

Berlin-based journalist raps Germany's falling living standards



Social Desk

Imploring immigrants to reconsider moving to Germany was the headline of an expatriate Iranian journalist on her live Instagram stream on December 8.

"Germany could no longer be recommended to people who have immigration at heart," said Mahdieh Pouryadegar, while criticizing the falling living standards of Germany, the EU's strongest economy, and a country generally considered to have favorable standards of living.

"The vision of leading a good life in Germany is no longer viable under current circumstances." Pointing out Germany's stance on the war in Ukraine, Pouryadegar identified it as the main reason behind the country's political and economic instability.

"All the European countries destabilized themselves by siding with the Ukrainians," she said, further adding, "And when Germany, the leading country of the union, is in such a state, one can only imagine the conditions the rest are in."

Citing the country's insufficient housing market, she cautioned, "Even if there's a house to be found, it would be too expensive and not at all affordable."

Moreover, the journalist complained about the rise in crime and security issues, which seem to be troubling the citizens.

She further stated that day-to-day life in Germany is occasionally disturbed due to inefficient bureaucratic processes, as well as recent economic and political distress, and refers to recent strikes in the country as an example. The latest case is the train drivers' strike at the national railway Deutsche Bahn, which went on a 24-hour strike, according to the GDL trade union representing the drivers.

In line with the journalist's observations, Ipsos published an article on December 6, echoing the "sick man of Europe" allegory for Germany. The article cited the November What Worries the World survey, revealing that "an alarming three-quarters of Germans (74%) believe their nation is on a downward trajectory."

According to the article, Germany's longstanding political stability and robust state coffers have been rattled by recent global events, primarily the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"Now, one in four Germans (24%) find it challenging to maintain financial stability, and one in three (32%) anticipate having to reduce their current standard of living."

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To be male and in Gaza

Humiliating civilians arises from hate, not anger

International Desk

PERSPECTIVE

While news and footage of the battering and torturing of prisoners of war (POWs) by Israel Defense Forces (IDF), abhorrent and brutal as they are, are nothing new, the occupying army always finds new lows to sink to.

Dozens of Palestinians have been pictured stripped to their underwear, bound, and lined up on their knees after reportedly being captured by Israeli soldiers in northern Gaza, according to the Daily Mail.

The men are believed to have surrendered in the Jabalia refugee camp and other areas around northern Gaza, with Israeli outlet Walla saying they were stripped "to rule out the possibility that they were carrying weapons". Dozens of captives are reported to have been paraded through Palestine Square in Gaza City, with shoes and sandals strewn across the street in one image.

When asked about the images, IDF spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari seemed to confirm that the men had been taken prisoner but did not clarify whether those pictured were members of Hamas or civilians.

The last point seems to be the worst. It's not even clear to the IDF



● REUTERS

itself whether those Palestinians were simple, hardworking men. Nevertheless, they were paraded around their hometown in front of the eyes of their neighbors and the world in the most humiliating way, with all their discerning features visible.

It's probably beating a dead horse to mention that even if these men were all Hamas members, this is a gross violation of the Geneva Convention, which both Israel and Hamas ratified as ruling political bodies. According to Article 3 of the universally accepted convention, "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment" shall "remain prohibited". But if there was an ear that listened to Israeli transgressions of international law, it must have been convinced

by now. Legalties aside, this cries hatred. It is hatred toward each and every Palestinian. It is a generational, systematic, and much deeper-seated hatred that can't conceivably be traced back to the October 7 attack alone.

Since October 7, Hamas fighters have killed 1,200 people in Israel. This still pales in comparison to the over 17,000 individuals that were killed indiscriminately by the IDF in response, but still, Hamas must have naturally stirred anger within many Israelis, IDF soldiers included.

We'll tell you why this is hatred and not anger. The great Greek philosopher Aristotle provided timeless, comprehensive definitions for many emotions. In his seminal book, Rhetoric, he distin-



guishes hatred sharply from anger. "Anger derives from what happens to oneself, whereas enmity arises also without [the offense] being directed at oneself. For if we believe that someone is a certain kind of person, we hate him. Also, anger is always about individuals... whereas hatred (misis) is also felt toward types: for everyone hates a thief and an informer."

If we contend that once again, Aristotle's observations have hit the mark, we can see why Palestinian civilians may have well been given the same inhumane treatment as members of anti-Israeli resistance movements. These men fit the criteria of being "a certain kind of person," that is, a brown-skinned, able-bodied Palestinian man in Gaza. Even the IDF admits that it has not yet conducted investiga-

tions to prove the guilt of those men. So, they have not committed any "offense" directed at anyone unless proven otherwise and, as such, should not be subject to any anger.

It is as heartbreaking to write this as I imagine it is to read it. The reason is simple: what if we were born in Gaza? We, or our loved ones, could have well matched that insanely general criteria. I assume this is a harder pill for some to swallow, but it's difficult to find fault with this argument.

To be sure, Aristotle does not forget to say that there is hatred toward individuals who have slighted us as well. But, even so, who, in their right mind, goes willy-nilly to a neighborhood and arrests and humiliates everyone in sight just because they were slighted by some unidentified men?

I challenge those soldiers to tell us what the man in the front row did, what the man beside him did, and what any of the other ones did to deserve this. And don't give us the "They have at least supported Hamas" argument. Every citizen of every country supports their ruling bodies by paying taxes and working in the public or private sectors. You have to do better than that argument, for your own sake, when you inevitably stand in front of a court, whether it be in this life or the other.

Message of Putin's trip to UAE, Saudi Arabia: *Moscow is not isolated*



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Russian president on Wednesday visited the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, followed by hosting his Iranian counterpart, Ebrahim Raisi, the next day. These diplomatic visits occurred against the backdrop of an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Vladimir Putin on charges of war crimes in Ukraine, dated March 17, 2023.

He had previously visited Kyrgyzstan and China. However, his visits to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, as allies of the United States in the region, were more significant. Iran Daily discussed the Russian president's trip with Mahmoud Shoori, an international affairs expert specializing in Russian issues.

IRAN DAILY: In your opinion, besides negotiating for bilateral exchanges, did the Russian president's visit to the UAE and Saudi Arabia have any specific political message or goal?

SHOORI: Certainly, it had a specific political message. After the

start of the Ukraine war and widespread Western sanctions led by the US against Moscow, a crucial issue for Russia was to demonstrate that the country is not isolated. Russians have said that only a few countries worldwide follow the West's sanction policies against the country, and most states maintain their previous relations with Russia. Now it seems that political and economic relations between Russia and many countries in the world are normal.

Therefore, Putin's visit to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, which are considered allies of the US, sends a message that Moscow is not in isolation. Both the UAE and Saudi Arabia acted in a grey area towards Russia amid the Ukraine war. The UAE not only has not reduced its economic relations with Russia but has increased them. A significant portion of Russia's needs is supplied through the UAE. Russia and Saudi Arabia have always engaged in negotiations regarding the oil market, and they continue to do so. Therefore, Putin's trip, in addition to its bilateral economic goals, also had an international political aspect, emphasizing the inefficacy of Western sanctions against the country.

Regardless, Western sanc-

tions against Russia have created challenges for the country, as President Putin had not undertaken multiple foreign trips before. However, it seems that with the prolongation of the Ukraine war and the continued conflict in Gaza, a breathing space has been created for Russia.

President Putin, nonetheless, exercised caution during his travels to foreign countries due to the International Criminal Court's indictment that labeled him a war criminal. In countries that have accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, a judge can issue an arrest warrant, making travel to these countries risky for Mr. Putin. However, for countries that have not accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, or have not provided assurances of compliance with its rulings, it is not problematic for the Russian president. Nevertheless, the longer the Ukraine war persists, the more it is in Russia's favor in terms of the international landscape. Countries that cut or reduced their relations with Russia under Western sanctions and the onset of Ukraine war gradually adjusted their positions and moved towards revitalizing relations, seeking to benefit

from engagements with Moscow.

In the news, it's mentioned that Mr. Putin will run for the presidential election in 2024. Do you think Putin has tangible achievements that ensure his victory?

There is no doubt that Putin will run for the presidency again, and he will likely win, as there is no serious competition in the field. Recent polls show he enjoys a popularity rating of 60 to 70 percent. He undoubtedly envisions successes for himself, especially considering his resistance to Western pressures over the past two years. He is currently engaged in a war, and naturally, he wants to bring an end to this conflict himself. Therefore, one can anticipate his victory in the elections.

Do you think there will be any changes in the current situation of the Ukraine war until the presidential elections in Russia and the US in 2024?

No, currently, there is no pros-



pect for a change in the war front. It doesn't seem that both sides are tired of the war or showing signs of a willingness to reconcile. So, the most foreseeable option is the continuation of this war of attrition. The best-case scenario is a cease-fire agreement rather than peace.

Trump is a serious candidate for the US presidential election. If Trump wins, how do you think the Ukraine war will evolve? Trump has claimed he can end the war within 24 hours.

It's too early to discuss the outcome of the US elections. Even if Trump wins, he won't be the ultimate decision-maker on the Ukraine war. European countries support Ukraine and their opinion is also important. However, Ukrainian opinions also matter. But a change in US policy in supporting Ukraine and Trump's pressure on Europeans might force them to accept a temporary agreement with Russia.