

NEWS IN BRIEF

West not qualified to preach human rights: Tehran



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IRNA - Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani rebuked Western countries for drafting and voting for an anti-Iran UN resolution, saying they are not qualified to preach human rights to Iranians. In response to the anti-Iran resolution in the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, Kanaani said countries that have a long history of systemic human rights violations and crimes against nations are in no position to give human rights advice to the Iranian government and people. The passing of the anti-Iran resolution amid indifference to Israeli crimes in Gaza has brought dishonor to Western countries and laid bare their "blatant hypocrisy and sheer lies" about human rights, he said.

Iran, Kazakhstan resume political talks after years



TASNIM - Iranian and Kazakh diplomats held a new round of political consultations between the two Asian states after a four-year hiatus. In the meeting held in Tehran, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani and his Kazakh counterpart Alibek Bakayev talked about ways to expand relations between Iran and Kazakhstan and discussed a broad range of regional and international issues.

The two diplomats also weighed plans for the conclusion of a road map to bilateral trade, the facilitation of economic relations and trade exchanges, the promotion of cultural and scientific cooperation such as the exchange of academics, and closer ties in the tourism industry. Highlighting the impact of international cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan on strengthened multilateral mechanisms, Bagheri said closer interaction between the two states within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the confidence building measures in Asia will help promote sustainable security in the region.

UN warns starvation imminent in Gaza as aid halts again

International Desk

UN aid deliveries to Gaza were suspended again on Friday due to shortages of fuel and a communications shutdown, deepening the misery of thousands of hungry and homeless Palestinians as Israeli troops battled Hamas fighters in the enclave. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said civilians faced the "immediate possibility of starvation" due to the lack of food supplies. Nine Palestinians were killed and others injured in an Israeli strike that hit a group of displaced people near the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt - the transit point for aid.

WHO's demand

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization called on Friday for a regular flow of patients to be allowed out of Gaza for treatment in Egypt, to relieve the pressure on overwhelmed hospitals. WHO said a system needed to be set up to get priority cases out of the besieged Palestinian territory. Twenty-five out of 36 hospitals in the strip are not functioning and the remainder are struggling to provide services. "This is clearly not enough to support the endless needs arising due to the hostilities," said Richard Peepkorn, the WHO representative in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israel has claimed its troops had found a tunnel shaft used by Hamas at Shifa Hospital in the north of the Gaza Strip.

The hospital, packed with patients and displaced people and struggling to keep operating, has become a major focus of global concern. Israel claims Hamas has stored weapons and ammunition and is holding hostages in a network of tunnels under hospitals like Shifa, using patients and people taking shelter there as human shields. Hamas denies this.

With the war about to enter its seventh week, there is no sign of any let-up despite international calls for a ceasefire or at least for humanitarian pauses.

The conflict was triggered by an attack by Hamas fighters on Oct. 7 killing 1,200 Israelis. More than 11,500 Palestinians, at least 4,700 of them children, have now been killed in Gaza.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), quoting Palestinian data, said Israeli attacks had destroyed or damaged at least 45% of Gaza's housing units.

Trucks suspended

The UN said there would be no cross-border aid operation on Friday due to fuel shortages and a communication shutdown. For a second consecutive day on Thursday no aid trucks arrived in Gaza due to lack of fuel for distributing relief. An Egyptian security source



said three fuel trucks were ready to cross from Egypt into Gaza on Friday, but an aid official inside the enclave said there was no confirmation that more fuel would be brought in. Nearly the entire Gazan population is in desperate need of food assistance, said WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain.

Water as 'weapon of war'

The organization also said on Friday it was very worried about the spread of disease in Gaza, citing more than 70,000 reported cases of acute respiratory infections and over 44,000 cases

of diarrhea, far more than expected.

Also, a UN expert said on Friday that Israel "must stop using water as a weapon of war" and allow clean water and fuel into Gaza to activate the water supply network before it is "too late." "Every hour that passes with Israel preventing the provision of safe drinking water in the Gaza Strip, in brazen breach of international law, puts Gazans at risk of dying of thirst and diseases," Pedro Arrojo-Agudo said.

'Policy of terror'

In the West Bank, UN figures show that daily Israeli set-

tlers attacks have more than doubled since the Hamas attacks. France on Thursday condemned violence by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, calling it a "policy of terror" aimed at displacing Palestinians and urging Israeli authorities to protect Palestinians from the violence.

"Concerning the West Bank, I'd like to express the strongest condemnation by France of the violence carried out by the settlers against the Palestinians," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Anne-Claire Legendre. UN human rights chief Volk-



Palestinian children eat their meal amid the ruins of their family home destroyed in an Israeli strike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, on November 7, 2023. AFP

er Turk echoed her words. Speaking in Geneva, Turk said he was deeply concerned about the intensification of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has asked Israel to take "urgent" steps to stop violence being carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

Iranian FM: US responsible for crisis in Gaza

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian blamed the United States for the escalation of crisis in the Gaza Strip due to its support for the Israeli regime. "We really didn't want this crisis to expand," Amir-Abdollahian told CBS News, referencing Israel's ongoing slaughter in Gaza. "But the US has

been intensifying the war in Gaza by throwing its support behind Israel." Referring to Hamas's October 7 operation in the occupied territories, the Iranian top diplomat said Hamas's attacks were a response to 75 years of Israeli occupation. "What Hamas did was based on its legitimate right to defend itself," Amir-Abdollahian said. He also denied that Iran

was responsible for a recent drone attack in the Red Sea that appeared to be targeting a US missile destroyer. The drone, which originated from Yemen, was shot down early Wednesday morning by the USS Thomas Hudner as it was "heading in the direction of the ship," according to a statement from the Pentagon. In a separate interview with the Financial Times,

he revealed that Tehran told the US through back channels that it did not want the Israel-Hamas conflict to spread further, but also warned Washington that regional conflict could be unavoidable if Israeli attacks on Gaza continue. "In response to the US," he said, "we said that Iran does not want the war to spread, but due to the approach adopted by the

US and Israel in the region, if the crimes against the people of Gaza and the West Bank are not stopped, any possibility could be considered, and a wider conflict could prove inevitable." "The war has already expanded in the region," he added. "The fact that the Yemeni Army... attacks the occupied lands with missiles and drones means the war has begun

to expand. The fact that [Lebanon's resistance movement] Hezbollah is fighting with a third of the Israeli Army shows the war has expanded," he said. Amir-Abdollahian warned that the resistance groups in Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon "are not indifferent towards the killing of their Muslim and Arab peers in Palestine".

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Gen. Qaani: Axis of Resistance stays united with Gaza fighters

The head of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has assured the military wing of Hamas in the Gaza Strip of the solidarity of the "Axis of Resistance" with Palestinian fighters. "Your brothers in the axis of Al-Quds and the resistance are united with you, and they will not allow the enemy to reach its dirty goals in Gaza and Palestine," Brig. Gen. Ismail Qaani said in a message on Thursday, Press TV reported. The Axis of Resistance refers to an alliance among Iran,

Syria and anti-Israeli groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere. Gen. Qaani hailed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm by Palestinian resistance fighters on Oct. 7, which caught Israel off guard and shattered the regime's myth of superiority in everything from military to intelligence power. The message came after the Western media claimed that Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh had gotten a dressing-down from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran. On Thursday, senior

Hamas official Osama Hamdan dismissed claims to this effect as "pure lies and slander," saying the British news agency Reuters "has published worthless lies instead of news." "Everyone knows the nature of the relationship between the Hamas movement and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the position of the country in supporting the Palestinian cause and its resistance, and especially the Hamas movement, and they know the view of Ayatollah Khamenei in supporting the Palestinian resistance.