



Iran will not enter Israel-Hamas war

PERSPECTIVE

The ongoing war between Israel and Hamas resistance group, which has been considered as one of the heaviest conflicts between the two sides in decades, has raised questions about the consequences of the war for the Palestinian group and the role of Iran, as one of the main supporters of the resistance movement, in the conflict.

Mehdi Zakerian, an Iranian expert on Israeli affairs, in an interview with Asr Iran news website, has ruled out the possibility of Iran's entering into the conflict, given that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei recently rejected accusations about Iran's involvement in Hamas's October 7 military operation against Israel.

Zakerian, however, praised Iran's diplomatic efforts to help put an end to the bloody war in the Gaza Strip. He said a recent warning issued by Iran's foreign minister about the possibility of the spread of war to the region can be useful for ending the conflict, which has claimed the lives of nearly 5,800 people so far.

Zakerian said that Iran had also played such a constructive role in resolving conflicts in the region in the past. He referred to Iran's cooperation with the European Union, France, Lebanon's Hezbollah movement and the country's government to help end the 33-day war between the Israeli regime and the Lebanese resistance group, Hezbollah, in 2006. He also referred to Iran's role in resolving differences between Afghanistan's groups, which the United States had not been able to settle.

The Iranian expert believes that Tehran should play the same constructive role in the new conflict and submit proposals and plans to save the people of Gaza from the crisis and gain credibility for itself in the world.

Zakerian said that the Israeli regime withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and then Hamas took control of the territory two years later. However, conflicts which erupted between the resistance movement and Palestinian Authority after the regime's retreat from the coastal region were of great benefit for Tel Aviv. Because the differences between the Palestinian groups had led to the weakness of the Palestinian negotiating side. But Hamas, which gradually focused more on Israel than the Palestinian Authority, became a serious threat for the occupying regime.

Therefore, the Israeli regime has finally come to the conclusion that it should end Hamas's rule in Gaza and displace a large population of the Palestinian territory and take control of the region, or hand it over to the Palestinian Authority. Between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Gazans have been forced to leave northern Gaza after Israel threatened them with a ground assault. Whenever Israel has displaced Palestinians, it has not allowed them to return to their original location.

Zakerian said that the people of Gaza have been under an Israeli siege for years. There is a sense of resistance carved in Palestinian hearts. Therefore, the public feels proud and victorious when such operations are carried out against the Israeli regime. However, he said that the recent military operation might not yield desirable results.

Aid trickles to Gaza

The summit came on the day a first convoy of aid trucks rumbled into southern Gaza through Egypt's Rafah crossing, which Guterres said needed to be rapidly scaled up, with "much more" help sent through.

The UN has said that about 100 trucks per day are needed to meet worsening needs in Gaza.

The UN Humanitarian Chief Martin Griffiths said the first convoy carrying aid into the besieged Gaza Strip Saturday "must not be the last", adding, "I am confident that this delivery will be the start of a sustainable effort to provide essential supplies... to the people of Gaza."

Meanwhile, the first humanitarian aid consignment of Iran, which consists of around 60 tons of commodities including medicines and health care equipment, has been dispatched to the Gaza Strip, according to IRNA.

Hamas freed first captives

Despite the humanitarian crisis caused by Israel in Gaza, Hamas has freed two American captives who had been held in Gaza since its fighters rampaged through southern Israel on October 7.

A pair consisting of a mother and daughter were freed for "humanitarian reasons," Hamas said, according to BBC.

Joe Biden said he was overjoyed at their release and confirmed he had spoken with the pair on the phone.



Iran's first humanitarian aid consignment gets dispatched to the Gaza Strip from an airport in the capital Tehran on October 20, 2023.

● TASNIM



The photo shows the opening session of the Cairo Summit for Peace, at the St Regis Almasra Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, on October 21, 2023.

● RYAN CARTER/REUTERS



Protesters from Jakarta to Mexico City demanded an end to Israel's bombardment of Gaza after two weeks of intense air and artillery strikes that authorities there say have killed 4,100 people.

Israel is gearing up for a ground war in the tiny, crowded Palestinian enclave after a brazen attack by Palestinian group Hamas on Oct. 7 that killed 1,400 people.

While some Western governments have voiced support for Israel's military campaign, many Muslim states have called for an immediate ceasefire, with many of their people angry at conditions in Gaza and expressing solidarity with Palestinians.

Tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched in London and other cities on Saturday in support of Gaza and condemning Israel's bombardment of the besieged enclave, AP reported.

Police estimated the crowd winding its way through central London at "up to 100,000." Waving Palestinian flags, participants called for an end to Israel's blockade and airstrikes.

Police in Berlin banned a pro-Palestinian demonstration that was scheduled for Sunday in the center of the city but allowed a pro-Israel demonstration elsewhere, hundreds marched through Rome on Saturday, some holding signs saying "Palestine, Rome is with you," and "No

peace until we get freedom."

"Israel carries out war crimes there, crimes against humanity there, and the international community has never acted," said Maya Issa, president of the Movement of Palestinian Students in Italy, which organized the demonstration.

In Australia, thousands marched through central Sydney on Saturday, shouting "Shame, shame Israel" and "Palestine will never die." Authorities in Gaza say nearly 4,400 people have been killed in the territory since the latest war began.

Crowds gathered in Lebanon; in Iraq at the country's border crossing with Jordan; in Jordan itself; in cities and towns across Egypt; in Turkey's capital Ankara and its most populous city of Istanbul; and in Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco and South Africa.

In New York, hundreds of protesters from Muslim, Jewish and other groups marched to US Sen. Kristen Gillibrand's Manhattan office, many shouting "cease fire now." Police later arrested dozens of protesters who blocked Third Avenue outside Gillibrand's office by sitting in the road. In Mexico City, dozens gathered outside the Israeli embassy on Friday evening, lighting candles and chanting "Free Palestine." In Jordan, which made peace with Israel in 1994, but where much of the population has

Palestinian heritage, more than 6,000 protesters marched in the center of the capital while thousands more rallied near the Israeli embassy, Reuters wrote.

Protesters in Jordan voiced support for Hamas, urging it to attack Israel with rocket strikes and suicide bombings, and addressing the Palestinian group with the chant: "We are your army."

In Egypt, thousands of protesters stood at the al-Azhar mosque, one of the oldest in the world, chanting "Where is the Arab army?", while others gathered at the central Tahrir Square.

Some demanded military action against Israel, others said Arab states should consider using other methods to stop the bombardment of Gaza.

"Palestine is the only country that unites our voices. If the Persian Gulf countries do not send aid, at least they should stop sending oil and gas. That's the least they should do," said protester Mohammed Gomaa in Cairo.

In Southeast Asia, hundreds of people gathered to protest near the U.S. embassies in each of the Indonesian and Malaysian capitals, burning Israeli flags and stamping on pictures of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Joe Biden.

"Today we gather here with the same intention to condemn the criminal act by Israel," said Qilila Marisa, a protester in Kuala Lumpur.

