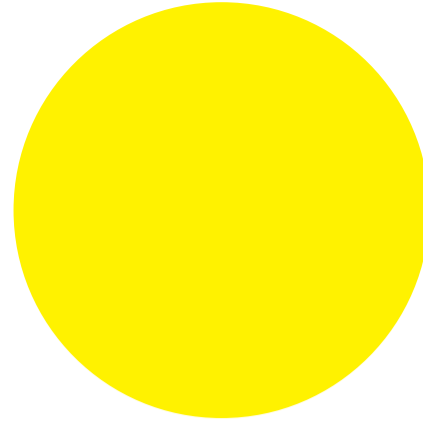


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Requiem for humanity

The political and legal aspects of the Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza



By Hossein Amir-Abdollahian
Iranian foreign minister

During the 48 days of the Zionist regime's aggression on Gaza, the legal status and ethical credibility of human rights principles in international law faced a critical test, challenging the legitimacy of the occupying entity and unabashedly questioning the credibility of international systems. In such circumstances, how can the global community demand the enforcement of humanitarian law in the face of statements from Zionist authorities such as "subhuman," denying the essence of Palestinian humanity? Yes, when humanity becomes a victim in the slaughterhouse of politics, mourning for the human race should precede everything else!

It is clear that the events of October 7, 2023 did not occur in a vacuum. The heinous phenomenon of the Zionist regime has been committing crimes and consolidating its occupation since 1948. Many of these crimes have been lost in the shadows of history, while others have been consigned to oblivion in the dark corridors of politics.

In the midst of all this, what is certain is the legitimate right of the oppressed Palestinian people to resist against an occupying regime. The root of the invasion dates back to 1948, marking the beginning of the Zionist regime's occupation. It is evident that one should not fall into the trap of this deceptive fallacy; in international law, there is no such thing as defending against legitimate defense! What is happening in the Gaza scene is, in fact, the continuation of the crimes of an occupying regime. In this context, the October 7 operations are not only derived from the inherent right to determine destiny but also a legitimate response to years of Zionist occupation. Strategically, the heroic operations of the Islamic Resistance have shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Zionist regime and exposed this fabricated regime to multiple layers of crises from within.

The Geneva Conventions of 1949, as the culmination of humanity's historical effort to regulate armed conflicts systematically, oblige all states not only to comply with their rules but also to ensure their observance by others. Despite this, more than 20,000 people have been killed, with 70% being women and children. An additional four times this number have been injured. These figures continue to rise daily in Palestine, and the international community remains baffled by the repeated violations of human principles.

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An Israeli attack helicopter releases flares while flying over the Gaza Strip on December 1, 2023.

JACK GUEZ/AFP



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Iran owns biggest number of cargo ships in Middle East



With over 940 vessels, Iran is the largest maritime trade power in the Middle East region, owning more than a third of the cargo ships in the region.

In a report on naval fleets in the Middle East region, the economic analysis of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) revealed that with 942 ships, Iran was the largest maritime trade power in the region in 2022, reported Mehr news agency on Friday.

According to the report, Iran had 32 bulk carriers, 31 container ships, 83 oil tankers, 393 general cargo ships and 403 ships of other types in 2022.

Iran's number of ships is more than twice that of Saudi Arabia.

The total number of operating commercial ships in the Middle East last year was 2,738, as more than one-third of these ships, equivalent to 34 percent, belonged to Iran.

President Raisi inaugurates Tehran-Parand metro, housing projects



Economy Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated the 19-km Tehran-Parand

metro in the newly-established city of Parand on Thursday.

President Raisi was accompanied by Tehran

Mayor Alireza Zakani and some other provincial officials during the trip to the city located some 35 kilometers southwest of

the Iranian capital, IRNA reported.

Speaking in the inaugural ceremony, he noted that the development of road,

rail and air transport infrastructure is one of the main policies of his government.

The government, the Ministry of Roads, the Tehran Municipality and all other bodies seek to improve people's livelihood, along with removing obstacles, Raisi added.

The metro project will provide 450,000 residents of Parand with easy and fast access to Tehran. The metro is expected to be used by about 40,000 commuters daily.

The feasibility studies on the Tehran-Parand metro project were initiated in 2005, and its construction was kicked off 12 years ago.

The chief executive also took part in the ceremony of handing over 4,380 residential units to people in Robat Karim and Parand.

Parand is a new city in the central district of Robat Karim County, in Tehran Province.

OPEC+ announces additional voluntary cuts to total of 2.2 mbd

Iran says oil cuts move should continue for ensuring market stability

Economy Desk

OPEC+ oil producers on Thursday agreed to voluntary output cuts totaling about 2.2 million barrels per day (mbd) for early next year, led by Saudi Arabia rolling over its current voluntary cut.

Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia and other members of OPEC+, who pump more than 40% of the world's oil, met online on Thursday to discuss supply policy, Reuters reported.

JP Morgan analyst Christyan Malek said, "Setting a new framework for each member to deliver on its cut reflects the degree of trust and cohesion among the members."

The group discussed 2024 output amid forecasts the market faces a potential surplus and as a 1 mbd cut by Saudi Arabia was set to end next month.

OPEC+'s output of some 43 million bpd already reflects cuts of about 5 mbd aimed at supporting prices and stabilizing the market.

The total curbs amount to 2.2 mbd from eight producers, OPEC said in a statement after the meeting. Included in this figure is an extension of the Saudi and Russian voluntary cuts of 1.3 mbd.

Russian Deputy Prime

Minister Alexander Novak said Russia's voluntary cut would include crude oil and products.

The UAE said it had agreed to cut output by 163,000 bpd, while Iraq said it would cut an extra 220,000 bpd in the first quarter.

Saudi Arabia, Russia, the UAE, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan and Algeria were among producers who said cuts would be unwound gradually after the first quarter, market conditions permitting.

OPEC+ is focused on lower output with prices down from near \$98 in late September and concerns brewing over weaker economic growth in 2024 and expectations of a supply surplus.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) in November forecast a slowdown in 2024 demand growth as "the last phase of the pandemic economic rebound dissipates and as advancing energy efficiency gains, expanding electric vehicle fleets and structural factors reassert themselves."

Favorable cooperation

The agreement and decisions made by OPEC+ and during ministerial meetings have served the OPEC and non-OPEC member states' common interests, said Iranian Oil Minister

Javad Owji, pointing out the successful move should continue in the future as it is vital for ensuring market stability and serving producers' interests.

Owji also praised 'favorable' cooperation and understanding between OPEC+ producers.

Talking to Shana, the minister added, "We are trying to institutionalize cooperation with non-OPEC producers within the framework of OPEC+ alliance."

Shifting to the postponement of OPEC and OPEC+ ministerial meetings caused by differences between their member states, Owji said, it is not something new as they have had such differences at some junctures, adding all that matters is that OPEC+ producers reach an agreement and a consensus serving the member states' interests.

The oil market is experiencing a challenging era, he stated, and noted additional supplies by some producers outside of the OPEC+ alliance associated with uncertainties surrounding the global economy, the outlook for international markets, speculators' activities in the oil market, and consequences of mentioned developments are sending out alarm signals.

The released reports and analyses show considerable uncertainties about global supply and demand, said Owji, adding each could have special impacts on future developments.

Short sellers' increased activities in the market have fueled concerns and the outlook for the international oil market cannot be anticipated with certainty, the minister stated, saying, "I cannot agree with any of these speculations, either."

He said the United States and other big consumers' worries about the global oil market and energy security have been caused by US policies and acts aimed at putting OPEC+ and its producers under pressure - political pressure on some big oil and gas producers by imposing brutal and unilateral sanctions and escalating geopolitical tensions through making political intervention and supporting war in the Middle East region.

Owji is convinced that the agreement and decisions made by OPEC+ are one of the significant factors in eliminating fluctuations in the oil market, improving global economic conditions, encouraging investment in the oil industry, and guaranteeing energy security.



"We consider the OPEC+ agreement and cooperation between large oil producers as the only option to provide the world with short- and long-term energy security," he emphasized.

"As I said before, all observers and experts of the oil market acknowledge the constructive achievements of the OPEC+ agreement for market stability and energy security," reiterated the minister.

Brazil to join OPEC+

OPEC+ also invited Brazil, a top 10 producer, to become a member of the group. The country's energy minister

said it hoped to join in January.

Brazilian Energy Minister Alexandre Silveira said on Thursday that his country will join the influential OPEC+ oil coalition that unites some of the biggest crude-producing nations in the world. In footage shared from the meeting, Silveira said that President Lula da Silva had approved his country's membership, starting next year.

"I would like to conclude my words by informing you that the honorable President Lula confirmed our entry into the OPEC+ cooperation charter from January 2024," he said.

"It is important that our technical crew analyzes the content of the document that we just received, the charter of the cooperation. It is part of our government protocol to do this," he added.

The document of cooperation of OPEC+ underpins the coalition and must be accepted by all group members.

The announcement of Brazil's membership to the OPEC+ comes after OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates were invited to join the BRICS group of emerging markets, which includes Brazil.

Salasel Castle in Shushtar, a glimpse into ancient Persian civilization



● wikipedia.org

Iranica Desk

Shushtar, a city renowned for its remarkable hydraulic system, has earned a well-deserved place on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Among the significant landmarks in Shushtar is the esteemed Salasel Castle. Situated alongside the Karun River, Salasel Castle has its origins dating back to the Achaemenid period, spanning an impressive expanse of approximately 5.3 hectares. It encompassed various sections such as a bakery, stable, bathhouse, barracks, armory, and kitchen. While time has eroded much of its former splen-

dor, the castle continues to captivate those intrigued by Iranian culture and civilization. Undoubtedly, Salasel Castle stands out as one of the most renowned attractions in Shushtar, harking back to the ancient Achaemenid era. Once boasting numerous courtyards and distinct sections, the castle featured exceptional fortifications, splendid pavilions, and embellishments adorned with gold, enamel, and lapis lazuli. Beyond its military and strategic significance, the castle likely served as a hub for monitoring water distribution and managing the region's water resources.

Although the grandeur of the castle has diminished over time, the remaining artifacts serve as a testament to its magnificence. Recognizing its historical value, it was listed on Iran's National Heritage List in 2009, transforming it into a popular tourist destination in Khuzestan Province. Historical records indicate the castle's existence since the Achaemenid era, serving as a residence until about half a century ago. In addition to its defensive role, the castle also functioned as the control center for the Darioon River and housed the governor of Khuz-

estan. Over the years, the castle has undergone several reconstructions, with the visible ruins primarily belonging to the Qajar period.

Castle bridges

These bridges were located over the moat surrounding the castle. According to studies, the materials used in these bridges included stone, brick, sarooj, and plaster. Currently, there is no trace of these bridges. In the past, there was a moat around the castle, which probably completely surrounded the southern side of the castle, connected to the

Karun River on one side, and the Darian River on the other. In an excavation conducted in 2005, in the south of the castle, near the fortification, evidence of the existence of a moat was found in the grassland.

Fortification

The castle's fortification, which was very strong and sharp, did not follow a specific shape or order. The materials used in it were in two forms, such that, initially, its foundation was raised with sandstone and sarooj, and then it was covered with bricks. In the southern side of the castle, remnants of a castle fence

can be seen. Remains of a circular tower of the castle are also preserved at its northwest end, which has a diameter of 30.5 meters, and its surface has been leveled through later construction.

Mansion

The castle mansion, the construction of which is attributed to Ahmad Shah Qajar, was used as the ruling residence in the highest part of the castle. The castle was built on a raised platform, several steps higher than the courtyard level of the castle. Currently, only one floor of this mansion remains.

Mystical beauties of Towbiroun and Chal Kandi valleys in Khuzestan Province

Iranica Desk

Have you ever visited a place that reminded you of a scene from a movie or a story? Are you interested in visiting a place that is full of excitement, mystery, and beauty that would leave an unforgettable mark on your heart? If so, Towbiroun Valley in Khuzestan Province is the perfect destination for you. Towbiroun Valley is located just 20 kilometers from Dezful in Khuzestan Province. Traveling to this area will be an unforgettable experience of valley exploration for nature and adventure enthusiasts who love to explore unknown places. As soon as you

reach Towbiroun, you will be amazed by its impressive beauty that will leave you in awe. The valley has a pleasant climate with a surprising cool breeze, which is hard to believe in Khuzestan Province. It took thousands of years for nature, fog, sun, and sky to come together to create such a mythical place. This valley is a result of erosion from seasonal rains in higher areas and rapid water flow in mountains and hills. During dry seasons, the valley drains underground water flows, and fresh water seeps from the walls and bottom of the valley, in some parts. Its thin walls with a high altitude reach-

ing over a hundred meters, and clusters of grape and fig trees, waterfalls, and pools have given the valley a special beauty. Despite Dezful's high temperature, which is usually above 40° Celsius, the cool breeze in this valley gives a special tranquility to guests. Sometimes the temperature in this valley drops to 25 degrees or less, enhancing the experience of visitors. Towbiroun Valley unleashes the mystical world of nature, which is full of surprises and unusual beauty. A trip to this valley will undoubtedly be one of the most memorable trips of your life. Chal Kandi Valley, situated between the northern region of

Dezful and the eastern area of Andimeshk, is another extraordinary valley that will undoubtedly leave you in awe. The harmonious interplay of the river and rocks creates a captivating spectacle. Serving as an oasis of cool, pleasant weather amidst the scorching heat of southern Iran, Chal Kandi Valley acts as the outlet for water from the Dez Dam. With its unparalleled characteristics, the locals affectionately refer to this area as Cham Sabz, meaning "Green Cham" ('cham' means green in the Lori dialect), owing to the abundance of lush vegetation and the vibrant hues of its waters. Chal Kandi stands out as one of

the lesser-explored areas along the Dez River, boasting diverse flora and fauna. While the eye-catching rocks, stones, and the gracefully flowing colored water are mesmerizing, it is important not to overlook the presence of the surrounding bushes, trees, and grasslands. Within the crystal-clear waters, various species of fish and crabs can be spotted, adding to the allure of this enchanting place. The tranquility encompassing the river, its pristine natural surroundings, and the undisturbed meadows, marshes and grasslands offer visitors a serene experience.

In the past, local inhabitants carved resting places resembling caves into the rocks, which have now become attractions in the region. These small chambers, available in various sizes, further enhance the appeal of the area. Chal Kandi Valley is renowned as one of the primary tourist destinations and recreational spots for the local community during summer, providing a refreshing escape from the intense heat of the city. Here, the conditions for swimming, boating, and fishing are ideal, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty of nature while engaging in joyful activities.



Towbiroun Valley
● jahane mana.ir



Towbiroun Valley
● kojaro.com



Chal Kandi Valley
● kojaro.com



As West Asia goes American free, a new Middle East emerges

Thousands of Moroccans take part in a protest in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza and against normalisation with Israel, in Casablanca, Morocco, Sunday, Oct. 29, 2023. Countries in the Middle East that have normalized or are considering normalizing relations with Israel are coming under growing public pressure to cut those ties because of Israel's war with Hamas. The protesters' demands present an uncomfortable dilemma for governments that have enjoyed the benefits of closer military and economic ties with Israel in recent years
 ● MOSAAB ELSHAMY/AP

Hamidreza Shahnazari
 Guest contributor

In the realm of geopolitics, geostrategy, and geoeconomics, West Asia assumes paramount significance for major powers, as dominance in this region wields substantial influence over global dynamics. Over the past four decades, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its emergence on the international stage, the United States has aspired to exert complete control over West Asia. This pursuit has manifested through the establishment of an American-centric order, with the Zionist regime serving as the linchpin of Western dominance in the region. Various measures were undertaken to realize this objective, ranging from the imposed war against the Iranian people, symbolizing the end of the American era with the Islamic Revolution, to multiple conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan under the pretext of combating terrorism—orchestrated and manipulated by American security services—and the Zionist regime's incursions into Lebanon, Syria, and different parts of Palestine.

Americans previously boasted about the Greater Middle East. Following the suspicious events of September 11 in the United States, they launched military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, leveraging the pretext created by those incidents. The aim was to reshape the geopolitical landscape of the region by Balkanizing it and establishing mosaic countries, paving the way for a new American order referred to as the "Greater Middle East." This plan faced defeat due to the resistance of the region's nations, falling short of its goals and resulting in the removal of figures like Saddam Hussein. Iran's strategic maneuvers contributed to the empowerment of the Resistance

Axis. Subsequently, the "Greater Middle East" plan underwent a name change to the "New Middle East." In 2006, during the 33-day war between the Zionist regime and Lebanon, then-US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, when asked about the duration of the situation, remarked, 'What is happening is the birth of a new Middle East, and the situation there is the pain of this childbirth.' These statements underscored the American intent to establish a new order in West Asia, marked by Israel's defeat, enhanced international prestige, and Hezbollah's strengthened position in Lebanon. Facing setbacks in launching proxy wars against the Resistance

Axis and the failures of projects like ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra, Americans acknowledged their insufficient military capability to confront the Resistance Axis directly. Consequently, they shifted their approach to pursuing a normalization debate, encompassing political, economic, and security dimensions. The objective was to position the Zionist regime as the central axis of the region. By normalizing relations between Arab states and other governments with this regime and sidelining the Palestinian issue, they aimed to undermine opposition to this regime's legitimacy. These developments unfolded during the peak of the Resistance Axis's influence. Hezbollah transformed

from a small guerrilla group into a formidable army amid Syria's transformations. Ansar Allah altered the equations in Yemen, prevailing against Saudi Arabia and the UAE in an unequal conflict that saw them rise from the ashes of the Yemen war. Iraq's resistance gained strength, and Palestinian resistance reached unprecedented heights. The Islamic Republic of Iran, holding a historic position of political and military power, not only extended its influence beyond the region but also expanded to transregional dimensions. Present realities in West Asia indicate the emergence of a new order. However, this order is not solely American; the United

States has become sufficiently discredited that even Saudi Arabia, a former dependent element, no longer places trust in it and seeks alliances with America's adversaries. The aftermath of Operation Sword of al-Quds, encompassing Hezbollah's activities in Lebanon, Iraq's resistance, and Ansar Allah's operations against the Zionist regime, signifies both a symbol and a stage in the realization of a new order. Operation Sword of al-Quds symbolizes the end of the American era and the inception of the Islamic Middle East—a new Islamic Middle East centered around the theory of resistance and configured in accordance with the region's desired order.

Requiem for humanity



In such conditions, it may be challenging to speak of the principles of necessity and proportionality when these principles are applicable when there is a legitimate goal. However, the conflict in Gaza and the West Bank of Palestine is fundamentally an illegitimate war. In this regard, the principle of distinguishing between military and non-military targets can be applied, which has been flagrantly violated in the most egregious manner. Hospitals and medical centers, meant to assist the wounded, have become the primary targets of the aggressors. In reality, the entire 2.3 million strong population of the Gaza Strip, including children, women, and men, has been subject to indiscriminate attacks by occupiers.

Today, the international community witnesses the failure of international mechanisms. Mechanisms created with reliance on the Charter of the United Nations for the achievement of international peace and security have collapsed. Humanitarian principles established under the framework of human-friendly international law are systematically violated one by one. The 70-year roller coaster journey that the United Nations has undergone for international coexistence is now being critically assessed with a modern brutality! If international mechanisms such as the responsibility to protect and humanitarian interventions are to be employed, the time to put them into action is now!

In the struggle against the oppressed people of Gaza, it is not a matter of determining which of the criminal titles under Article 8 of the International Criminal Court statute has been committed. The more precise question is which of the 50 enumerated items has not been committed so far?! Additionally, systematic genocide as a crime process and racism as a continuous crime must also be addressed by the International Criminal Court.

Supporting elements and supporting states of this regime should not be overlooked. Support for the Zionist regime is, in fact, support for the continued violation of international norms. The issuance of weapons and deliberate obstruction of obtaining a ceasefire and stable truce in Gaza are tangible examples of Article 25 of the International Criminal Court statute and fall under incitement to genocide.

The United States and European troika, committed to preventing genocide under the 1948 Genocide Convention, have themselves become complicit in one of the facilitating elements of the crime. Political maneuvering and adopting double standards have become a poisonous pest for international oversight institutions.

Since 2015, Palestine has been a party to the International Criminal Court statute, and, naturally, crimes committed within its territory fall under the jurisdiction of the Court. How is it that the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court immediately arrives in Ukraine within 24 hours of the crisis's onset, forming the largest investigative team to examine the potential dimensions of the incident, while after a

month, and under public pressure, not for sympathizing with the oppressed people of Palestine but to express solidarity with the families of Zionist victims at the Rafah border crossing?

All these questions and inquiries of this nature have distressed the collective conscience of the international community! The global community has lost its resilience in the face of these perplexing and shameful contradictions, and today, public opinion worldwide is directly on the stage.

The widespread protests involving thousands of people around the world, including in the United States and Europe, against the Zionist regime's child-killing policies serve as a clear testament to the human emotions at stake. Therefore, the crimes committed in Gaza should not go unpunished. Perhaps the main reason for the impunity of the Zionist regime during the 48 days of aggression and crimes against Gaza is the long-term negligence that has been realized under the comprehensive support of the United States and some European governments. Public pressure has demonstrated that international issues can yield results regardless of the political will of Western leaders. The demands for accountability from the Zionist regime and its supporters must continue, and this widespread anger should persist until the authorities of the regime are criminally prosecuted.

In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran, within the framework of its principled and active approach to stopping the Zionist regime's aggression against the Palestinian people, has engaged in continuous consultations with many countries, particularly Islamic governments, at various levels. The immediate cessation of the massacre of the people of Gaza and urgent humanitarian assistance has been a top priority during this period. The sending of letters by the honorable president to the leaders of 50 world countries, their participation in the summit of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, virtual participation in the BRICS summit, participation in the executive committee meeting of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, more than 50 telephone consultations with foreign ministers worldwide, regional visits to countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Qatar, Turkey, etc., participation in the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York and the Geneva summit, and the call for economic and trade sanctions against the Zionist regime have been on the diplomatic agenda.

The 48 days of unjust war and aggression have temporarily halted in the face of the resilience and determination of the Palestinians and the demands of people worldwide. Efforts to end aggression and the rights abuses of the Zionist regime, as well as laying the groundwork for the realization of the right to self-determination of the resilient Palestinian people, will continue. We believe that the future lies with the people of Palestine, and the occupying regime and its Western supporters will ultimately succumb to the iron will of the Palestinian people!

The criminal died

Henry Kissinger, a distinguished diplomat and foreign policy theorist, died on Thursday night at the age of 100. Widely regarded as a diplomatic genius, his pivotal roles in global conflicts have consistently been evident throughout his career. But who was he really? A serving politician or a war criminal?

Born in May 1923, Kissinger was an American politician of German descent who earned the Nobel Peace Prize. The former U.S. Secretary of State breathed his last at the age of 100 in his Connecticut residence. He played a decisive role in shaping U.S. foreign policy during the administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. Even until a few months ago, he remained engaged in mediating tensions in regions like Ukraine and China, with the United States relying on his crucial decision-making role. Additionally, he co-founded a consulting firm named Kissinger Associates.

Coming from a Jewish family, Kissinger lived in Germany until 1937, when he was 15 years old. Fleeing the rise of the Nazis, the Kissinger family, including him, relocated to the United States. Kissinger's initial studies were in accounting, although they remained incomplete. Subsequently, he joined the army and later became closely associated with the U.S. intelligence system. In the following years, his interest in international relations led him into the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. After obtaining bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees, Kissinger commenced teaching international relations at Harvard.

In 1969, President Richard Nixon appointed him as the National Security Advisor, marking his significant influence on U.S. foreign policy in two administrations. Throughout this period and subsequent era, Kissinger utilized his capabilities for de-escalation, positioning himself not as an anti-war politician but as a theorist seeking to control conflicts and consider U.S. interests.

Supporting the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam, even during a period when America viewed such withdrawal as a defeat, Kissinger's role in establishing a ceasefire in the conflict earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973. The award generated controversy, leading to the resignation of two Nobel Committee



members. Despite this, the destructive Vietnam War concluded, with Kissinger attributed a heroic role.

Dark spots in Kissinger's political life

His support for the dictator Augusto Pinochet remains a stain on his career, haunting him until his last days. Conversely, many attribute the decades-long Cold War and Moscow-Washington rivalry to Kissinger's realpolitik. While holding governmental positions until 1977, he later transitioned into America's foremost foreign policy theorist, a role he continued until his passing. At the age of 100, during a trip to Beijing, he played a crucial role in establishing U.S.-China relations, meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Kissinger's impact extended beyond academia. He contributed articles to think tanks and served as a consultant in the National Security Council and the U.S. Department of State during the presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Kissinger, married twice to Felicity (1949-1964) and Nancy Kissinger (1974 to the present), had a daughter named Elizabeth and a son named David. Alongside George W. Bush, he played a role in the 9/11 Commission and resigned due to the negative atmosphere

surrounding him. The stain from the overthrow in Chile remained indelible.

The Intercept, in a report on the death of the seasoned American diplomat, highlighted that few people globally have been as involved in death, destruction, and human suffering as Henry Kissinger. Investigations in 2023, based on a unique archive of U.S. military documents and interviews with survivors and American witnesses in Cambodia, revealed that Kissinger, possibly the most powerful National Security Advisor in U.S. history and the principal architect of America's war policy in Southeast Asia from 1969 to 1975, was responsible for the deaths of non-combatants in Cambodia. Experts assert that Kissinger played a significant role in attacks in Cambodia resulting in the deaths of 150,000 non-combatants.

"Mick Wallace," an Irish legislator in the European Parliament, shared on the social media platform "X" on Friday night regarding "Henry Kissinger," the former U.S. Secretary of State: "Henry Kissinger was a War Criminal who helped destroy the lives of millions - So sad that he was never held to account. Now #EU is giving its unconditional support to #Israeli Regime who are committing endless War Crimes against the #Palestinians - They must be held to account."



Iran remains 21st in FIFA Ranking, second in Asia



● MOHAMMADREZA ALIMADADI/IRNA

Sports Desk

Iran retained the 21st spot in November's FIFA Men's Ranking, released by the international football governing body on Thursday.

Amir Qalenoee's side tallied 1565.08 points to remain second to Japan, which moved up to world No. 17 with 1620.19 points, in the Asian standing. Qalenoee's men began their quest for a place in the 2026 World Cup with a 4-0 home victory over Hong Kong, China in the latest international break in mid-November, before surrendering a two-goal halftime lead to share the points with Uzbekistan in a 2-2 draw in Tashkent in Group E of the Asian qualifiers less than a fortnight ago.

Iran is followed by South Korea (23rd), Australia (25th), Saudi Arabia (56th), and Qatar (58th) in the AFC ranking.

A three-time AFC Asian Cup champion, Iran will be looking to end a 58-year drought at the continent's flagship international event – starting January 12 in Qatar. Iran will kick-start its campaign against Palestine in Group C – also featuring the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong – in Al Rayyan's Education City Stadium on Jan. 14.

Meanwhile, reigning world champion Argentina remained atop the FIFA Ranking, with France – beaten by the Argentines in last year's World Cup final – in second. England, Belgium, Brazil, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Croatia complete the top 10 of Men's Ranking.

IHF Women's World Championship: Iran off to losing start against Poland



● Iran's Hadiseh Norouzi shoots during a defeat against Poland at the IHF Women's World Championship in Herning, Denmark, on November 30, 2023.
● IHF

Sports Desk

Iran began its campaign at the IHF Women's World Handball Championship – cohosted by Sweden, Norway, and Denmark – with a 35:15 defeat against Poland.

Participating at the flagship international tournament of the sport for only the second time, Iran struggled early on against the European side in Herning's Jyske Bank Boxen on Thursday, turning the ball over on 18 occasions, as plenty of misplaced passes saw the Asians fall 9:1 behind before taking their first timeout.

The introduction of goalkeeper Fateh-meh Khalili improved the Iranians' defensive display, helping them em-

bark on 6:4 run, but Poland coach Arne Senstad made several changes to turn things around.

The substitutions paid off as Poland went into halftime with an 18:8 advantage and then picked up where it left off before the break, extending the lead with a 4:1 run.

Iran tried to reduce the deficit by bringing in an extra outfield player but was left exposed in the back, with Poland – fourth-placed in the competition in 2013 and 2015 – making the most of the situation to seal the victory.

Magda Balsam and Dagmara Nocuń were Poland's top scorers on the night with six goals apiece, while Iranian back Fatemeh Merrikh, who was among the top 10 scorers at last year's Youth

World Championship, also bagged six to grab the Player of the Match award. Elsewhere in Group F of the preliminary round, Germany edged out Japan 31:30.

Having finished fourth in the Asian Championship last year for a second successive berth at the world event, Iran will be the clear underdog when taking on Germany today before Monday's game against Japan – in a repeat of the Asian last-four encounter, which the Japanese won 43:19.

A place in the main-round groups might be far beyond the Iranians' reach, but they will still be looking to have a decent run in the President's Cup, which will decide the 25th-32nd places of the competition.

Saudi Arabia to host AFC Champions League Elite finals

REUTERS – Saudi Arabia will host the first two editions of the AFC Champions League Elite finals when the continent's revamped elite club competition begins next season, the Asian Football Confederation said on Friday.

The competition, which replaces the existing AFC Champions League, begins in September next year and sees the region's top 24 clubs divided into two leagues of 12 across East and West.

Clubs will compete home and away for a place in the round of 16, with the eight winners advancing to a centralised final round where teams play the quarter-finals, semis and final in a single leg format. The move is part of a major overhaul of club competitions in Asia that has also seen the top prize in the continent's top tier club event increase to \$12 million

from \$4 million.

Saudi Arabia won the rights for the first two years of the finals ahead of a rival bid submitted by the Iraq Football Association "after evaluating the infrastructure and accommodation requirements", the AFC said in a statement.

The Saudis have also been provisionally awarded the hosting rights for a further three years subject to an AFC review of the initial seasons, it added.

The event is the latest to be awarded to the Saudi Arabia, which will organise the FIFA Club World Cup later this month and is the only nation to have submitted a bid to host the 2034 World Cup finals.

The country has already been granted the rights to host the 2027 Asian Cup finals and Riyadh will organise the 2034 Asian Games.



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Notice of tender for export sale No. 14/1402/Z		Analysis %	
Min	65.00	Fe	
Ave	1.2	FeO	
Max	0.05	P	
Max	0.01	S	
Max	3.5	SiO2	
Max	0.7	Al2O3	
Max	0.9	CaO	
Max	2.5	MgO	
Ave 250		CCS(kg/p)	
Min 90		8-16 mm%	
Ave 5		-6 mm%	
Max 3.8		A.1%	
Min 95		T.1%	
19-24		Prosity%	
Min 90		Reducibility%	

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Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70,000 metric tons of Iron Ore pellet (%Fe:65.00) on basis of F.O.B at Shahid Rajaei Jetty Bandar-Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.gog.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 14:00 P.M. on 11th Dec. 2023 to the Golgohar complex in Sirjan. (50 km in Shiraz road)

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Deadly resumption of Gaza war draws int'l regret

Iran: No solution exists other than open-ended cease-fire

The deadly resumption of Gaza war after a week-long truce has drawn international regret as Israeli warplanes pounded the besieged strip, sending scores of wounded and dead pouring into hospitals on Friday. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian slammed Israel and the United States, as its main supporter, for resuming the military campaign against the besieged Gaza Strip, warning that the progress of the war will lead to a new genocide in the Palestinian territory.

International Desk

Fighting resumed in Gaza immediately after the expiry of a week-long truce, with the first fatalities reported minutes later, according to health officials in the enclave.

He said that "No solution exists other than open-ended cease-fire, extensive delivery of humanitarian aid and agreement on fresh exchange of prisoners."

"POWs are not released with war but are instead killed in strikes," he wrote in a post on X.

Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, also denounced the Israeli attacks, saying

that Tel Aviv, the United States and their allies are liable for the atrocities being committed against Palestinians in the besieged territory.

Ezzat el-Rashq, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said on the group's website: "What Israel did not achieve during the fifty days before the truce, it will not achieve by continuing its aggression after the truce."

'Catastrophic' resumption

The United Nations said it deeply regretted the resumption of deadly hostilities in Gaza, calling the situation "catastrophic".

"I still hope that it will be possible to renew the pause that was established. The return to hostilities only shows how important it is to have a true humanitarian ceasefire," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on X.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk branded the resumption of hostilities "catastrophic", urging all parties and states with influence to try and bring

about a cease-fire on humanitarian and human rights grounds.

"Recent comments by Israeli political and military leaders indicating that they are planning to expand and intensify the military offensive are very troubling," he added.

'Nightmare' returns to Gaza

Renewed fighting in Gaza has brought back a "nightmarish situation" for the Palestinian territory, the head of the Red Cross told AFP on Friday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the UN's COP28 climate talks in Dubai, Robert Mardini said, "People are at a breaking point, hospitals are at a breaking point, the whole Gaza Strip is in a very precarious state".

"There is nowhere safe to go for civilians," Mardini said, stressing the challenges hospitals and humanitarian organizations are facing. During the seven-day truce, 80 Israeli prisoners and 240 Palestinians were released.

Renewed fighting also

threatens the entry of aid into Gaza, where about 80 percent of the population is displaced and grappling with shortages of food, water and other essentials.

"With the resumption of hostilities, the likelihood will be that less aid will get in," Mardini said.

"More importantly, humanitarian organizations, like the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and others such as the ICRC and UN agencies, will have reduced capacities to deliver aid to the people," he added.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who had met Israeli and Palestinian officials on Thursday on his third trip to the region since the war began, declined to comment on the collapse of the truce to reporters traveling on his plane.

'Genuine doubts'

On Thursday, Israel recalled its ambassador in Madrid and said it will be reprimanding Spain's top diplomat in Tel Aviv after Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said he had

"genuine doubts" about whether Israel was complying with international humanitarian law in its offensive in Gaza.

Sanchez's latest remarks came a week after he caused a diplomatic spat by using a visit to Israel to urge it to rethink its operations in Gaza, claiming its response to Hamas' attack on October 7 could not "imply the deaths of innocent civilians, including thousands of children".

However, speaking to Spain's state broadcaster, TVE, on Thursday morning, Sanchez repeated his condemnation of Hamas's attacks.

Unacceptable move

Meanwhile, Jordan's King Abdullah on Thursday urged UN aid officials and international groups to pile pressure on Israel to allow more aid into the beleaguered Gaza enclave where the humanitarian situation is worsening, officials and aid workers said.

They said the monarch told an emergency meeting in Amman of UN officials, heads of Western non-gov-

ernmental organizations and representatives of Arab donors it was unacceptable that Israel continued to hold back sufficient aid flows.

Call for swift action

Qatar on Friday urged swift international action to stop violence in the Gaza Strip with its Foreign Ministry, saying in a statement that it stresses that continued bombing at the end of the pause "complicates mediation efforts and exacerbates the humanitarian catastrophe in the strip, and... calls on the international community to move quickly to stop the violence."

It added, "Condemnation of all forms of targeting civilians, the practice of collective punishment, and attempts to forcibly displace citizens of the besieged Gaza Strip, and its demand for an immediate cease-fire."

Qatar has been engaged in intense negotiations to repeatedly prolong a truce in Gaza that had lasted a total of seven days after two extensions.

IAEA calls for revival of nuclear talks

International Desk

The head of the UN nuclear watchdog has urged world powers to relaunch talks with Iran to break a stalemate over the country's nuclear program. "There needs to be some re-creation of a system of dialogue with Iran," Rafael Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said after he expressed concern about Iran's stockpiling of enriched uranium. Grossi said talks with Iran might require a new framework, rather than an attempt to revive

the 2015 accord — known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — that has floundered since the US abandoned it in 2018 under former president Donald Trump.

"Trying to put [a nuclear deal] back into the JCPOA box wouldn't work," Grossi said. "You can still call it a JCPOA, but it should be a JCPOA 2.0 or something because you have to adapt."

He also said the situation surrounding Iran's nuclear program was "very uncertain" and urged nations to "sit down and re-engage."

The talks to revive the 2015 deal kicked

off in Vienna in April 2021, with the intention of removing anti-Iran sanctions and examining Washington's seriousness in rejoining the JCPOA.

The discussions, however, have been at a standstill since August 2022 due to Washington's refusal to remove all the sanctions imposed by the previous US administration.

Iran said last year that it has begun producing enriched uranium at 60% purity at its Fordo nuclear plant. Iran says uranium enrichment to the purity level of 60% was in response to the lack of commitment by the European parties to the nuclear agreement.

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami announced in June that enriching uranium to the said purity level was in accordance with a December 2020 parliamentary law — the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions.

Iran, Oman stage joint naval drill in Strait of Hormuz

Iranian and Omani military forces staged a day-long joint naval rescue and relief exercise in the Hormuz Strait and the northern tip of the Indian Ocean as the two neighbors move to build stronger relations.

Combat vessels and airborne units of the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy, the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), the Naval Division of the Border Police, the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran, and the Royal Navy of Oman took part in the drills on Thursday. The naval exercise was held in the presence of the heads of the joint military friendship commissions of the two countries.

The main goals of the naval drills were described as boosting combat readiness, and implementing

bilateral agreements on maritime security. Iranian drones carried out observation and monitoring operations in the northern parts of the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Hormuz, and the country's reconnaissance aircraft made several sorties to survey all military and merchant vessels cruising in the vicinity of the area at the time.

Iranian and Omani military forces managed to successfully implement various scenarios during the joint drill, showcasing their coordination. In recent years, Iran has staged many naval drills with countries, including Oman, Pakistan and Russia in order to test the combat preparedness of its Navy which has increased its presence in international waters.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on

Tuesday said, "In the first years after the [Islamic] Revolution, the presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy beyond territorial waters was unimaginable, but now the Navy makes a 360-degree voyage around the globe powerfully and returns to the country with pride." Meanwhile, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani on Friday praised the Navy's efforts and advances in recent years. The Iranian commander said that the country's Jamaran destroyer is now on a mission in the Gulf of Aden, and the Alborz destroyer is present in the Red Sea to secure the shipping lines. Today, the maritime economy is provided with high security by the country's naval forces, he said. On Monday, a new domestically-manufactured destroyer, dubbed Deylaman, joined Iran's northern naval fleet to strengthen security in the Caspian Sea.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great progress in developing and manufacturing a broad range of military equipment, making the Armed Forces self-sufficient in this regard.



Smoke rises above buildings during an Israeli strike on Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on December 1, 2023.

SAID KHATIB/AFP



Countries like Sudan and Uganda will benefit from the fund.
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COP28 opens with loss and damage deal

Iranian delegation walks out in protest at Israel participation Support far too little, far too late: UN chief

First day fund victory

A breakthrough was achieved on the inaugural day of the COP28 UN summit hosted by UAE, as countries banded together to establish a groundbreaking fund aimed at assisting the world's poorest and most vulnerable nations in coping with the impacts of climate disasters. The agreement garnered a standing ovation from delegates. The host country, UAE, and Germany committed \$100 million each to the loss and damage startup fund. The primary objective of this financial initiative is to address the escalating costs stemming from extreme weather events and gradual yet devastating disasters such as rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and melting glaciers.

Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, stated "Today's news on loss and damage gives this UN climate conference a running start. Governments and

their negotiators must seize this opportunity to deliver truly ambitious outcomes here in Dubai." Sultan Al Jaber, the president of COP28, added, "I am more confident than ever that we will deliver an unprecedented result." The onus now falls on other wealthy nations to announce their contributions, as world leaders prepare to take the stage on Friday and Saturday. With loss and damage costs in developing countries already estimated to exceed \$400 billion annually, and expected to rise, time is of the essence. The future trajectory of these expenses will be contingent upon the effectiveness of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. The blueprint for this groundbreaking agreement entails the establishment of a fund under the auspices of the World Bank, initially capable of disbursing funds to developing nations. This fund will be financed by rich industrialized nations, emerging economies, and fossil fuel-producing countries, including China, Gulf States, and the United Arab Emirates, the host country of COP28.

Iran for 'common but differentiated responsibility'

Iran's Minister of Energy, Ali Akbar Mehrabian, had prepared a speech to present on behalf of Iranian government at the 28th conference on combating climate change in the UAE. However, in protest against the presence of Israeli delegations, the Iranian delegation decided to leave the conference.

In the statement, it is argued that imposing compensation for climate change damages on developing countries would impede their development process, which is their inherent right. The document acknowledges that climate change is a major crisis in the world today, leading to an increase in extreme weather events globally, particularly in the Middle East. The statement recognizes the importance of concepts such as 'common but differentiated responsibility' in

global literature and their establishment as a collective commitment to the global community. It also emphasizes that the success of joint efforts to mitigate climate change, promote adaptation, and enhance resilience depends on developed countries implementing compensatory measures based on their historical responsibility and commitments. Furthermore, it suggests adopting an approach for developing countries that incorporates principles of justice, flexibility, and common but differentiated responsibility, encompassing financial, technical, and technological support. The statement highlights that poverty alleviation, healthcare improvement, and access to housing and energy are crucial priorities for a significant portion of the developing world. The lack of implementation mechanisms for climate measures, including financial resources and technology transfer, poses the greatest challenge for these nations. Therefore, the focus should be on emphasizing compensation for damages and losses by developed countries.



Warning to world leaders

In a speech delivered at the opening of the World Climate Action Summit, UN Secretary-General highlighted the urgent need for global leaders to address the pressing climate crisis.

After expressing his gratitude to the UAE for their warm hospitality and commending COP28 President for the positive start to the conference, António Guterres drew attention to the melting ice of Antarctica and the disappearing glaciers of Nepal.

He emphasized the interconnectedness of these environmental crises, and stressed that polar ice and glaciers vanishing before our eyes have far-reaching consequences, from landslides and floods to rising sea levels. However, the Secretary-General made it clear that this is just one symptom of the larger sickness plaguing our climate.

"Earth's vital signs are failing: record emissions, ferocious fires, deadly droughts and the hottest year ever. We can guarantee it even when we're still in November," Guterres warned.

He also pointed out that we are far from meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement and dangerously close to exceeding the 1.5-degree temperature limit. Despite the grim situation, he expressed optimism that it is not too late to prevent a planetary catastrophe.

Social waste management could rescue Iran's Hyrcanian forests

Social Desk

The head of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE) has announced that the Social Waste Management (SWM) project is currently being piloted in the villages of Darabkala and Dalir in Mazandaran Province. As a result, these villages have seen a 70 percent reduction in waste. "The implementation of SWM should be extended nationwide," said Ali Salajegheh, according to Tasnim News Agency. Ali Salajegheh emphasized the importance of people's involvement in waste management. He believes that waste should be seen as a valuable resource, and when people recognize its worth, they will be less likely to dispose of it. Education plays a crucial role in promoting this understanding.

Salajegheh outlined the SWM plan, which has been successfully implemented in Mazandaran Province with the support of the National Environment Fund. He stressed the need for a people-centered approach to waste management and called for the nationwide implementation of SWM, starting with the northern cities that face waste-related challenges.

The vice president highlighted the case of Amol city, which has struggled to find suitable waste disposal sites. He proposed implementing the SWM plan through zoning in Amol, aiming to tackle the city's waste issues effectively.

The head of the DoE shared the success of the SWM plan in Kiakala, where for every 10,000 tons of waste produced, eight people are employed directly. "Household waste is purchased from those

who separate their waste, and through a cycle that avoids landfilling, the waste is transformed into organic fertilizer for local agricultural lands," he said.

He emphasized that the key to this approach lies in providing education and creating incentives for people to actively participate in waste management. Profitability is linked to people's involvement in the process.

Salajegheh stressed that waste management does not require complex formulas but can be achieved through SWM, which combines social innovations with technical solutions. The SWM project aims to prevent water and soil pollution caused by leachate, eliminating the need for compost factories, waste incinerators, and collection machines.

In the SWM project, community organizations provide training to villagers on proper waste separation. Large garbage bins are then collected from these villages, and each family is provided with two separate bins for dry and wet waste. With the knowledge gained from the training, people separate their waste accordingly, and it is collected from them.

Wet waste is transformed into compost in a farm located near the village, while dry waste is purchased from individuals who participate in waste collection.

"These individuals benefit from the material rewards of waste collection," Salajegheh said. Furthermore, designated SWM shops in these areas allow people to exchange their accumulated points for goods, incentivizing their active participation in waste management.



An overview of waste disposal in northern Iran

The accumulation of garbage in the Hyrcanian forests in the north of Iran began around 50 years ago due to the challenges associated with proper waste disposal in the region. Over time, these mountains of garbage have reached a height of over 90 meters. It is important to note that this issue is not a recent phenomenon.

The unique topographic conditions of Iran's northern provinces, including their proximity to the sea and the presence of numerous rivers and underground aquifers, make it difficult to dispose of waste in the conventional manner used by other cities in the country. Consequently, we observe the accumulation of a massive waste mountain within the heart of the pristine forests of the north. This waste accumulation is increasing each year due to population growth and the rise in per capita waste production. The consequences of this problem are becoming increasingly serious, posing a threat not only to the health of the forests but also to the well-being of the surrounding communities. The challenges arising from the waste accu-

mulation include the emission of unpleasant odors, the degradation of the forest landscape, the spread of respiratory and skin diseases, and the contamination of soil and underground water sources. Leachates from the waste flow down and harm even the most resilient trees, causing them to wither and die.

A whopping 64 percent of waste produced in these three provinces is buried in forests, 26 percent is dumped in rivers, and 10 percent is discarded in pastures. Burying 64 percent of waste in forests leads to the pollution of underground water and soil, thereby perpetuating urban and rural waste pollution. Given the unique circumstances of the northern provinces, it is imperative to significantly reduce waste production and transportation to burial centers. This can be achieved by changing consumption patterns, minimizing waste production, reusing devices, and fully implementing waste separation plans from the source.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

