

## NEWS IN BRIEF

FM spokesman  
blasts Zionists'  
desecration of  
Holy Qur'an

**TASNIM** – Nasser Kanaani, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, strongly condemned the desecration of the Holy Qur'an by the Zionist regime's settlers in the West Bank, adding that the regime clearly "does not have any red lines in insulting religious sanctities and violating human rights."

A group of Israeli settlers stormed the village of Urif, south of Nablus, in the northern West Bank on Friday, forcing their way into a local mosque and vandalizing it before ripping the pages of a copy of the Muslim holy book and throwing it into the street.

Pakistan  
Army Chief  
to visit Iran

**IRNA** – Pakistani Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir will make an official visit to Tehran in the coming days to advance Islamabad's military diplomacy with neighbors.

A senior Pakistani military official, who asked not to be named, said that strengthening bilateral cooperation in the security, border, and military sectors is on the agenda of the general's talks with high-ranking Iranian officials.

Region  
prioritizes  
maritime  
coalition: Navy  
commander

**MEHR** – Forming a maritime coalition is one of the priorities of the region, said Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, adding that it would enhance security in the region.

Pointing to Iran's role in securing maritime trade routes, the Iranian Navy commander noted that Iranian naval forces have been honored three times by the United Nations for establishing maritime security and combating piracy.

Iran, Russia reject drone claims  
as 'political show'

Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri (r) and Commander of the Army General Abdolrahim Mousavi visit an underground drone base. AP

The Iranian and Russian ambassadors to the United Nations rejected claims by the U.S. representative about Moscow's use of Iranian combat drones in the Ukraine conflict as baseless.

Tehran slammed the anti-Iran action by the U.S., Ukraine, and three European countries as "a political show aimed at affecting" the UN chief's report on Iran abiding by its commitments under the nuclear deal, IFP reported.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield claimed that her country had "released further information" that Tehran had provided "hundreds of one-way attack Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)", and insisted that Ukraine and the UK had also provided "evidence" that Iranian

drones had been recovered by Kyiv.

"Russia has not only procured hundreds of Mo-hajer and Shahed series UAVs from Iran in clear violation of Resolution 2231 but it is also now working with Iran to produce these weapons inside Russia," she alleged.

"Russia has been using these UAVs in recent weeks to strike Kyiv, destroy Ukrainian infrastructure, and kill and terrorize Ukrainian civilians," Thomas-Greenfield continued. The diplomatic mission of Iran noted in a statement that the accusations against Iran aim to influence the six-month report of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres about the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2231 that authorized the Iran

nuclear deal.

The statement also said the push by the U.S. and its allies is aimed at preventing the review of the report in June at the Security Council, which is chaired by the United Arab Emirates, and postponing it to the next month when the UK takes over the presidency of the council, adding that the move shows the spiteful intentions of those countries. The Iranian diplomatic mission at the UN once again rejected claims that Iran is involved in the Ukraine war, stressing that the conflict is unwinnable and that all efforts must be aimed at ending it as soon as possible and resolving the root cause of the war in order to restore lasting peace in Ukraine. Russia's ambassador to the United Nations also

stressed that Kyiv has not given Moscow or Tehran an "iota of credible evidence" to prove the allegation.

Vassily Nebenzia condemned the U.S. version of events and accused Washington of attempting to 'mislead' the world.

"We categorically rejected it. These are baseless allegations and blatant attempts to deliberately mislead the international community. The arguments that our colleagues are providing do not withstand any scrutiny and simply lack any legal or technical grounds," he said.

The Russian ambassador added that the 'evidence' was limited to 'open source information and vague assessments' with 'incoherent photos of hardly identifiable debris'.

"It looks like they are not

even sure themselves about the shreds of evidence they are providing, and it's not about facts, as you see. Rather, it's all about a fake political narrative," he stated.

Both Iran and Russia have repeatedly denied claims that Tehran has provided Moscow with drones to be used in the Ukraine war.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in November dismissed media controversy over Iran's alleged support for Russia in the Ukraine war, adding, however, that Tehran had provided Moscow with a limited number of drones months before the war in Ukraine.

He also gave assurance that Iran would not be indifferent if it is proven that Russia has used Iranian drones in the conflict.

## Political understanding ...

The second suggests that the de-escalation pertains to the fact that some of the regional countries have decided to adopt a more independent policy. This could reduce tensions between Tehran and Washington. Nonetheless, we do not know whether the positive trend of de-escalation is a prelude to or result of a political understanding between

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Iran and the U.S. But easing tensions with the region and the U.S. have positive effects on each other. It means that securing regional cooperation will help reduce and gradually resolve tensions between Iran and the West, including the U.S. Besides, if Iran and the U.S. reach a strategic understanding, we will witness its effects on promoting regional cooperation. The

move will also pave the way for Tehran and Washington to normalize economic ties.

Can we say that regional agreements with Iran are currently at the security and political phase; they have not gone through the phase of economic cooperation yet?

That is correct. Although regional countries have good economic ties with

Iran, they face restrictions in developing these relations as long as U.S. sanctions on Tehran remain in place. These restrictions hamper efforts to make huge investments.

Iran's foreign minister put forward a proposal to promote dialogue and cooperation among regional countries. Can the plan help establish cooperation in the region with long-lasting effects? A proposal to promote regional cooperation had

already been suggested by former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. But it was not realized because conditions were not ripe. Now, however, it seems that the conditions are ripe for going ahead with the foreign minister's plan. Both Iran and other regional countries should be aware that sole reliance on the process of easing tensions is not enough to strengthen regional stability. Governments should continue talks on different levels to clear up misun-

derstandings and establish new bonds.

In my opinion, if the Iranian foreign minister's plan is realized, it can serve as a suitable platform for enhancing cooperation and resolving remaining disputes among regional countries. This will, ultimately, lead to establishing a strong and stable region.

It is high time that the plan is put into operation because the conditions are prepared for its realization and big powers support it.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran Embassy assailant indicted by Denmark

A knife-wielding assailant who intruded into the Iranian Embassy compound in Copenhagen with the intent to assassinate the ambassador last October has been finally indicted by a Danish prosecutor.

The 33-year-old assailant has been charged with aggravated assault against Iran's Ambassador Afsaneh Nadipour as well as inflicting property damage on the embassy building and automobiles, according to a statement released Friday by the prosecutor's office, which further noted that Denmark's justice

minister has accepted the charges brought against the suspect.

The assailant entered the embassy compound on October 7, 2022, and tried to attack and seriously harm the female Iranian ambassador by rushing towards her with a knife, injuring a local employee of the diplomatic post who tried to stop him, Press TV wrote. According to the prosecutor's statement, the attempted assault on Nadipour was thwarted by an embassy employee, and the suspect was then arrested by the Copenhagen police

and has since remained in custody.

The statement said the inability of a foreign diplomat in Denmark to perform his or her duties without fear of being physically attacked is a very serious matter and totally unacceptable, adding under such circumstances, the diplomat — by law — must come under police protection. Denmark's ambassador to Iran extended his country's apology, promising that security measures for the Iranian embassy would be upgraded.