

## Iran, Russia reject drone claims as 'political show'

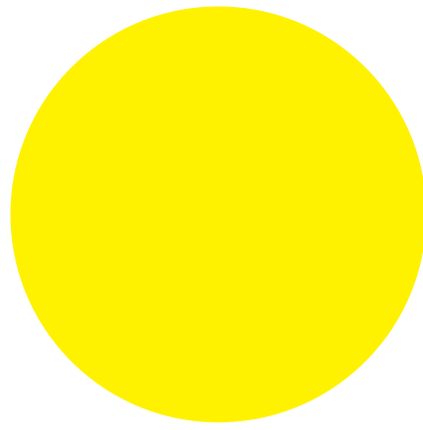


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# Iran Daily

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Iran's Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province hosts the First Festival of Iran's Ethnic Groups, which began on June 20 and will last till June 26, 2023.  
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## Political understanding between Iran, the West feed regional developments

By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff Writer



Iran's foreign policy apparatus has recently witnessed a flurry of activity, especially in the past two weeks. The latest example pertains to the four-nation Persian Gulf tour of Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, which took him to Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait and Oman. This is in addition to talks held between Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani and European Union deputy foreign policy chief Enrique Mora.

Besides, Amir-Abdollahian has also unveiled Iran's proposal for establishing a joint mechanism for dialogue and cooperation among the Persian Gulf states. Iran Daily has conducted an interview with Diako Hosseini, an expert on strategic issues, to discuss such developments. He says Iran is simultaneously easing tensions with regional countries and the United States. Here are excerpts from the interview.

tries. This is because they regard this process as a prelude to regional stability which can also benefit the global economy. It seems that this process is the basis of Iran's diplomatic activities. Moreover, boosting regional ties can positively affect Iran-U.S. communications through mediators.

Meanwhile, the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is unlikely until the U.S. presidential elections are held in 2024. Hence, a political understanding could replace the agreement in avoiding or reducing tensions. We can expect that easing regional tensions will pave the ground for de-escalation between Iran and the West, including the U.S. In other words, reducing tensions in the region is part of a political understanding between Iran and the West.

**IRAN DAILY:** Iran has seen a flurry of diplomatic activity or "diplomatic traffic" over the past months. What is your take on the issue?

**DIAKO HOSSEINI:** The diplomatic activity is in line with Iran's efforts to promote relations with neighboring countries, which have been emphasized by President Ebrahim Raeisi. Likewise, big powers like China and the U.S. support the process of easing tensions between Iran and regional coun-

Do you believe that de-escalation of tensions between Iran and some regional countries, as well as the West, is moving ahead in parallel?

In this regard, there are two points of view. The first indicates that the ongoing regional developments are part of a political understanding between Iran and the West. This process is supported by China.

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## Russian president calls Wagner mutiny treason; vows to punish its leaders

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday vowed harsh punishment for the organizers of an armed rebellion spearheaded by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, who led his troops out of Ukraine and into a key southern city. Putin denounced the move as "a stab in the back" in an address to the nation.

Prigozhin's private army appeared to control the military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, a city 660 miles (over 1,000 kilometers) south of Moscow that runs Russian operations in Ukraine, Britain's Ministry of Defense said, according to AP. Wagner troops and equipment also rolled into Russia's Lipetsk Province,

about 360 kilometers (225 miles) south of Moscow, where authorities "are taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the population," said regional Gov. Igor Artamonov, via Telegram.

As the fast-moving events unfolded in Russia, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow is suffering "full-scale weakness" and that Kyiv was protecting Europe from "the spread of Russian evil and chaos."

In his speech, Putin called the actions by Prigozhin, whom he did not mention by name, a "betrayal" and "treason."

**'Inevitable punishment'** "All those who prepared the rebellion will suffer inevitable punishment," Putin said. "The armed forces and other government agencies have received the necessary orders."

Prigozhin said his fighters would not surrender, as "we do not want the country to live on in corruption, deceit and bureaucracy."



"Regarding the betrayal of the motherland, the president was deeply mistaken. We are patriots of our homeland," he said in an audio message on his Telegram channel.

Prigozhin's private army, known as Wagner, has been fighting alongside regular Russian troops in Ukraine. His goals weren't immediately clear, but the rebellion marks an escalation in his struggle with Russian military leaders, whom he accused of botching the war in Ukraine and hobbling his forces in the field.



Members of Wagner group sit atop a tank in a street in the city of Rostov-on-Don, on June 24, 2023.

● STRINGER/AFP

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## Israeli minister calls for assassination of 'thousands' of Palestinians

Far-right Israeli Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir called on his cabinet to launch a wide military offensive in the occupied West Bank, encouraging the regime forces to assassinate "hundreds, or if needed, thousands" of Palestinians. Ben-Gvir made the remarks during a visit to the illegal hilltop outpost of Evyatar on Friday, Press TV reported. "Here, there should be a

full settlement, not only here, but in all the hills around us," he said, urging the settlers to "run to the hilltops." "We should settle the Land of Israel, and at the same time, launch a military operation, blow up buildings" and eliminate not just one or two, but dozens and hundreds and, if needed, thousands of Palestinians, Ben-Gvir said.