

# Hamas-Israel truce deal gets global welcome

Israel and Hamas agreed on Wednesday to a cease-fire in Gaza for at least four days, to let in aid and release at least 50 people captured by fighters in exchange for at least 150 Palestinians jailed in Israel.

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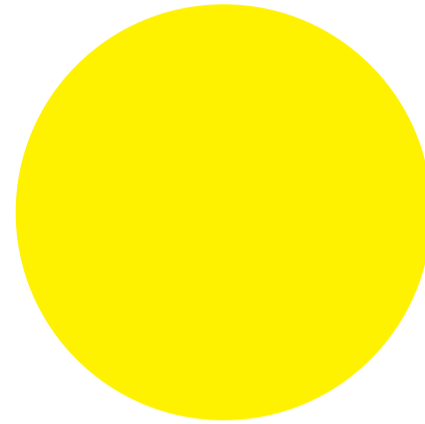
## SPECIAL ISSUE



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Empathetic Western media personalities fall victim to a comprehensive movement aimed at silencing support for Palestine

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Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (c) watches youths participate in a leg of traditional Iranian sports in Tehran on November 22, 2023. leader.ir

# Leader: Athletes Who Refused to Face Israel Vindicated

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## Minister: Iran supports OPEC+ decisions



Oil Minister Javad Owji on Wednesday said Iran, as one of the founders of OPEC, always supports the agreements and decisions made by OPEC+, a group comprising the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies.

The minister added Iran is convinced that the agreement reached between the alliance's members and issued in OPEC and non-OPEC producers' Declaration of Cooperation brings benefits for the global oil market, producers, consumers, and the economy, Shana reported.

Owji made the remarks as OPEC+ is scheduled to meet in Vienna on November 30 and could make further changes to an agreement that already limits supply into 2024 to support the market, according to analysts and OPEC+ sources.

"All observers and experts of the oil market acknowledge the constructive achievements of the OPEC+ agreement for market stability and energy security," stated the minister, adding the OPEC+ member states will discuss all options in their Sunday meeting to maintain oil market stability.

"The escalation and continuation of tensions in the Middle East region will lead to uncertainty and instability in energy markets, particularly the oil market, and endanger regional and global energy security," he underlined.

"The continuation of political instability causes sharp fluctuations in global oil prices and imperils security of energy supply and sustainable development of energy industry," continued the minister.

The sustainable stability of oil market demands the continuation of cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC members, noted Owji, adding, the OPEC+ member states are determined to provide the oil market with stability and maintain it; and their performance and putting the Declaration of Cooperation into action during the past years prove it.

The agreement and decisions made by OPEC+ is a key factor for eliminating fluctuations in the oil market, improving the global economy, encouraging new investments in the world oil industry, and ensuring the energy supply.

OPEC+ has delayed its ministerial meeting to Nov. 30, from Nov. 26, as previously scheduled, OPEC said in a statement on Wednesday.

Oil prices extended an earlier decline following the surprise development, Reuters reported.

# Iran Parliament wraps up debate on Seventh Development Plan

## Economy Desk

The debates on the bill outlining the country's Seventh Development Plan (2024-28) was completed in the Iranian Parliament on Wednesday after holding 57 open sessions which started on September 25.

Announcing the above, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf added that the bill will be sent to the Constitutional Council for ratification, IRNA reported.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi presented the bill to Parliament on June 18, when he explained the important features of the plan to lawmakers.

The plan, which is considered an umbrella document in Iran, outlining the roadmap for the three branches of government for the next five years, has been compiled in seven sections and 22 chapters, while considering other key documents of the country and the 26 policies announced by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed

Ali Khamenei.

"The seventh plan does not intend to amend the current laws of the country," Raisi told lawmakers, "In this plan, the focus has been put on the country's central issue and priorities."

## Tax revenues up, petrodollars down

Meanwhile, according to discussions on the budget bill for next Iranian year (to start March 20, 2024), tax revenues will increase by 42% compared to the current Iranian year, as oil revenues will drop by 3%.

The general budget resources in the bill have been targeted at about \$49.24 billion (24.62 quadrillion rials), which has increased by 18% compared to the figure for current year's budget bill.

Oil revenues of the country is estimated at \$11.7 billion (5.85 quadrillion rials) according to the bill, as tax revenues of the government will be \$29.92 billion (14.96 quadrillion rials).



## WSA: Iran's 10-month crude steel production tops 25m tons



## Economy Desk

Iranian steelmakers churned out 25.1 million tons of crude steel in the first 10 months of 2023, according to statistics released by the World Steel Association (WSA) on Wednesday, indicating that the country stands at tenth place among steel producing countries.

The country's steel ingot production for October 2023 registered a 3.5 percent growth compared to the figure for October 2022.

World crude steel production

for the 63 countries reporting to the association was 150 million tons in October 2023, a 0.6 percent increase compared to October 2022.

China produced 79.1 million tons in October 2023, down 1.8 percent over October 2022, while India produced 12.1 million tons of steel ingots last month, up 15.1 percent compared to the figure for last year, as Japan produced 7.5 million tons, up 2.6 percent compared to the same month last year.

The United States produced 6.8 million tons of crude steel in

August, up 3.4 percent. Russia is estimated to have produced 6.3 million tons, up 9.5 percent. South Korea produced 5.5 million tons, up 6.5 percent.

The World Steel Association is one of the largest and most dynamic industry associations in the world, with members in every major steel-producing country. The WSA represents steel producers, national and regional steel industry associations, and steel research institutes.

Members represent around 85 percent of global steel production.

## Tehran, Beijing sign MoU on textile industry

Iran and China inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the fields of textile industry and clothing.

The MoU was inked between the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Iran Textile Industries Association and the head of China International Textile Trade Promotion Council in Shanghai, on the sidelines of the ITMA Asia Exhibition, IRNA reported.

The two sides expressed hope that relations between the two countries will expand further with developing investment and sharing the technical know-how and experience of industrialists.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior officials of the two countries including Director General of Clothing and Textile Industries Office of the Ministry of Trade Mohsen Gorji, members

of the Board of Directors of China's Supreme Council of Textile and Clothing Industries, and those who are involved in the field of clothing and textile industry.

The ITMA is the world's largest international textile and garment technology exhibition, which is held once every two years in Shanghai.



## Iran, Oman ink cooperation deal to boost trade

Officials from Iran and Oman signed a cooperation agreement for enhancing bilateral ties in the fields of trade and economy.

It was inked between the Arvand Free Zone Organization and the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce following a visit by a high-ranking delegation of Iranian free zones to the Sultanate of Oman, Tasnim news agency reported.

Vice President and Secretary of Free Industrial-Trade and Special Economic Zone Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki in his visit to Oman was accompanied by CEOs of Iran's free zones organizations.

He held talks with the chiefs of free zones, the trade minister, and heads of chambers of commerce of Oman.

Given the trade opportunities and commonalities that exist at the Arvand Free Zone, a cooperation agreement was inked between

the Arvand Free Zone Organization and Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce, in line with enhancing the level of trade exchanges between the two countries.

Under the agreement, the two sides emphasized developing cooperation in the field of exports as well as exchanging investors in the areas of exports, production and re-branding.



## Iran Metafo 2023 expo to open Friday

The 20th edition of Iran's international metallurgy exhibition entitled "Iran Metafo 2023" will be held in Tehran during November 24 to 27.

In this exhibition, the Iran Central Iron Ore Company (ICIOC) will showcase its latest products and

achievements in the field of mining and minerals, reported Tasnim news agency.

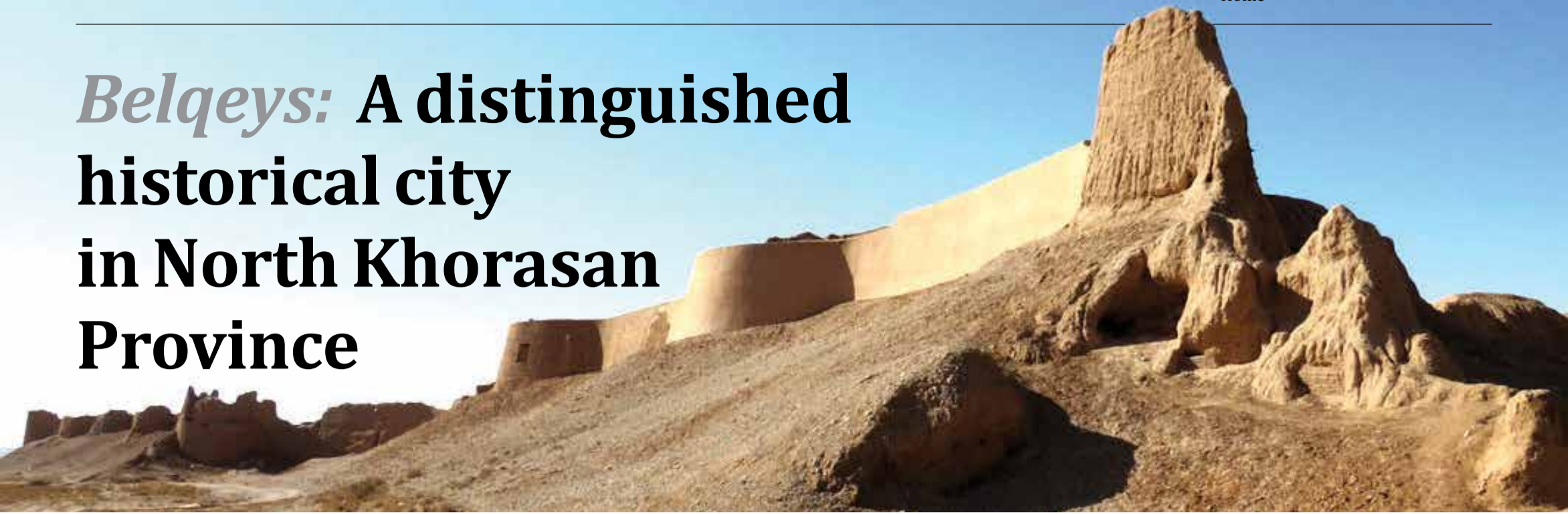
The expo covers a wide range of products and services related to the metallurgy industry, including iron and steel products, casting, molding, forging

and non-ferrous metals. The exhibition is the biggest event of its kind in the Middle East and its aim is to connect Iranian businesses with their foreign counterparts, introduce them to providers of raw materials, and present opportunities for attracting

investors and signing cooperation agreements.

It provides an opportunity for companies to showcase their products and services, network with potential customers and partners, and learn about the latest trends in the metallurgy industry.

# Belqeys: A distinguished historical city in North Khorasan Province



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## Iranica Desk

Iran is a country steeped in history, with evidence of our ancestors' settlements dating back thousands of years. North Khorasan Province is a treasure trove of historical sites, where nature and history have combined to create a unique blend of attractions.

The historical city of Belqeys, one of the most distinguished historical cities in Iran, is the crowning jewel of this province. Located in the southwest of Esfarayen, and on the eastern outskirts of Jushaqan village, this ancient city has a 4,000-year history. Throughout the centuries, people have always inhabited this area, and new discoveries continue to shed light on the city's rich and complex past.

Despite being repeatedly destroyed by invading tribes, Belqeys has been rebuilt time and time again, each time rising from the ashes to reclaim its former glory. Recent archaeological excavations have revealed that the city's origins can be traced back to the pre-Islamic era. Artifacts from this ancient city, registered on Iran's National Heritage List, have been displayed in North Khorasan Province's Museum of Archaeology, located in Bojnourd, after ten years of excavation.

Historical documents reveal that Belqeys was famously founded by Esfandiyar, the son and crown prince of the Kiyanian King Goshtasp, according to Islamic historians and geographers. Life continued in the historical city until the end of the Safavid period, when it was completely destroyed during the latter part of Tahmasb II's reign and the beginning of Nader Shah Afshar's rule. Despite attempts to rebuild the city, it

never regained its former glory after the Afghan invasion, and it took on the legendary name of Belqeys over time. Despite this, it remains an essential part of Iran's cultural heritage and legacy.

### Ancient castle

One of the most significant remaining structures in the historical city of Belqeys is a 1,200-year-old castle, steeped in history and cultural significance. This fortress, with its origins tracing back to the aftermath of the Mongol invasion, bears witness to both construction and restoration efforts over the centuries. Under the control of the Afghans, the castle faced complete destruction, yet it continued to be inhabited by families until the late Qajar era.

Regarded as the second oldest mud-brick structure in Iran, after the Bam Citadel, this castle is a testament to Sassanid architecture, constructed primarily using mud and clay. Comprising 29 towers, each standing at approximately 11 meters in height, the fortress was encircled by a protective moat. Excavations in 2007 unearthed pottery similar to that found in Marv, Samarkand, and Neishabur.

Despite the ravages of time and illegal excavations, remnants of the castle's interior endure in the form of a clay shell, situated within a sprawling 51,000-square-meter area. The construction materials predominantly consist of clay, with strategic use of brick and wood for added stability in certain sections.

In a departure from the typical high-altitude positioning of castles, this for-

ness stands on a level plain, encircled by a protective moat. This area encompasses various neighborhoods within the city, all enclosed by sturdy mud and clay walls. Noteworthy structures within this expanse include Tappeh Menar (Menar Hill), a bustling bazaar, workshop areas, as well as a cemetery.

### Menar Hill

Menar Hill holds particular significance within the historical city, its presence verified by geographical books and travelogues, which attest to the existence of a mosque and its minarets.

The third season of excavation in the site yielded a significant find: the unearthing of a pottery kiln dating back to the latter half of the sixth century.

### Water reservoirs

In the historical city of Belqeys, there are two notable water reservoirs (*ab-anbar* in Persian) situated in the northern and southern regions of the city. Both reservoirs share similar features, including an entrance, staircase, faucet, and tank. However, while the northern reservoir remains relatively intact, the southern one is in deteriorating condition.

### Tunnel

In recent years, a road construction project near Esfarayen led to the remarkable discovery of an extensive network of underground tunnels. After thorough investigations, it was revealed that this extraordinary 1,800-year-old tunnel belonged to the historical city of Belqeys, stretching an impressive 18 kilometers. Archaeologists suggest that this extensive tunnel network may have been constructed for seeking relief from summer heat or providing protection for women, children, and the elderly during times of conflict.

### Sheikh Azari tomb

Sheikh Fakh al-Din Hamzeh, also known as Azari, was a renowned mystic and poet of the region, spending part of his life in India and the majority of his days in Iran. The tomb of this esteemed poet now stands as a prominent tourist attraction in North Khorasan Province and has earned a place on Iran's National Heritage List. The structure comprises two distinct architectural spaces

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with varying dimensions — the southern part serving as a mosque, while the northern part is revered as the burial place and tomb of Sheikh Azari.

### Arts

**Plasterwork:** The Menar Hill in the historical city of Belqeys has yielded a unique discovery of plasterwork artifacts during archaeological excavations, shedding light on the artistic practices of the region.

**Tilework:** A multitude of exquisite tiles were unearthed in the archaeological site, indicating a thriving and prosperous tilework tradition in the city. These tiles were utilized to adorn prominent buildings, showcasing the city's rich artistic heritage.

**Pottery:** Pottery and clay vessels represent a significant aspect of human achievements, reflecting both daily life and artistic expression. In the historical city of Belqeys, glazed and monochrome pottery is notably abundant, signifying the popularity of monochrome pottery production during the early Islamic period.

**Metalwork:** Scholars and researchers have recognized the advanced knowledge and skill in metallurgy among the residents of Esfarayen, particularly during the Seljuk and Ilkhanid periods. The existence of metal vessels bearing the signatures of Esfarayeni masters, though many are housed in foreign museums, serves as tangible evidence of this craftsmanship.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

US fears  
Iran could  
sell Russia  
ballistic  
missiles

● IRNA

REUTERS - The White House on Tuesday said Iran may be considering providing Russia with ballistic missiles for use in Ukraine.

White House spokesman John Kirby said the United States would monitor the situation between Iran and Russia and take appropriate action as needed.

In return for that support, he said Russia had been offering Tehran "unprecedented defense cooperation" including missiles, electronics, and air defense. Iran was seeking to purchase billions of dollars in military equipment from Russia including attack helicopters, radars, and combat trainer aircraft.

He said the Wagner mercenary group, at Russia's direction, was preparing to provide air defense capabilities to either Hezbollah or Iran.

The Kremlin declined on Wednesday to comment on Kirby's claim.

"We are developing relations with Iran, including in the field of military-technical cooperation, but we do not comment on this information," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in a regular news briefing.

Iran seeks  
to nix dark  
shipping  
terminology

● ALAMY

SPLASH - Iran is proposing amendments to a draft resolution on dark shipping at the upcoming meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly.

In a document submitted ahead of a meeting next week, Iran said that the recently proposed resolution "shows a clear deviation of IMO's concentration from its function and merit, as it includes controversial concepts and terms that lack precise and absolute definitions acceptable to all member states or within international law, such as dark ship or illicit."

# Leader: Athletes who refused to face Israel vindicated



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei hailed those athletes who expressed their support for Palestine and the Palestinian cause and withdrew from compet-

ing with the occupying regime's representatives in international tournaments, saying the veracity of their act is now manifested more than ever before in the wake of Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with a group of Iranian athletes, sports personalities, and medal winners who participated in the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, Press

TV reported. "Today, the whole world has realized why the Iranian athlete will not agree to face the Zionist side on the field," the Leader said, adding that Israeli athletes are competing for



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses a group of Iranian athletes, sports personalities, and medal winners in Tehran on November 22, 2023.

● Leader.ir

a terrorist and criminal regime. He maintained on Wednesday that Israel was "knocked out" in Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, the largest military operation by Palestinian resistance groups against the occupying regime.

"[The Palestinian resistance movement] Hamas, not as a government or country with ample facilities but as a combatant group, managed to deal a knockout blow to the usurping Zionists with all their facilities."

Stressing that the Israeli regime is still reeling from the burden and disgrace of a heavy defeat after Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, the Leader said, "Their show of power has no value when it is done to the hospitals, schools, and the homeless people in Gaza." Ayatollah Khamenei added, "It's as if an athlete loses on the field, and then in revenge for that loss, he attacks the fans of the op-

posing team, insults them, and beats them up."

Elsewhere in his address, the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution censured the politicization of sports and the double-standard approach by certain international organizations.

"They say sports are not political, but when they need to politicize sports, they politicize it in the worst way. At the slightest excuse, a country is banned from participating in all international sports events," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

The Leader stressed that they ban a country on the pretext of war while ignoring another country's war, war crimes, and even genocide.

Pointing to Israel's incessant shelling of Gaza over the past 48 days, the Leader said, "There is nothing more ignominious than what the Zionist regime has perpetrated. The Zionist regime's heavy defeat will not be compensated by these bombings. Such bombardment campaigns will only shorten the life of the occupying regime, [and] this tyranny and cruelty will not go unanswered."

## Will cease-fire become permanent?



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

### OPINION

As per the latest news, a temporary cease-fire between Israel and Hamas is set to kick off this morning. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had been dragging his feet on accepting a cease-fire, holding out until his objectives are achieved. Israel's utmost desire was to wipe out Hamas, treating it as their top priority. Both Israel and its main supporter, the United States, labeled Hamas' actions in the occupied territories on October 7

as terrorism, branding the resistance group a terrorist organization.

Media reports suggested that Israel and the United States hesitated to accept the cease-fire as they saw any negotiations with Hamas as a recognition of its existence. Moreover, Israel, fueled by its military superiority, believed it could swiftly end its operations in the Gaza Strip and crush Hamas. It appears that the United States and European nations supporting Israel shared the same notion, expecting Israel's Gaza operation to swiftly attain its goals. Consequently, they opposed a cease-fire, with the United States vetoing a proposed reso-

lution in the UN Security Council for a humanitarian pause.

Now, after 48 days of war, Israel not only failed to achieve its desired goal of obliterating Hamas, but the regime has eventually come to the negotiating table with Hamas, mediated by Qatar and Egypt. While Israel has yet to secure a decisive victory on the battlefield, it has lost the battle in the media and global public opinion. Soon after the conflict broke out, Israel's propaganda machine and the biased coverage of the mainstream media lost their effectiveness that portrayed Hamas attacks on October 7 as "terrorist and inhumane." On the

other hand, independent media outlets and people on social networking services became the front-runners, disseminating information and documenting Israel's atrocities in Gaza to the world. The images of women, children, journalists being killed, hospitals being bombed and destroyed, and the disruption of basic amenities like water and electricity laid bare Israel's true colors for the world to see. It was only natural for mass protests and rallies to take place in the heart of America and European countries, expressing solidarity with the people of Gaza and condemning Israel's crimes.

Simultaneously, these unprecedented and massive demonstrations sent shiver down the spine of Western politicians who staunchly support Israel. They found themselves pursuing a policy that was openly opposed by their own citizens. Gradually, Western politicians started criticizing Israel's inhumane conduct in Gaza, to the point where even US President Joe Biden was compelled to adopt a critical stance against Netanyahu's stubbornness in rejecting a cease-fire and disregarding civilian casualties. Netanyahu is now facing internal pressure from the families of captives, as well as former Israeli of-

icials, not to mention the hardline factions within Israel, particularly some members of his cabinet like hard-right Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who believes his boss has made too many concessions to Hamas.

At the same time, the Israeli prime minister is also facing external pressure from global public opinion and certain European and American politicians who view further support for the regime and its crimes as detrimental to their political future and party interests. There are hopes that the persistence of such pressure will make the temporary cease-fire a permanent one.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran greenlights entry of IAEA inspectors

### International Desk

Iran's nuclear chief urged the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to refrain from politicizing the country's nuclear file, saying Tehran has approved 120 inspectors of the UN nuclear watchdog to enter the country.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a Wednesday cabinet session, Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said according to Article 9 of the statute, we are entitled to accept or

reject the inspectors that are introduced, IRNA reported. Eslami pointed out that some of those inspectors have not come to Iran for years.

The IAEA criticized Iran's September decision to withdraw the accreditation of several of its inspectors, saying the move "directly and seriously affected" the agency's work.

The Iranian nuclear chief further explained that IAEA's duties regarding Iran fall within the framework of the 2015 nuclear agreement, also known as the Joint Com-

prehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

"The JCPOA states that if several parties fail to fulfill their obligations, the other party may suspend its obligations. In addition, the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, which was approved by the Iranian Parliament, is being implemented."

"Iran's actions are carried out within the framework of the Safeguards Agreement, and the International Atomic Energy Agency supervises these activities," Eslami added.

# Hamas-Israel truce deal gets global welcome

*WHO: Cease-fire would not end civilian suffering*



Flares fall over Gaza, as seen from southern Israel, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas, on November 22, 2023. **REUTERS**

## International Desk

Israel and Hamas agreed on Wednesday to a cease-fire in Gaza for at least four days, to let in aid and release at least 50 people captured by fighters in exchange for at least 150 Palestinians jailed in Israel. Nations around the globe welcomed the announcement that Israel and Hamas reached a deal to exchange prisoners and pause Israel's ferocious fighting and bombardment in Gaza. The World Health Organization also welcomed the deal, but the UN health agency's chief said it would not end civilian suffering.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who was in Beirut told a press conference upon his arrival in Beirut, "The six weeks of resistance in Gaza proved that the main losers in the face of global public opinion are the United States and Israel." "There is no doubt that the future of Gaza and Palestine will be determined by the Palestinian people alone," he added. Amir-Abdollahian quoted the leaders of the resistance as saying that the fingers of the resistance will remain on the trigger until the realization of the full rights of Palestinians and the complete libera-

tion of Palestine. The first truce in a brutal seven-week-old war, reached after mediation by Qatar, was hailed around the world as a sign of progress that could ease the suffering of Gaza's civilians and the exchange of prisoners. Israel said the cease-fire could be extended further, as long as more hostages were freed. Hamas and allied groups captured around 240 Israelis when fighters rampaged through southern Israeli towns on Oct. 7. Previously, Hamas had released just four. The truce was not expected to begin until Thursday

morning. The Palestinian Authority hailed the truce, calling for a more permanent cease-fire. "President Mahmoud Abbas and the leadership welcome the humanitarian truce agreement, value the Qatari-Egyptian effort made, and reaffirm the call for a comprehensive cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and the entry of humanitarian aid," senior PA official Hussein al-Sheikh wrote on X. US President Joe Biden thanked the leaders of Qatar and Egypt for their "critical leadership" in reaching the deal. Mentioning the release of

prisoners, he expressed his gratification that the prisoners "will be reunited with their families once this deal is fully implemented".

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron called the deal a crucial step towards providing relief to the families of the prisoners and addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said the "breakthrough" agreement "must be used to bring vital aid to people in Gaza".

Beijing hoped "that it will help ease the plight of the humanitarian crisis, de-escalate the conflict and ease tensions", said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning.

The Kremlin called the deal "the first good news from Gaza in a very long time", noting that "it is only on the basis of these kinds of pauses that some outlines of future attempts at a sustainable settlement can be built".

Egypt, which helped broker the deal, hailed the success in creating a "humanitarian truce," according to President Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi, who welcomed the deal and noted "the continuation of the Egyptian efforts to reach final and sustainable

solutions... to guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people".

Jordan's Foreign Ministry also issued a statement, praising Qatar and Egypt for their roles in brokering the "humanitarian truce". The statement stressed that the truce must allow for increased aid to Gaza and lead to a more permanent cease-fire which stops the "targeting of Palestinians and their forced displacement".

Turkey's Foreign Ministry said it hoped the "humanitarian pause" will be part of efforts "to completely end the conflict as soon as possible and initiate a process towards a just and lasting peace on the basis of a two-state solution".

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said she had ordered her European Commission to step up aid deliveries to Gaza. "The European Commission will do its utmost to use this pause for a humanitarian surge to Gaza," she said in a statement, adding, "I wholeheartedly welcome the agreement".

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres "welcomes the agreement reached by Israel and Hamas, with the mediation of Qatar, supported by Egypt and the United States," a spokesman for the UN chief said in a statement, adding, "This is an important step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done".

**AFP, Reuters, and IRNA contributed to this report.**

## Public opinion pressuring Western gov'ts



By Seyed Davood Aghaee  
Professor of international law

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The surprise attack by Hamas on Israel on October 7 and the significant losses suffered by Israelis in this operation was akin to an earthquake in the occupied territories and Netanyahu's cabinet. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had stated in the early days that, following the Holocaust, the damage from Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was the most substantial inflicted on Jews. This operation, for Israel, which had claimed to have created the utmost security for its citizens, proved to be a severe blow. Consequently, in an attempt to cover and recover from the heavy blow it had received, Israel initiated destructive attacks against the people of Gaza, which continue to this day.

Leaders of the United States and several European countries showed solidarity with Israel and supported the attacks on Gaza under the guise of "right to self-defense". The US and Europe believed that, given Israel's military superiority compared to Hamas, the Israeli Army could quickly achieve its goals of destroying Hamas and freeing hostages. However, the situation did not unfold as Israel desired and its supporters envisioned. Hamas resisted vigorously and, after 48 days, Israel has yet to achieve its objectives, and Hamas remains steadfast.

In the early days of the war, Israel, with the aid of media campaign, managed to sway public opinion in its favor, adding the term "right to self-defense" to the scope of its attacks. However, as time passed and more angles of the events of October 7 came to light, coupled with the intensification of Israel's atrocities in Gaza, which starkly contradicts human rights, world public opinion turned against Israel. Demonstrations and large rallies were held, not only in Arab and Islamic countries, but also in the capitals of Western countries that supported Israel, where people demanded an end to the war. Public opinion in Western countries, contrary to their governments' positions, rose in support of the people of Gaza.

With the heightened global sentiment against Israel and in support of the people of Gaza, especially with the prolonged war and significant casualties, doubts arose among Western policymakers. They questioned whether they should continue to support Israel unconditionally and remain silent in the face of the massacre of the people. Differences of opinion emerged among Western politicians, especially in the United States, regarding whether the policy of unconditional support for Israel was justified. Public voices resoundingly declare that this unconditional support was not the right policy. It seems that under the influence of this public pressure and the questioning of Western claims, such as the pursuit of peace and the observance of human rights by Israel, President Joe Biden and the US government are gradually shifting their stance and expressing criticism of Israel's behavior. This change in position, however, does not signify a fundamental shift in U.S. policy towards Israel, but rather tactical adjustments. US politicians see that their claimed values of striving for peace and respecting human rights are losing credibility globally due to Israel's actions.

Public opinion is a powerful tool in shaping the policies of the Western world, and it appears to gradually influence the positions of Western governments regarding the Gaza war. To prevent further global discredit, the US government must pay attention to public sentiment and, at the very least, modify its policy of unconditional support for Israel's attacks.

## Israel is losing on both fronts

By Mohammad Mardani Nokandeh

Political analyst

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In today's wars, every battle has two fronts, says an envoy of the apartheid regime of Israel; the first is the battlefield, where the key elements are soldiers, weaponry, and ammunition, and the other is public opinion. The United States attacked Iraq and Afghanistan to extract free oil and minerals and have a closer look at the soon-to-be dominant power in the West Asia region, Iran, under the pretext of fighting terrorism. The Americans got millions killed in the process and achieved nothing.

United States nuked Japan, napalmed Vietnam, created and armed ISIS — as former president Donald Trump put it — and got many governments to support it logistically. After seeing its plans fail at the

hands of the Iranian hero Major General Soleimani, the US took revenge and assassinated him and denounced him as a terrorist, with its allies following in its footsteps. The country has thus repeatedly lost the battle for public opinion but bounced back every time by taking advantage of Hollywood, mainstream media, the fading Dollar, and the corruption, fear, weakness, and greed of some other world leaders.

In the case of Israel and Palestine, even the recent war has been different. While Hamas forces are mobilizing under and over the ground to open a front and fight against the occupying enemies, the occupiers cowardly airstrike schools, mosques, and most importantly, the hospitals. Meanwhile, you can hear here and there that the Israelis say Hamas is spreading disturbing pictures from other wars as propaganda to victimize itself. The Zionist regime

bombs Gazan Hospitals, which are filled to the brim with injured people, and calls it Hamas' false flag operations.

Unlike the military front, there is a major difference in the second front of this "genocide, not war". This time, we are witnessing an eye-opening shift in public opinion. Although the true narration of what is going on in Gaza is being suppressed and silenced under heavy bombardments, we are witnessing rallies in the world's major capitals that call for a ceasefire in Gaza. Massive crowds in unprecedented numbers expressed their hatred for Israel.

Before the historic October 7, 2023, the world was slowly forgetting the misery of the Palestinian people. Arab leaders, who were supposed to be supporters of Palestine, were finding their peace with the Zionists. Not only the right to self-determination for the people of Gaza was fading away

in the discourse, some were generously offering the occupiers a two-state solution, but the amount of children's blood spilled on the streets and hospitals of Gaza since October 7, shook the world. No one in their right mind can witness the gruesome actions of an infamous regime against a small population of defenseless civilians and stay quiet. The violent genocide that Israel inflicted against the defenseless men, children, and women of Palestine made it impossible to legitimize their actions under the pretext of self-defense against alleged "Hamas terrorism".

The outcome of the war on the second front is already determined; Palestine won the public opinion, even though at the cost of nearly 5,000 innocent children — among a total chilling number of 12,000 bodies — who were supposed to have a normal life ahead of them. The world is restless and hates Israel, no amount of Semitism or

anti-Semitism sugar-coating can reverse this hatred, and nothing can fix this humiliating loss.

In response to the envoys of the apartheid illegal regime who claim in self-righteousness that Hamas is an entity you cannot reason with, one must ask, "What kind of reason?" Is it the "I kill your family members and relatives, kick you out of your home, overtake your land, and get away with it with the support of allied colonial powers and you should take it and move on or I'll kill your people even more" kind of reason?

How dare anyone victimize Israel and blame Hamas? What are we blaming them for? Blame them for retaliating the slaughter of their loved ones in previous Zionist raids, or for standing their ground to the last drop of their blood? What happened to us to think that way? What treaty did they violate? When did they consent to occupation?

Keep talking about a two-state solution. Why would the Palestinian people give away their homeland to the occupiers?

They say Hamas attacked civilians and took them as hostages. First of all, there is a major damning argument that the footage of Hamas attacks was staged by the loyal henchmen of Netanyahu — whose administration is destined to fall apart due to corruption — to use it as a uniting cement and justify the genocide against Gaza people. Secondly, I don't even call them hostages. I simply call the move an arrest and capture of illegal immigrants and trespassers because none of them obtained permission from the Palestinians before entering Palestine.

Let us all join the free souls of the world in support of Palestine and play a part in ending the ongoing genocide of Palestinians as the seven-decades-old "spider's web," known as Israel, is breaking apart.

## Violent clashes mar Brazil v Argentina match



● SERGIO MORAES/REUTERS

REUTERS – Argentina captain Lionel Messi accused the Brazilian police of brutality as the start of their World Cup qualifier against Brazil was delayed by half an hour after clashes between police and visiting fans at Maracana Stadium on Tuesday.

Brazilian and Argentinian fans started fighting behind one of the goals during the national anthems, prompting police to charge at the travelling contingent with night sticks drawn.

Some Argentina fans responded by ripping up and throwing seats at the officers as other fans panicked and came onto the pitch to escape the fighting.

One Argentina fan lay on the pitch with a bloodied face before being taken from the stadium on a stretcher.

The Argentina team, led by Messi, went over to the terraces to try to calm the situation before leaving the pitch and returning to the dressing room.

"It was bad because we saw how they were beating people ... The police, as it already happened in the Libertadores final, were once again repressing the people with night sticks, there were players who had families over there," Messi said in a pitchside television interview.

"We went to the locker room because it was the best way to calm everything down, it could have ended in tragedy.

"You think about the families, the people who are there, who don't know what's going on and we were more concerned about that than playing a match that, at that point, was of secondary importance."

Brazil captain Marquinhos, who could be seen interacting with Messi and the Argentinian players as they tried to calm the situation, shared the concerns. "We were worried about the families, women and children, that we were seeing in panic up there in the stands," Marquinhos told reporters.

"Down on the pitch it was hard for us to understand what was going on, it was a very scary situation."

Argentina won 1-0 with a 63rd-minute headed winner from defender Nicolas Otamendi and celebrated the victory over their fiercest rivals in front of their fans at the same end of the ground where the trouble had occurred.

It was a third straight defeat for five-times World Cup winners Brazil, who had midfielder Joelinton sent off 18 minutes from time.

# FIFA U-17 World Cup: Shootout heartbreak sends Iran packing

Sports Desk

Iran's impressive run at the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Indonesia came to a painful end after a 4-1 shootout defeat against Morocco in the round of 16.

Iran's Hesam Nafari sent his effort from the spot wide and Kasra Taheri was denied by goalkeeper Taha Benrhazil, while the Moroccans converted all four spot-kicks to head into the last-eight clash against fellow African side Mali, which routed Mexico 5-0 earlier in the day.

The Iranian boys thought they had done enough to go through when Esmail Qolizadeh broke the deadlock with 17 minutes from normal time, only to see his header goal canceled out by Nassim Azaouzi's superb volley in the fourth minute of the stoppage time.

"It was a game of tears and smiles at the end," Iran head coach Hossein Abdi said after the game, adding: "My players were clearly exhausted as we had to take an hours-long trip [to reach to Surabaya] and only had one training session before the game, while the Moroccans had been here for five days."

"I believe we could have won the game if the team had not been tired. I still want to congratulate my players. I should also apologize to the Iranian people for not giving them what they deserved.

"We say goodbye to the under-17 World Cup but we will regroup for another tournament in the near future," added the Iranian.

The setback against the under-17 Africa Cup of Nations runner-up, boasting players from top-notch European club academies, still takes nothing away from Iran's brave campaign in Indonesia.

Hossein Abdi's team pulled off one of the biggest upsets in the history of the competition by coming from two goals down at halftime to beat the defending champion Brazil 3-2 in their group opener.

Iran then went toe to toe with England before a 90th-minute winner from Manchester City academy player Joel Ndala gave the 2017 champions a 2-1 victory.

The 5-0 triumph over New Caledonia saw Abdi's team finish the group stage equal on six points with the two under-17 heavyweights but settle for the third spot on a goal difference.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Germany defeated USA 3-2 thanks to a Bilal Yalcinkaya's last-gasp winner and will face Spain – 2-1 winner against Japan on the preceding night – on Friday for a place in the semifinals. Argentina thrashed Venezuela 5-0 to set an all-South American quarterfinal date against Brazil, which had beaten Ecuador 3-1 on Monday.



Iran's Esmail Qolizadeh (1) is in action against Morocco's Ayoub Chaikhoun during a last-16 game at the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Surabaya, Indonesia, on November 21, 2023.

● FIFA

## Iran 'will take lessons' from Uzbekistan draw, head coach Qalenoiei says

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Qalenoiei said his players will learn from their mistakes after playing to a 2-2 draw against Uzbekistan in a World Cup qualifier in Tashkent.

It was a game of two halves at the Milliy Stadium as the visiting side went into the break with a two-goal cushion, in what was arguably Iran's best 45 minutes under Qalenoiei since he took charge in March, but the host delivered a much-improved performance after the break to salvage a point.

Sardar Azmoun, wearing Iran's armband, found Ramin Rezaeian in the corner of the box with a delicate touch before Sepahan fullback's effort went in off the keeper's leg with 14 minutes into the game. Porto striker Mahdi Taremi doubled Iran's lead with a composed finish in the 38th minute after being played through by Brentford midfielder Saman Qoddous, who was



Uzbekistan skipper Eldor Shomurodov (7) is challenged by Iranian midfielder Saeed Ezzatollahi (1) and center-back Shoja Khalilzadeh in a 2-2 draw in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on November 21, 2023.

● AFC

forced out injured right before the interval. Oston O'runov pulled one back for Uzbekistan seven minutes after the break and then turned provider in the 83rd minute when his cross set up an unmarked Igor

Sergeev to volley home on the far post. "My players thought the game is over at halftime," Qalenoiei said in the post-match press conference, adding: "Uzbekistan players played with their

hearts in the second half while we just walked on the pitch." "It was a big lesson for us before the Asian Cup and we will have to learn from it. Big names do not guarantee the victory and

you have to be passionate to win a football game," added the Iranian after his team's 10-game winning streak came to end. The game was Iran's last outing ahead of January's AFC Asian Cup in Qa-

tar, but the second-half display on Tuesday was surely a reality check for Qalenoiei, who will be looking to lead the three-time champion to a first trophy since 1976 in the continent's flagship international event.

"We were in full control in the first half but conceded a bad goal early after the break. The whole stadium was pushing them forward and their support played a massive part [in Uzbekistan getting back into the game]. We lost our rhythm in the second half and Uzbekistan made the most of it," said Rezaeian, who was involved in on-pitch rows with the host's players in the closing stages of the contest.

"That is normal in football. Iranian players play with passion and commitment and I just reacted to their provoking behavior." Iran will next take on Palestine on January 14 in the Asian Cup Group C – also featuring the United Arab Emirates, and Hong Kong, China.



# The Terminated

## Empathetic Western media personalities fall victim to a comprehensive movement aimed at silencing support for Palestine

“Gaza is currently being treated like a concentration camp,” wrote Melissa Barrera, a 33-year-old Mexican actress, in a story on her Instagram account, and she was subsequently fired from her role in an upcoming installment of the popular franchise, ‘Scream’. In her story, she referred to the

Israeli treatment of the people of Gaza as “genocide and ethnic cleansing.” Many users on platform X supported her for speaking the truth, with many advocating for a boycott of the franchise. In response, the production house, Spyglass, issued a statement on the matter,

labeling her remarks as “anti-Semitic” and a form of “inciting hate.” The western media has reached a new low by penalizing anyone who demonstrates awareness and empathy during such a significant humanitarian crisis. What has been occurring for over 45 days now is a one-sided war,

a type of collective punishment, against a defenseless people. Furthermore, Melissa Barrera is not an isolated case in this matter. The list of individuals who have been terminated for taking a humane, compassionate stance on the war in Gaza is extensive. And the justification for their dis-

missals is consistently the same tired excuse: anti-Semitism. However, at such a time, the very essence of our humanity demands us to be anti-Zionist, countering the Israeli propaganda machine that seeks to portray Palestinians as a people without any rights to be defended whatsoever.



### Michael Eisen

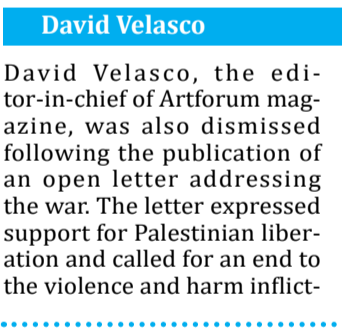
The first high-profile case of individuals being dismissed for taking a pro-Palestinian stance occurred when Michael Eisen, the former editor-in-chief of the biomedical and life sciences journal eLife, was fired by the journal’s board. This action was taken after

he quoted a post from the satirical website The Onion on X, with the headline, “Dying Gazans Criticized for Not Using Last Words to Condemn Hamas.” The post criticized the indifference towards the lives of Palestinian civilians. Eisen wrote, “The Onion speaks

with more courage, insight, and moral clarity than the leaders of every academic institution put together.” He then expressed his desire for more moral stances on the conflict. In response, the journal’s board of directors issued a statement mentioning that Eisen

had received clear feedback regarding his leadership approach, communication, and social media usage. They stated that his actions had been detrimental to the cohesion of the community they were trying to build, as well as to eLife’s mission, which is stated on

their website as “bringing about real change in the way the results of research are reviewed and communicated.” This mission has nothing to do with dismissing editors-in-chief for expressing their humanity and acting in a humane manner.



### David Velasco

David Velasco, the editor-in-chief of Artforum magazine, was also dismissed following the publication of an open letter addressing the war. The letter expressed support for Palestinian liberation and called for an end to the violence and harm inflicted

upon civilians, which was nothing more than an expression of its signatories’ belief in the fundamental essence of humanity: protecting the suppressed. The letter also advocated for an immediate ceasefire and the delivery of humanitarian aid

to the besieged enclave, where the population has endured a brutal military operation since Hamas’s October 7 Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. The signatories of the letter also condemned the complicity of governing bodies in grave human rights violations and war crimes.

Moreover, they demanded an end to the institutional silence surrounding the ongoing humanitarian crisis faced by 2.3 million Palestinians in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip. This very “institutional silence” resulted in severe consequences for David

Velasco, leading to the loss of his job. In response, renowned US photographer Nan Goldin, along with other artists, announced their refusal to collaborate with Artforum in the future in protest against Velasco’s termination.



### BBC, MSNBC, and the rest

In yet another display of shameless oppression against free speech and advocacy for the defenseless people of Gaza, six reporters from BBC News Arabic were investigated by the broadcaster and taken off the air. This action was taken based on allegations that they

had shown pro-Palestinian sentiment amidst Israel’s ongoing bombardment of Gaza. Their punishment was a result of liking or sharing posts on social media that criticized the Israeli government or expressed support for Palestine. The suspension of these BBC

journalists is part of a larger trend, including the removal of three Muslim anchors from MSNBC and an order from German media company Axel Springer instructing its staff to downplay Palestinian deaths in news coverage, as well as the Israeli military’s deliberate tar-

geting and killing of Palestinian journalists. Ahlam Muhtaseb, a professor of media studies at California State University, San Bernardino, later commented on the situation, stating, “There is a very absurd media push to dismiss and invisibilize any Palestin-

ian sympathy.” She shed light on the truth about the state of affairs in Western media, particularly in the United States, by asserting, “The one-sided Israeli victimhood narrative requires the support of media institutions and even the U.S. government itself.”

### Jackson Frank, Zahraa al-Akhrass

Also falling victim to the concerning trend of terminating pro-Palestine journalists are Jackson Frank, a sports writer for Philadelphia local news outlet PhillyVoice, and Zahraa al-Akhrass, a Canadian journalist of Palestinian origin who was recently fired from her job due to her

pro-Palestinian social media posts regarding Israel’s attacks on Gaza. Frank was terminated after posting “Solidarity with Palestine always” and has since continued to comment on the conflict, asserting that Western media plays a significant role in promoting the “acceptance

of Zionism and Palestinian genocide.” He further claimed that many politicians, organizations, journalists, and media outlets bear responsibility for the bloodshed of Palestinians. Similarly, Akhrass was fired from Global News for expressing support for the Palestinian people through

her social media posts. She emphasized that her posts were made on her personal accounts, which are entirely separate from her role as a Global News employee. She voiced her concerns about the lack of empathy for Palestinians in Western media and stated, “My dismissal should be seen

within the context of a comprehensive movement aimed at silencing those who support Palestine in Western media.” Akhrass also highlighted that she is not the first Palestinian to be fired for advocating for Palestine during recent events, and she won’t be the last.



What we have covered so far in this article is just the tip of the iceberg. Many Palestinians

outside of Palestine have experienced oppression through arrests, job losses, and the increasing Is-

lamophobia in the West. However, as Edward Said once so eloquently stated, “You cannot continue

to victimize somebody else just because you yourself were a victim once. There has to be a

limit.” Hopefully, people worldwide are beginning to recognize the truth in his words, acknowl-

edging the necessity for a limit. Awareness is spreading, and the paradigm may be shifting as

younger generations see through the menacing propaganda perpetuated by Israel.



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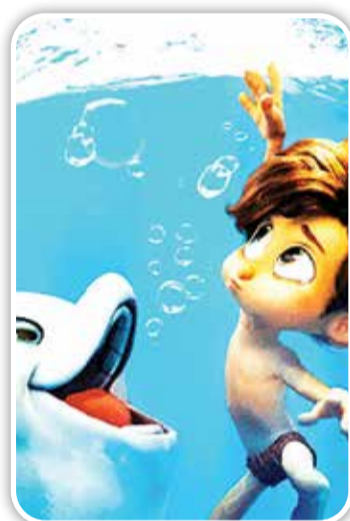
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# Iran's children's cinema: Overcoming technical peaks, struggling with storytelling challenges

## Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian animation industry has come a long way since its beginnings, marked by collaborative studio-based efforts and technological advancements. With the recent release of 'Smart Kid', the industry showcases promising growth in domestic sales, indicating a potential contribution to global box office revenues. However, as technical skill reaches new heights, a critical challenge emerges, and that is the art of storytelling. An article recently published in Mashregh News examined the historical journey of Iranian animation and children's cinema, going through its roots, weaknesses, and strengths.



'Dolphin Boy'

## Golden age

During the 1980s and 1990s, children's cinema of Iran experienced significant growth. These works fell into two categories: The first group consisted of works with a children's theme and an artistic style, but were not intended for a child audience. The second group included films and series produced specifically for children, such as 'The School of Mice' and 'Thief of Dolls', featuring various dolls. Despite the simplicity of the technical aspects in Iranian children's cinema during this period, the era was considered a golden age due to flourishing storytelling. The 2000s witnessed efforts to refresh Iran's animation industry. However, technical progress could not keep pace with the peak period of Iranian storytelling. The screening of 'Tehran 1500' in the 2000s marked a significant starting point for Iranian animation to enter into Iran's professional cinema. It was evident that this animation was not targeted at children.

## Success in visual technique

In 2023, the creators of 'Princess of Rome' and 'The Elephant King' have returned to the public screen with another feature-length animation 'Smart Kid'. National themes, emphasizing indigenous heroism alongside religious elements, remain evident in the film. Technically, 'Smart Kid' appeared as a success, compared to previous works. However, reaching one technical peak highlighted other shortcomings. Watching 'Smart Kid' has made it clear that Iran's cinema faces a major storytelling problem, both in animation and other fields. It is said that finding poor visual quality doesn't require much effort to prove. However, it is not easily accepted that the story is weak or unappealing. Iranian animation faced several challenges to reach its current technical level, with the need to address its technical deficiencies apparent from the start. However, to address the weaknesses in storytelling, no official or investor prioritizes to work on the art of storytelling. If Iran's commercial cinema can maintain box office rankings indefinitely through repetitive comedies and win international festival awards with a distinct tone in social works, the same is not true for animation. Animation always requires storytelling, whether for adults or children, for domestic or international audiences.

## Children's animation

The religious-themed 'Princess of Rome' was finally released, which was more successful in engaging child audiences than 'Tehran 1500' because it, at least, told a story for children. Animation production in Iran hadn't found economic viability yet. It seemed the only solution was for creators of a feature-length animation to work on specific subjects. Supporters of such projects had no understanding of the long-term impact and cultural influence of artistic works. Therefore, they only supported projects that were completely religious. Simultaneously with the production of the religious-themed 'Princess of Rome', in the opposite spectrum, they showed their approach in supporting 'Rostam and Sohrab', intending to introduce nationalistic sentiments in the style of the 'Shahnameh' to children. Unlike 'Princess of Rome', the visual quality of 'Rostam and Sohrab' was low, resembling computer games in some scenes. Just as 'Princess of Rome' paved the way for the production of other historical-religious works such as 'Elephant King,' and 'Benjamin', 'Rostam and Sohrab' led to the produc-

tion of another animation called 'The Last Fiction,' set in the ancient Iranian context. Some of Iran's most famous film stars, including Parviz Parastouei, Hamed Behdad, and Leila Hatami, voiced the characters in 'The Last Fiction'. However, it was not an idea that could attract a working-class audience. The tone of this animation in some dialogues and speeches was similar to the tone of scholars; thus, expecting that adult audiences could communicate with it seemed unreasonable. Therefore, it can be said that a part of Iran's animation cinema, produced with the religious support of the government, was somewhat more successful. In the late 2010s, certain animations were released without clear national or religious labels. Ancient stories lacked effective storytelling, while national content, emphasizing native values over Western concepts, gained prominence. 'Dolphin Boy', which was successfully screened in Russia, became the highest-grossing Iranian animation at the time. Another example is 'Loupetou', released in 2022.

## History

Although some believe that the roots of the concept of Iran's animation date back to thousands of years ago, according to Farheekhtegan newspaper, cinema, as we know it today, wasn't present then; animation emerged later as a cinema subdivision. Contrary to the belief that cinema arrived in Iran with Mozaffaredin Shah of Qajar, he brought only film cameras, not the cinematic art. Iranian cinema faced many challenges until the late 1940s, gaining significant form in 1949, and maturing in the 1950s. In the 1950s, Iranian animation started forming. Inspired by "motion" in film frames, Esfandiar Ahmadiyeh used a camera to transform his sketches into animated films, unknowingly parallel to Émile Cohl's French invention 50 years earlier. Nosratollah Karimi, a Prague graduate, and Ja'far Tejaratchi joined Ahmadiyeh, forming Iran's first animation studio, creating the first short animations. It is said that during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, the dominance of two elements, Filmfarsi (low-quality films, mostly copied from Bollywood, with poor plots) and the screening of foreign films (especially American ones), almost monopolized the growth potential over other types and styles of cinema in the country. For this reason, during that period, Iranian animation couldn't seriously make it to public screens, and was short-lived.



'The Last Fiction'



'The School of Mice'

## Post-1979 Islamic Revolution

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Farsifilm mafia temporarily stepped aside, and foreign film screening became the Farabi Foundation's responsibility. Despite this, Iranian animation still struggled to find its way to public screenings. Part of Iran's children's cinema, with creating films for children (not necessarily about them), performed better during

this period. This era unintentionally raised the notion that "children only want cheers," influenced the quality of the productions. However, feature-length animated films must appeal to both children and adults. Since a child doesn't go to the cinema alone, engaging both audiences is crucial, encouraging parents to accompany their children.



'Princess of Rome'



'Rostam and Sohrab'

## 'Smart Kid'

Animation distinguishes itself from other visual genres. In contrast to television shows, where the producer assumes the creator role, and theater, where the director serves as the creator, animations typically involve production by a company. This distinction arises because every stage of animation production follows a collaborative and studio-based process. The studio aims to produce animations that entertain children and have educational functions. 'Smart Kid' is developed based on this approach. It addresses the priorities of today's children, such as superhero concepts, environmental conservation, etc., to contribute to social development. The process of creating an animation involves specialized techniques, more than real cinema, as each aspect, even the creation of a character, requires diverse concepts and techniques. The design involves expertise in topology, anatomy, clothing, hair, color, facial expressions, and more. The collaboration between Honar Pooya Studio and the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young

Adults is considered beneficial due to the latter's experience in producing for children. Gathering experts for the 'Smart Kid' animation involves decision-making with company involvement. The producer is the first and last person to enter or exit the project. However, in company-based production, decisions involve the participation of various elements within the company structure, with the producer making the decisions. Honar Pooya's main policy is to select and employ individuals who can coordinate well with collective work and the company-based production structure. All in all, as the Iranian animation industry struggles with the need for interesting storytelling, it stands at a critical point. Technical skill alone cannot guarantee the industry's growth; a concerted effort to train creative storytellers is imperative. The journey from historical struggles to contemporary challenges highlights the flexibility of Iranian animation, pointing towards a future where interesting narratives complement technical quality and contribute to a successful global industry.