seven export destinations of Iranian goods. He also named Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain as the other customers of Iranian goods.

Latifi named the UAE (\$1.9 billion), Turkey (\$345 million) and Russia (\$58.5 million) as the main exporters to the country.



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## More Palestinians killed in Israel's attacks on Gaza

Israel's Army and resistance groups in the Gaza Strip traded heavy cross-border fire Wednesday, with 22 Palestinians killed over two days amid the worst escalation of violence to hit the coastal territory in months.

Smoke billowed from the densely populated coastal enclave after Israel launched fresh attacks on Gaza. Gaza's Health Ministry said seven people were killed, a day after Israeli strikes on the Palestinian territory left 15 dead, AFP reported.

In a joint statement Palestinian resistance groups said hundreds of rockets were fired, while the Israeli army reported 270 launches from Gaza.

Four of those killed Wednesday were fighters with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the group said in a statement.

The fatalities also included a 10-year-old girl. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was "ready for the possibility of an expanded campaign and harsh strikes against Gaza," in a meeting with local leaders near the coastal territory.

Israel's Iron Dome air defence system intercepted rockets above the coastal city of Ashkelon and elsewhere in the south.

The latest violence comes a day after Israeli strikes on Gaza killed three top Islamic Jihad commanders and

12 others, including four children, according to a health ministry toll. Islamic Jihad had vowed Tuesday to retaliate, with Israel warning its residents near the Palestinian territory to stay near bomb shelters.

The latest violence comes on the second anniversary of a devastating 11-day war fought between Gaza fighters and Israel.

Hamas spokesman Abdul Latif al-Qanou said Wednesday "the strikes of the unified resistance are part of the process of responding to the massacre committed by (Israel)."

Earlier Wednesday, Israeli troops also raided the West Bank town of Qabatiya, killing two Palestinians. The Palestinian Health Ministry

identified the two men as Ahmed Jamal Tawfiq Assaf, 19, and Rani Walid Ahmed Qatanat, 24.

The Israeli military said troops detained one person during the raid. Israel has occupied the West Bank since the Six-Day War of 1967 and its forces regularly operate in Palestinian cities.

The Arab League on Wednesday condemned the "aggressive (and) barbaric Israeli raids on the Gaza Strip, which targeted civilians, children and women in residential neighbourhoods".

The Gaza violence this week is the worst since a three-day escalation in August killed 49 Palestinians, with no Israeli fatalities.