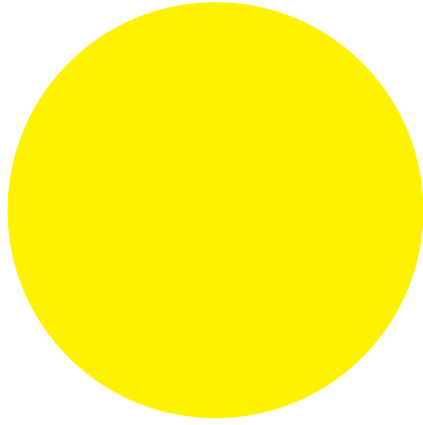




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SPECIAL ISSUE



# Iran Daily

**Israel has become policy-maker for US: Ex-Iranian FM**

By Ebrahim Beheshti & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou  
 Staff writers

**INTERVIEW**

The United States vetoed a United Nations resolution Friday backed by almost all other Security Council members and dozens of other nations demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza. It is now more than clear that the US has an undeniable role in the crimes committed against the people of Gaza. In a situation where France has voted in favor of and the UK has abstained from voting, why has the US, ignoring the public opinion in the world and contrary to its claimed values, prevented a cease-fire in Gaza? In this regard, Iran Daily talked with Ali-Akbar Salehi, former minister of foreign affairs and former head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.

**IRAN DAILY:** The recent meeting of the UN Security Council did not lead to a cease-fire as the US vetoed the proposed resolution. How long will the world tolerate Israel's crimes in Gaza and the killing of innocent people?

**SALEHI:** The war in Gaza and Israeli attacks on innocent people is a very sadening crisis because of the killing that is being done in front of the entire world and openly.



There are few people in the world who have witnessed the scenes of Israel's measures in Gaza and are not grieved by all the pain and suffering of the people. People around the world came to the streets in protest of Israel's crimes and expressed sympathy with the troubled Palestinian people.

According to a survey published by the Israeli media, on October 7 about 55 percent of the respondents supported Israel, but the figure dropped to five percent a few weeks later, that is, 95 percent of the respondents declared their support for the people of Gaza, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

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## Iran, Cuba agree on joint production of meningitis vaccine: Official



### Economy Desk

Iran has established collaborations with Cuba in various fields, including the biotechnology field, as the two countries have agreed to cooperate in the joint production of a meningitis vaccine, announced an aide to Iran's foreign minister.

Issa Kameli, who is also the director general of the Foreign Ministry's Department of the Americas, told ISNA on Sunday that there is a bright perspective in the relations between Iran and Latin America, as Tehran has a strong will to expand ties with LatAm states based on common interests.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuba was the first country to share the vaccine manufacturing technology with us, said the official, adding that this measure of Havana is important and valuable for Iran.

Tehran's relations with Havana are growing following the visit of the presidents of the two countries and the agreements reached, he said, noting that Cuban officials were also satisfied with the visit they made to Tehran last week.

We are trying to expand relations between Iran and Latin American countries at the highest level, Kameli stated.

# Iran talks with 20 countries to foster air transport cooperation: CAO



The head of the Iranian Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) said negotiations were conducted with 20 countries on the development of air transportation cooperation on the sidelines of the 15th ICAO Air Services Negotiation Event (ICAN2023) which was held on Decem-

ber 3-7. Speaking on the occasion of commemorating International Civil Aviation Day, Mohammad Mohammadi-Bakhsh pointed to organizing the ICAN2023 in Saudi Arabia and said the talks were held on the development of the flight network, reported Tasnim news

agency. He said the realization of the two components of safety and security, emphasized in the Chicago Treaty, is given serious attention in Iran's aviation transport industry. The CAO has gained eye-catching achievements in this industry, especially in recent years, he further em-

phasized. Despite the economic war the US and its allies have waged against Iran over the past 43 years, the CAO has been successful in the fields of repair and maintenance, design and construction of planes, using the technical know-how and experience of new technology-based

companies, Mohammadi-Bakhsh said. Also, in the ceremony of commemorating International Civil Aviation Day, the memorial stamp of the CAO was unveiled. In April, Mohammadi-Bakhsh said his organization had taken giant strides in the current Iranian year (started March 21) to

develop the air transportation fleet as well as to boost the flight network. He went on to say that the CAO has inked memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with 30 countries over the past 18 months, adding that the country has launched direct flights to 60 destinations worldwide.

## Huge fire erupts at refinery; reservoirs explode in East Iran

A huge fire broke out on Sunday morning at an oil refinery in the eastern Iranian province of South Khorasan, leading to the simultaneous explosion of several gas condensate reservoirs, Tasnim news agency reported.

The fire started at one of the reservoirs of the refinery, which is located in Birjand Special Economic Zone, at 8:45 a.m. local time (0515 GMT), the report said.

Firefighting, rescue and emergency teams were dispatched to the scene immediately, while firefighters were trying to contain the fire, it spread to other nearby reservoirs, causing them to explode simultaneously, added the report.

"Five firefighting groups as well as a number of fire engines are at the scene trying to cool the nearby reservoirs down to prevent the further spread of the blaze,"

Tasnim quoted Birjand's Governor Ali Fazelifard as saying.

He added that the refinery had been completely evacuated to minimize potential human casualties, noting the cause of the incident had not been determined yet.

According to Tasnim, the refinery belongs to the Azaran Sanaat Barsava Company, which produces light and heavy hydrocarbons using gas condensates.



## Israel has become ...

The consciousness gained by the world's public opinion about the events in Palestine is one of the achievements of the Operation Al-Aqsa Storm by Hamas. On the other hand, Western governments, especially the US, have remained silent regarding this massacre by Israel. We hope that this awakening and public awareness can finally put pressure on Western governments.

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**The West, led by the US, has claimed universal values over the past decades as it has tried to promote them in different ways in the world. Values such as democracy, human rights, equality and human dignity, conventions**

**and international law. In your opinion, how is the recent US vetoing of the proposed resolution connected with such values?**

Vetoing the proposed resolution for a cease-fire in Gaza, has not only nothing to do with those claimed values, but is in the opposite direction.

With this vetoing, Americans put their political dignity into doubt. Basically, the Gaza war revealed the contradictions of Western countries led by America.

On the one hand, they claim human rights and international conventions on war and respecting the rights of civilians while, on the other hand, they supported Israel against the violation of all international conventions and laws.

They had the same atti-

tude towards the war in Ukraine and condemned and sanctioned Russia as well as President Vladimir Putin, but they have remained silent about the war crimes and genocide in Gaza.

In fact, Westerners highlight their claimed values such as democracy and human rights when their interests demand it, and they are indifferent to the violation of these values wherever their interests do not demand it. On Friday, a US official said that the damage done by Israel to the United States' position in the world is irreparable.

**At the head of the international bodies you mentioned is the UN, which despite the efforts made by Secretary General António Guterres, has not succeeded in do-**

**ing anything against Israel's inhumane attacks.**

Having international organizations and institutions is better than not having them, but the fact is that these bodies are under the influence of major powers. Despite the efforts made by its Secretary General, the UN could not even support the lives of its own employees in Gaza. About 130 UN workers and aid workers have been killed in Gaza.

One point that was revealed in the Gaza war was that Israel has never sacrificed its interests for the interests of the US in the past 75 years, but US has always sacrificed its interests and policies for the interests and policies of Israel.

Although the US has tried to justify its indefensible measures by the help of its economic and media power, it cannot justify this humiliation and unconditional support of Israel, which has led to the death

of nearly 18,000 people in Gaza.

I really do not know how the US government will save face in the public opinion of the world and even in the American society.

It is as if Israel is the leader and decision-maker in US policy and Washington is only a provider of Israel's needs.

**What is mostly seen in the media is the destruction and the number of victims in Gaza as well as the suffering of the people of Gaza. What have the resistance groups and the people of Gaza achieved during the two months of standing against Israel?**

The Hamas attack on October 7 is called Operation Al-Aqsa Storm. The result of the storm has been destruction, and it shows that whoever sows wind, shall reap a whirlwind. Is-

rael has been sowing wind for 75 years; therefore it should have expected a whirlwind.

We hope that this storm will ultimately lead to the defeat of Israel. One of the most important achievements of the people and militant groups in Palestine is the global awakening that manifested itself in the form of large demonstrations around the world against the crimes of Israel and in support of the people of Gaza.

On the other hand, contrary to its claims, Israel has not yet succeeded in achieving its declared goals. They announced that they would destroy Hamas, release prisoners and flood Hamas tunnels in Gaza.

The Gaza Strip is about 365 square kilometers, and the Israeli Army is considered one of the most equipped armies in the world. During more than 40 days of entering

the territory of Gaza, it has been engaged in only 50-60km of the Gaza Strip, and it has not been able to take over the total area.

Hamas continues to resist and the Israeli Army could not release even one prisoner without Hamas's approval. Therefore, Israel has not made a significant achievement so far.

Perhaps US's insistence on unconditional support for Israel is because this regime has not been able to achieve its declared goals.

It is now necessary to remind people of the correctness of the Islamic Republic of Iran's policy on the Israel-Palestine issue. As time passes, the correctness of this policy becomes more apparent. Iran has been defending the historical and legal rights of the Palestinians and human dignity for over 40 years. As long as people support the resistance groups, the groups will not fail.



# Kharaqan Towers offer a peek into Seljuk architecture and historical enigmas

## Iranica Desk

Kharaqan Towers are two magnificent brick structures from the Seljuk period, renowned as one of the most popular tourist attractions in Qazvin Province. These towers, approximately 29 meters apart, can be found just one kilometer from the Hesar-e Valiasr village in Avaj. In recognition of their historical significance, Kharaqan Towers were officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1977. Situated near each other in a spacious area, these towers share many similarities except for the fact that the eastern tower predates the western tower by 26 years. Adjacent to the village's ancient cemetery, which has stood for a millennium, these towers

beautifully display the architectural artistry of their period, though their builders and the purpose of their construction remain shrouded in mystery. Regarding their historical background, research on the Kharaqan Towers originated in 1964. While the exact motive and identity of the builder are still unclear, existing inscriptions suggest that they were possibly constructed by an individual named Zanjani. One hypothesis proposes that during the time of the Seljuks, the area served as a grazing pasture for Turkish tribal herds, with the chiefs of these tribes being laid to rest within the towers. Unfortunately, in 1968, a flood caused significant damage to the towers, prompting the local villagers to initiate the initial restoration efforts. Since

then, these remarkable structures have undergone several rounds of restoration, ensuring their preservation for future generations to appreciate.

## Architecture

The magnificent Kharaqan Towers demonstrate the architectural influence of the Samanid and Buyid periods. Unlike most towers in northern Iran that were built with a circular plan during the 11th and 12th centuries, the craftsmen behind the Kharaqan Towers chose to construct them with an octagonal plan. This decision showcases their skill and artistic taste, as it allowed for the creation of varied and unique decorations on these towers.

The Eastern Tower, which is older than the Western Tower, dates back to 1072 CE and stands at a height of 12.45 meters. Its eight-sided plan adds to its distinctive beauty. To reach the stairs, one must pass through a small rectangular door located inside the burial chamber. Each staircase consists of 22 steps. The construction of the Kharaqan Towers begins with simple bricks measuring 60 centimeters thick, which are then adorned with a decorative brick covering 21 centimeters thick.

Notably, these towers represent the first double-shell dome of the 11th century, making them historically significant.

Situated approximately 29 meters from the Eastern Tower, the Western Tower was built in 1093 CE, and reaches a height of 12.95 meters. This tower surpasses its counterpart in height by about 50 centimeters, and boasts seven columns with a diameter of 95 centimeters, along with one column with a diameter of 133 centimeters. The decorations of the Kharaqan

Towers feature around 30 different motifs, indicating the existence of an ancient tradition that dates back to the Sassanian period, where plaster and later brickwork were adorned with intricate designs. The combination and arrangement of these various designs within the two towers, in addition to the engineering and harmony of their components, are truly admirable.

The Eastern Tower's decorations begin under the dome and exhibit a unique and special charm. Decorative frames grace the eight-sided facades of the tower, with no two patterns being identical.

Paintings play a significant role in the ornamentation of these structures, dating back to the Seljuk period. Elements such as male peacocks with kite-shaped umbrellas and pomegranate trees with two birds can be found within these paintings. Additionally, the interior surface of the dome showcases decorative patterns that combine Kufic calligraphy, beautifully created within green and blue frames.



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# Maqbarat al-Shu'ara of Tabriz, a testament to Iran's literary and cultural heritage

## Iranica Desk

Maqbarat al-Shu'ara, nestled in the Sorkhab neighborhood of Tabriz, East Azarbaijan Province, stands as a testament to Iran's rich literary and cultural heritage. Designated as a national heritage site, it serves as the final resting place for over 320 esteemed poets, scholars, and literati from across Iran, including luminaries such as Asadi Tusi, Khaqani Shirvani, and Qatran Tabrizi. Tragically, the ravages of time, earthquakes, and human neglect have obscured the names and tombs of many of these revered figures. Despite these challenges, the tombs of

approximately 70 individuals have been identified and meticulously reconstructed, welcoming visitors from far and wide. The significance of Tabriz as a sanctuary for poets during the reign of the Atabegs of Azerbaijan, in 11th and 12th centuries, cannot be overstated. Seeking respite from the wars and conflicts, these literary giants found solace in the tranquil embrace of this city, culminating in their final resting place at Maqbarat al-Shu'ara. The historical and cultural complex of Maqbarat al-Shu'ara offers a captivating glimpse into the lives of poets from diverse backgrounds who once called this region

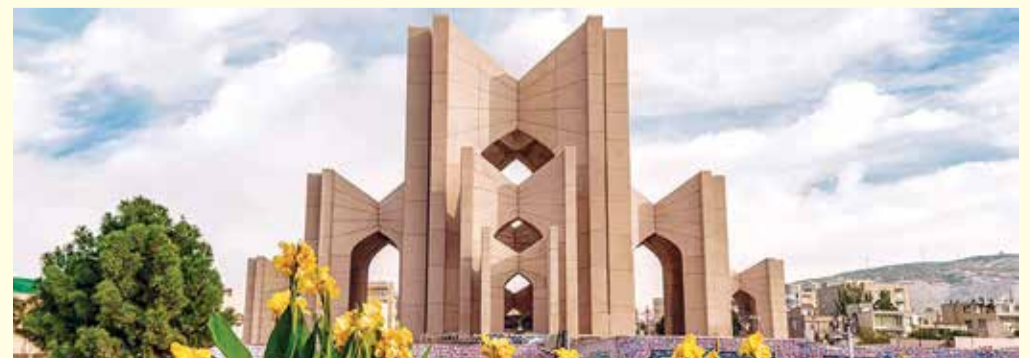
home. Despite enduring neglect following the earthquakes of 1779-80, the cemetery's importance was reaffirmed in 1971 through a design competition for a monument, ultimately resulting in the construction of a striking memorial building designed by Gholam Reza Farzaneh. This architectural marvel, situated at the heart of the complex, fosters an enduring connection between visitors and the structure, boasting a design that seamlessly blends tradition with modernity. Its enduring aesthetic allure, even after nearly four decades, stands as a testament to its timeless appeal.

The symbolic significance of Maqbarat al-Shu'ara in Tabriz is further underscored by its role as a connection of traditional and contemporary architectural art, displaying grandeur and cultural signif-

icance. Annually, during the Nowruz (Iranian New Year) holidays, this site draws many visitors from both within Iran and abroad, cementing its status as a cherished cultural landmark.



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## Israel's Failed Bombing Campaign in Gaza

# Collective Punishment Won't Defeat Hamas



By Robert A. Pape  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS expert

Since October 7, Israel has invaded northern Gaza with some 40,000 combat troops and pummeled the small area with one of the most intense bombing campaigns in history. Nearly two million people have fled their homes as a result. More than 17,000 civilians (including some 6,000 children and 5,000 women) have been killed in the attacks, according to Gaza's Hamas-run Ministry of Health, and the U.S. State Department has suggested

that the true toll may be even higher. Israel has bombed hospitals and ambulances and wrecked about half of northern Gaza's buildings. It has cut off virtually all water, food deliveries, and electricity generation for Gaza's 2.2 million inhabitants. By any definition, this campaign counts as a massive act of collective punishment against civilians. Even now, as Israeli forces push deeper into southern Gaza, the exact purpose of Israel's approach is far from clear. Although Israeli leaders claim to be targeting Hamas alone, the evident lack of discrimination

raises real questions about what it is actually up to. Is Israel's eagerness to shatter Gaza a product of the same incompetence that led to the massive failure of the Israeli military to counter Hamas's attack on October 7, the plans for which ended up in the hands of Israeli military and intelligence officials more than a year earlier? Is wrecking northern Gaza and now southern Gaza a prelude to sending the territory's entire population to Egypt, as proposed in a "concept paper" produced by the Israeli Intelligence Ministry?

Whatever the ultimate goal, Israel's collective devastation of Gaza raises deep moral problems. But even judged purely in strategic terms, Israel's approach is doomed to failure—and indeed, it is already failing. Mass civilian punishment has not convinced Gaza's residents to

stop supporting Hamas. To the contrary, it has only heightened resentment among Palestinians. Nor has the campaign succeeded in dismantling the group ostensibly being targeted. Sixty-plus days of war show that while Israel can demolish Gaza, it cannot destroy Hamas. In

fact, the group may be stronger now than it was before. Israel is hardly the first entity to err by placing excessive faith in the coercive magic of airpower. History shows that the large-scale bombing of civilian areas almost never achieves its objectives.

### Losing Hearts And Minds

Since the dawn of airpower, countries have sought to bomb enemies into submission and shatter civilian morale. Pushed to their breaking point, the theory goes, populations will rise up against their own governments and switch sides. This strategy of coercive punishment reached its apogee in World War II. History remembers the indiscriminate bombing of cities in that war simply by the place names of the targets: Hamburg (40,000 dead), Darmstadt (12,000), and Dresden (25,000).

Now Gaza can be added to this infamous list. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has himself likened the current campaign to the Allies' fight in World War II. While denying that Israel was engaging in collective punishment today, he pointed out that a Royal Air Force strike targeting Gestapo headquarters in Copenhagen killed scores of schoolchildren.

What Netanyahu left unmentioned was that none of the Allies' efforts to punish civilians en masse actually succeeded. In Germany, the Allied bombing campaign, which took off beginning in 1942, wreaked havoc on civilians, destroying one urban area after another and ultimately a total of 58 German cities and towns by the end of the war. But it never sapped civilian morale or prompted an uprising against

Adolf Hitler, despite the confident predictions of Allied officials. Indeed, the campaign only encouraged Germans to fight harder for fear of a draconian postwar peace.

That failure should not have been so surprising, given what happened when the Nazis tried the same tactic. The Blitz, their bombing of London and other British cities in 1940–41, killed more than 40,000 people, and yet British Prime Minister Winston Churchill refused to capitulate. Instead, he invoked the resulting civilian casualties to rally society to make the sacrifices necessary for victory. Rather than shattering morale, the Blitz motivated the British to organize a years-long effort—with their U.S. and Soviet allies—to counterattack and ultimately conquer the country that had bombed them.

In fact, never in history has a bombing campaign caused the targeted population to revolt against its own government. The United States has tried the tactic numerous times, to no avail. During the Korean War, it destroyed 90 percent of electricity generation in North Korea. In the Vietnam War, it knocked out nearly as much power in North Vietnam. And in the Persian Gulf War, U.S. air attacks disrupted 90 percent of electricity generation in Iraq. But in none of these cases did the population rise up.

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Despite nearly two months of heavy military operations—virtually unrestrained by the United States and the rest of the world—Israel has achieved only marginal results. By any meaningful metric, the campaign has not led to Hamas's even partial defeat.





## A Counterproductive Campaign

This historical pattern is repeating itself in Gaza. Despite more than two months of heavy military operations—virtually unrestrained by the United States and the rest of the world—Israel has achieved only marginal results. By any meaningful metric, the campaign has not led to Hamas's even partial defeat. Israel's air and ground operations have killed as many as 5,000 Hamas fighters (according to Israeli officials), out of a total of about 30,000. But these losses will not significantly reduce Hamas's power, since, as the October 7 attacks proved, it takes only a few hundred Hamas fighters to wreak havoc on Israel. Worse, Israeli officials also admit that the military campaign is killing twice as many civilians as Hamas fighters. In other words, Israel is almost certainly producing more fighters than it is killing, since each dead civilian will have family and friends eager to join Hamas to exact revenge.

Hamas's military infrastructure, such as it is, has not been meaningfully dismantled, even after the much-vaunted operations against the al-Shifa hospital, which the Israeli military alleged Hamas used as an operational base. As videos released by the Israeli Defense Forces show, Israel has captured and destroyed the entrances to many of Hamas's tunnels, but these can eventually be repaired, just as they were built in the first place. More important, Hamas's leaders and fighters appear to have abandoned the tunnels before Israeli forces entered them, meaning that the group's most important infrastructure—its fighters—survived. Hamas has an advantage over Israeli forces: it can easily abandon a fight, blend into the civilian population, and live to fight again on more favorable terms. That is why a large-scale Israeli ground operation is also doomed to failure.

More broadly, Israel's military campaign has not

deeply weakened Hamas's control over Gaza. Israel has rescued only one of the 240 or so captives taken in the October 7 attack. The only other captives freed have been released by Hamas, showing that the group remains in control of its fighters.

Despite large-scale power shortages and extensive destruction throughout Gaza, Hamas continues to churn out propaganda videos showing civilian atrocities committed by Israeli forces and intense battles between Hamas fighters and Israeli troops. The group's propaganda is distributed widely on the messaging app Telegram, where its channel has more than 620,000 subscribers. By the count of the University of Chicago Project on Security and Threats (which I direct), Hamas's military wing, the Qassam Brigades, has disseminated nearly 200 videos and posters every week from October 11 to November 22 through that channel.

## Land For Peace

The only way to deal a lasting defeat to Hamas is to attack its leaders and fighters while separating them from the surrounding population. That is easier said than done, however, especially since Hamas draws its ranks directly from the local population rather than from abroad.

Indeed, survey evidence shows the extent to which Israel's military operations are now producing more fighters than they are killing. In a November 14 poll of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank conducted by the Arab World for Research and Development, 76 percent of respondents said they viewed Hamas positively. Compare that with the 27 percent of respondents in both territories who told different pollsters in September that Hamas was "the most deserving of representing the Palestinian people." The implication is sobering: a vast portion of the more than 500,000 Palestinian men

between the ages of 18 and 34 are now ripe recruits for Hamas or other Palestinian groups seeking to target Israel and its civilians.

This result also reinforces the lessons of history. Contrary to conventional wisdom, most militants do not choose their vocation owing to religion or ideology, although some certainly do. Rather, most people who take up arms do so because their land is being taken away.

For decades, I've studied the most extreme militants—suicide attackers—and my study of 462 people who killed themselves on missions to kill others from 1982 to 2003 remains the largest demographic study of these assailants. I found that there are hundreds of secular suicide attackers. Indeed, the world's leader in suicide attacks during that period was the Tamil Tigers, an openly antireligious, Marxist group in Sri Lanka that carried out more suicide

operations than Hamas or Palestine Islamic Jihad—the two leading Palestinian groups—combined. What 95 percent of the suicide attackers in my database had in common was that they were fighting back against a military occupation that was controlling territory they considered their homeland.

From 1994 to 2005, Hamas and other Palestinian groups carried out more than 150 suicide attacks, killing about 1,000 Israelis. Only when Israel withdrew military forces from Gaza did these groups abandon the tactic almost entirely. Since then, the number of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank has grown by 50 percent, making it even harder for Israel to control the territories in the long run. There is every reason to think that Israel's renewed military occupation of Gaza—"for an indefinite period," according to Netanyahu—will lead to a new, perhaps larger wave of suicide attacks against Israelis.

## The Settler Problem

Although there are many dimensions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one fact helps clarify the complex picture. Virtually every year since the early 1980s, the Jewish population in the Palestinian territories has grown, even during the years of the Oslo peace process in the 1990s. The growth of settlements has meant the loss of land for the Palestinians and increasing concerns that Israel will confiscate more land to resettle more Jews in the Palestinian territories. Indeed, Yossi Dagan, a prominent settler and member of Netanyahu's party, has urged the creation of settlements in Gaza, where the last settlements were removed in 2005.

The growth of the Jewish population in Palestinian territories is a central factor in fomenting conflict. In

the years immediately after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the total number of Jews living in the West Bank and Gaza numbered only a few thousand. Israeli-Palestinian relations were mostly harmonious. No Palestinian suicide attacks and few attacks of any kind occurred during this period.

But things changed after the right-wing cabinet led by the Likud Party came to power in 1977, promising a major expansion of settlements. The number of settlers increased—from about 4,000 in 1977 to 24,000 in 1983 and to 116,000 in 1993. By 2022, about 500,000 Jewish Israeli settlers lived in the Palestinian territories, excluding East Jerusalem (Al-Quds), where an additional 230,000 Jews resided. As the set-

tlements grew, the relative harmony between the Israelis and the Palestinians dissipated. First came the creation of Hamas in 1987, and then the first intifada of 1987–93, the second intifada of 2000–2005, and continuing rounds of conflict between Palestinians and Israelis ever since.

The near-continuous growth of the Jewish settlements is a core reason why the idea of a two-state solution has lost credibility since the 1990s. If there is to be a serious pathway to a Palestinian state in the future, that growth must come to an end. After all, why should Palestinians reject Hamas and support a supposed peace process if doing so means only more loss of their land?

## A Lasting Peace

Only a two-state solution will lead to lasting security for Israelis and Palestinians alike. The goal should be to revive a process that has been dormant since the last negotiations failed in 2008, 15 years ago. To be clear, Israel should couple this political approach with a military one, engaging in limited, sustained operations against the Hamas leaders and fighters responsible for the October 7 attack. But it must adopt the political element of the strategy now, not later. Israel cannot wait until after some mythical time when Hamas is defeated by military might alone.

Those who doubt that a two-state solution can ever be reached are right that immediately resuming negotiations with the Palestinians would not reduce Hamas's will to fight. For one thing, the group is an avowed proponent of eliminating Israel. For another, it would be one of the biggest losers in a two-state solution, since a peace deal would almost certainly involve the prohibition of armed Palestinian groups aside from Hamas's main internal rival, the Palestinian Authority, which would likely enjoy renewed support and legitimacy if it secured an agreement that the majority of Palestinians supported. And even if a two-state solution is achieved, Israel will still need a strong defense capability, since no political solution can completely eliminate the threat of terrorism for years to come.

But that is why the goal now should not be to immediately put forward a final plan for a two-state solution—something that is simply not in the realm of

political possibility at the moment. Instead, the immediate objective should be to create a pathway for an eventual Palestinian state. Although skeptics claim that such a pathway is impossible because Israel has no suitable Palestinian partners, in fact, Israel can take crucial steps on its own.

Israel could publicly announce that it intends to achieve a state of affairs where the Palestinians live in a state chosen by Palestinians side by side with Israel. It could announce that it intends to develop a process to achieve that goal by, say, 2030, and will lay out milestones for getting there in the coming months. It could announce that it will immediately freeze settlements in the West Bank and forgo such settlements in Gaza through 2030 as a down payment that demonstrated its commitment to a genuine two-state solution. And it could announce that it is willing and ready to work with all parties—all countries in the region and beyond, all international organizations, and all Palestinian parties—that are willing to accept these objectives.

Far from being irrelevant to Israel's military efforts against Hamas, these political steps would augment a sustained, highly targeted campaign to reduce the near-term threat of attacks from the group. Effective counterterrorism benefits from intelligence from the local population, which is far more likely to be forthcoming if that population has hope of a genuine political alternative to the terrorist group.

Unilateral Israeli steps signaling a serious commit-

ment to a new future would decidedly change the framework and dynamics in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship and give Palestinians a genuine alternative to simply supporting Hamas. Israelis, for their part, would be more secure, and the two parties would at long last be on a path toward peace.

Of course, the current Israeli cabinet shows no signs of pursuing this plan. That could change, however, especially if the United States decided to use its influence. For instance, the White House could apply more private pressure to Netanyahu's cabinet to curtail indiscriminate attacks in the air campaign.

But perhaps the most important step that Washington could take now would be to jump-start a major public debate of Israel's conduct in Gaza, one that allowed alternative strategies to be considered in depth and that brought forth rich public information for Americans, Israelis, and people around the world to evaluate the consequences for themselves. The White House could release U.S. government assessments of the effect that Israel's military campaign in Gaza is having on Hamas and Palestinian civilians. Congress could hold hearings centered on a simple question: Is the campaign producing more Hamas fighters than it's killing?

The failure of Israel's current approach is becoming clearer by the day. Sustained public discussion of that reality, combined with serious consideration of smart alternatives, offers the best chance for convincing Israel to do what is, after all, in its own interest.



Persian Gulf Pro League roundup:

# Esteghlal held at Foolad; Persepolis, Sepahan close the gap on top

## Sports Desk

The latest round of fixtures at the Persian Gulf Pro League saw Esteghlal play to a goalless draw at bottom-half struggler Foolad Khuzestan.

Sepahan, meanwhile, routed Mes Rafsanjan 4-1 at home to close the gap on Javad Nekounam's Blues on top of the table, with Persepolis walking away with a much-needed 1-0 victory over Havadar at the Azadi Stadium.



## Boring in Foolad Arena

Nekounam's reunion with his former employers turned out to be a boring affair at the Foolad Arena, as the home side – third from bottom – seemed to be more than happy with the minimum point against the in-form Blues, while the visiting side failed with creating clear-cut chances despite desperately

searching for a winner. In a further blow for Esteghlal, Iman Salimi was forced out before the break with an eye injury, leaving the center-back a doubt for Thursday's Tehran derby against Persepolis.

A second successive draw away from home kept Esteghlal on top with 24 points – three clear of Sepahan and Tractor, although the Isfahan-based club has a game in hand.

## Sepahan flying high

Days after becoming the only Iranian top-flight side to progress to the knock-out phase of the AFC Champions League, Sepahan marched to a third victory in a row in the domestic league.

Ex-Sepahan striker Sajjad Shabbazzadeh sent his effort wide after going past keeper Payam Niazmand deep into the first-half stoppage time, arguably a pivotal point throughout the contest as the home side went on to score four in the second half before a late consolation for Mes.

Iranian international fullback Ramin Rezaeian broke the deadlock with yet another superb free-kick 10 minutes after the restart, with Reza Shekari adding a second six minutes later.

Shahriyar Moghanlou came off the bench to find the net twice and take his tally to five for the season, before Jalal Alimohammadi sent Niazmand the wrong way from the spot to cut the deficit to three.

Having been deducted four points for a 'budget cap violation' earlier in the season, Sepahan, boasting probably the most formidable squad in the league, remains the favorite to go all the way to lift the ultimate prize by the end of the campaign.



## Relief for Reds

Stepping onto the pitch on the back of a devastating defeat at home against Al Duhail, which led to the Reds crashing out of the Asian elite clubs event, Yahya Golmohammadi and his men knew a seventh consecutive match without a victory was the last thing they needed ahead of the encounter with their archrivals.

Persepolis, playing without suspended top scorer Shahab Zahedi, had Saeb Mohebbi to thank for the maximum points as Havadar defender's own goal midway through the first half settled the scoreline.

The result might have provided relief for Golmohammadi, who had sections of the crowd chanting against him after the Al Duhail defeat, but the Reds manager was still left with much to think about, as his players were again wasteful in front of the goal, while

clearly running out of steam in the second period.

A first league victory since late October lifted the defending champion to fourth in the table – equal on 20 points with Zob Ahan, which shared the spoils in a goalless stalemate at Paykan on the preceding night.

Elsewhere on Saturday, Nassa-ji Mazandaran celebrated only a second win of the season, edging out fellow relegation zone side Esteghlal Khuzestan 1-0 at home, courtesy of Amirmohammad Houshmand's 66th-minute strike. On Thursday, Brazilian Gustavo Vagenin scored right before the break as Tractor left Sirjan with a massive 1-0 win against Golgozar. Shams Azar continued the impressive run in its debut top-flight campaign, thanks to Ali-Asghar Arabi's second-half double in a 2-0 victory away to Malavan FC on Friday, which saw Mahdi Tartar's side drop to sixth in the standing – one point adrift of Persepolis and Zob Ahan.

In Abadan, three first-half goals saw Amin Kazemian and Reza Jabireh find the target either side of a Yousef Kayshams' equalizer to steer Iralco to a 2-1 win at San'at Naft in a match dominated by controversial refereeing decisions.

Esteghlal defender Armin Sohrabian (5) goes up for a header during a goalless draw against Foolad Khuzestan in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Foolad Arena, Ahwaz, Iran, on December 9, 2023.  
● AMIN BAHRAMI/IRNA

## James named MVP as Lakers win inaugural NBA Cup

AP – As commissioner Adam Silver prepared to hand LeBron James the MVP trophy of the inaugural NBA In-Season Tournament, he cautioned that "it doesn't come with a franchise".

James bent over in laughter, but he has been serious about wanting to own an NBA expansion team in Las Vegas.

For now, he'll more than settle for the individual honor and tournament championship after scoring 24 points and adding 11 rebounds Saturday night to help the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Indiana Pacers 123-109 in the final.

"My enthusiasm about being here post-career, bringing a team here has not changed," James said. "The fans are amazing here. This is a place that loves great attractions, and I think the

NBA will be another great addition to this city."

As well as James played Saturday, the star was teammate Anthony Davis, who had 41 points and 20 rebounds – numbers that would have been season highs if they counted. This is the only game in the tournament that doesn't figure in the standings or statistics.

Davis also shot 16 of 24, had five assists and blocked four shots.

"They're a hell of a one-two punch," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said about James and Davis. "That one or two could be either one of them on any given night. At the end of the day, they know how to take it to the next level when everything is on the line."

Los Angeles are the first In-Season Tournament champions because the two headliners received plenty of

help.

Austin Reaves scored 28 points, D'Angelo Russell added 13 points and Cam Reddish set the tone defensively by limiting the damage by Indiana's Tyrese Haliburton, who emerged as one of the faces of this tournament.

He had 20 points and 11 assists against the Lakers, often passing to a teammate rather than trying to force the action.

Also for the Pacers, Benedict Mathurin scored 20 points and Aaron Nesmith had 15.

In addition to taking home a trophy, Lakers players on standard contracts each made \$500,000 and the Pacers received \$200,000 apiece. Players on two-way deals take home half those amounts.

The tournament and the title game had a combination of a NBA playoff and one-and-done NCAA tournament kind of atmosphere, and the Pacers and Lakers played as if their seasons were on the line.

The Lakers led most of the game, though Indiana kept in striking distance until Los Angeles went on a 15-3 run late in the fourth quarter to turn in a 100-96 lead into a 115-99 advantage.

Lakers' LeBron James hoists the NBA Cup trophy as teammates celebrate the victory over the Pacers in the In-Season Tournament final in Las Vegas, NV, US, on December 9, 2023.  
● AP



## Ukraine must consider interests in taking part in Paris Olympics, says minister

REUTERS – Ukraine must consider whether taking part in next year's Paris Olympics is in the nation's interests but participation is impossible unless the IOC alters its "non-constructive position," Ukraine's sports minister said on Saturday. Matviy Bidnyi, Ukraine's minister of youth and sport, was speaking on national television a day after the International Olympic Committee said Russian and Belarusian athletes could compete in Paris as neutrals without flags, emblems or anthems. "The decision to participate should be made based on what it will bring to the country, what the reaction will be and how much it will bring us closer to victory," Bidnyi said, referring to Ukraine's 21-month-old war with Russia. "We should not make rash decisions. It will be a balanced decision and we have to communicate it to the public. We will weigh the pros and cons very carefully."

Russians and Belarusians had initially been banned from competing internationally following Russia's February 2022 invasion of

Ukraine, for which Belarus has been used as a staging ground.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Friday condemned the IOC decision as "shameful". Russia's Sports Minister, Oleg Matytsin, called the conditions set by the IOC for Russian athletes' participation at the Olympics "discriminatory."

Bidnyi said Ukraine could work towards participating if leaders came to the conclusion that it would "promote our position to the world".

"If we continue to see the absolutely non-constructive position of the IOC, to continue to tolerate the participation of the henchmen of the bloody (Russian) regime, this will make our participation impossible."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has for months tried to rally world support for his call for all Russian and Belarusian athletes to be barred from the Games. However, he has not raised the question of whether Ukrainians will take part alongside them competing as neutrals.





# Iran unveils drones armed with air-to-air missiles



The indigenous Karrar drones were unveiled in a ceremony and added to the drone fleet of the Iranian Army on December 10, 2023.  
● IRNA

**National Desk**

In what it considers a significant shift in technological power in the region, Iran has unveiled new combat drones with air-to-air missile capabilities.

"Dozens of Karrar drones, armed with air-to-air missiles, have been added for air defense in all border areas of the country," the official IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

The drones, with an operational range of up to 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), were exhibited on Sunday morning during a televised ceremony organized at a military academy in Tehran, AFP reported.

"The enemies will now have to rethink their strategies" because the Iranian forces have "become more powerful and will have the upper hand in aerial battles," IRNA quoted the Commander-in-Chief of Iran's Army Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi as saying.

The Karrar interceptor drone, the first version of which was unveiled in 2010, has been equipped with a Majid thermal missile, with a range of eight kilometers (five miles).

"We have been feeling the need to produce a drone that is made entirely in Iran, isn't expensive to produce, and can carry out our operations."

Karrar drones "succeeded in their operational tests" during military exercises held in October, Mousavi said. The first batch of the drones were supplied to the army for use last month, the commander pointed out.

The development of Iran's military arsenal has sparked concern among many countries, particularly the United States and Israel, the sworn enemies of the Islamic Republic.

The latter accuse Tehran of providing fleets of drones to its allies in the Middle East, notably to the Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah, and to the Houthi group in Yemen.

Tehran has been accused by Kyiv and its Western allies of providing Russia with drones for use in the Ukraine war, a claim Tehran vehemently denies.

Western governments, however, imposed several rounds of biting sanctions on Iran over the alleged arms sales. Iran began manufacturing drones in the 1980s during its eight-year war with Iraq.

PA: Victory requires unity among Palestinians

## UN chief last to lose hope on UNSC

Gazans stripped of dignity on 'hell on earth': UNRWA

**International Desk**

After the US wielded its veto at the United Nations Security Council to block a move to call for a cease-fire in Gaza on Friday, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the council is "paralyzed by geostrategic divisions".

The event left the UN without a clear route map to stop the conflict lasting many months, but the chief vowed he would not give up seeking a cease-fire in Gaza, according to the Guardian.

Speaking at the Doha Forum in Qatar, Guterres did not directly criticize the US in his address but said world institutions "are weak and outdated, caught in a time warp reflecting a reality of 80 years ago".

Guterres spelled out why he had employed Article

99 of the UN Charter to use his extraordinary powers to force the Security Council to address the crisis in Gaza. "I urged the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, and I reiterated my appeal for a humanitarian cease-fire to be declared."

"Regrettably, the Security Council failed to do it, but that does not make it less necessary," he said. "I will not give up."

Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister, also said he was not giving up on the negotiations to secure the release of Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners, the precondition that Israel and the US have set for a cease-fire.

He said the previous willingness to negotiate does not currently exist and

urged both sides of the conflict to trust the process. The continuation of the Israeli bombardment, he noted, is narrowing the window, endangering the lives of Palestinian political prisoners, and putting the captives at risk.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said Israel should be put under sanctions and complained that the International Criminal Court had been dragging its feet in looking at the question of the Israeli occupation.

He was reluctant to discuss solutions such as how Gaza might be administered at the end of the conflict but said Palestinians were under a duty to build a united front. "Today we have no excuse whatsoever to be divided. It is a must that if we are to win, we must not be divided."



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres speaks during a UN Security Council meeting about his invoking Article 99 of the UN charter to address the humanitarian crisis in the midst of the Israeli military campaign against Gaza at the UN headquarters in New York City, US, on December 8, 2023.  
● REUTERS

But at further side meetings in the Doha Forum, there were calls to move beyond the existing Palestinian Authority leadership, saying it had lost all credibility. Young Palestinians were less interested in two-state solutions than their rights, the forum heard.

Philippe Lazzarani, commissioner general of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said: "There is no doubt a cease-fire is needed if we are to bring an end to hell on earth".

He said UNRWA is on the edge of collapse, and if it does collapse, it would be felt as an ultimate betrayal by the international community of the Palestinian people. He said the Palestinian people feel "stripped of dignity, humiliated, and psychologically broken".

In a post on his official social media account on Sunday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said the United States, by vetoing the Gaza cease-fire resolution, once again demonstrated its role as "the main supporter of the massacre of innocent women and children in Gaza".

Turkish President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday slammed the UN Security Council, describing the UN leadership as the "Israel protection council".

Erdogan also accused the West of "barbarism" and Islamophobia for the war in Gaza, Fox News reported.

**Emboldened US supplies ammo**

Going around Congress, the Biden administration said Saturday it has approved the emergency sale to Israel of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition worth more than \$106 million as Israel intensifies its military operations in the southern Gaza Strip.

The move comes as President Biden's request for a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel, and other national security issues is languishing in Congress, caught up in a debate over US immigration policy and border security, CBS News wrote.

The purchase will bypass the congressional review requirement for foreign military sales. Such determinations are rare but not unprecedented.

The sale is worth \$106.5 million and includes

13,981 120-mm High Explosive Anti-Tank Multi-Purpose with Tracer tank cartridges as well as US support, engineering, and logistics. The material will come from the Army's inventory.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu thanked the US president for his administration's vetoing of the UNSC resolution urging a cease-fire and for its approval of an urgent shipment of some 14,000 tank shells he says were due to start arriving Sunday.

Meanwhile, the war between Israel and Hamas is having a catastrophic impact on health in Gaza, the WHO chief warned Sunday, with medics facing an "impossible" job in unimaginable conditions.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a special session of the World Health Organization's executive board that the Palestinian territory's health system was in free fall, according to AFP.

"As more and more people move to a smaller and smaller area, overcrowding, combined with the lack of adequate food, water, shelter, and sanitation, is creating the ideal conditions for disease to spread," he said.

The UN health agency's

chief said there were worrying signs of epidemic diseases — and the risk was expected to worsen with the situation deteriorating and winter conditions approaching.

"Gaza's health system is on its knees and collapsing," Tedros said, with only 14 out of 36 hospitals functioning with any capacity at all and only two of those in the north of the coastal territory. Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas after the group's unprecedented attacks on October 7, when its fighters broke through Gaza's militarized border, killed about 1,200 people, and took captives, according to Israeli officials.

In response, Israel's military offensive in Gaza has killed at least 17,700 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Heavy fighting raged Sunday across Gaza, including in the devastated north, where entire neighborhoods have been flattened by air strikes and where ground troops have been operating for over six weeks.

The AP reported that about 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced within the besieged territory, where UN agencies say there is no safe place to flee. Israel's Channel 13 TV broadcast footage showing dozens of detainees stripped to their underwear with their hands in the air. Detainees from a separate group who were released Saturday told The Associated Press they had been beaten and denied food and water.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist







Behdad Najafi Asadollahi

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# Art marketing, key for Iranian artists' success



By Hamideh Hosseini  
Staff writer

In today's interconnected world, marketing has become an influential force shaping economic, social, and even personal aspects of societies globally. Regardless of geographical location, artistic specialization, or individual artists' approaches, art marketing has emerged as an essential aspect for artists and art enthusiasts worldwide, including Iran.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, painter and photographer Behdad Najafi Asadollahi explained the crucial role of art marketing for the success of Iranian artists.

## Impact of art marketing on art development

When asked about the effectiveness of art marketing in the development and expansion of artistic activities within society, Najafi highlighted the practical impact that art marketing has on the diverse art scenes in Iran. Many activities contributing to the expansion and prosperity of artistic activities align with academic principles of marketing and marketing management, even if implemented experientially within the current norms of the field. For instance, holding art exhibitions serves as a vital channel for showcasing artworks and represent an important way of integrated marketing communication in the art world. Advertisement of exhibitions, targeting specific markets and audiences, exemplifies a unified approach to art marketing. Basically, any activity aimed at introducing and facilitating the exchange of artistic works falls within the field of marketing, he said.

While art marketing activities are already present in the Iranian art market, Najafi emphasized the importance of implementing these programs cohesively and scientifically. This approach allows for precise targeting, efficient resource utilization, and effective execution of plans, ultimately achieving desired goals.

Speaking about his paintings, he explained that his artworks, basically inspired by nature, primarily fall within the realms of abstract expressionism and minimalism. Najafi prefers not to confine his paintings to a specific style, believing that styles in painting serve as references, guiding artists to find inspiration, explore interests, and adapt visual characteristics for essential categorizations in artistic events.

According to Najafi, every artist develops their personal approach through various means, such as education, self-learning, inspiration, and interpretation of historical art movements.

## Abstract and minimal paintings

Abstract expressionist painting, according to Najafi, has been officially integrated into art history for over a century. He identifies four prominent features of this style. Firstly, it is characterized by being limitless, allowing artists to have unrestricted freedom in form and color. However, Najafi clarifies that this doesn't mean violating the major principles of visual elements and foundational principles of visual arts; instead, artists can work within these principles while pushing their boundaries. Secondly, the uniqueness of works within this style is attributed to the interaction between the artist's unconscious mind and external influences. Najafi believes

that abstract works are born from the artist's subconscious and are shaped through a mutual relationship with the outside world, influenced by the artist's personality, experiences, and skills.

Thirdly, Najafi emphasizes the non-materialistic nature of abstract works, asserting that they do not represent the tangible material world. Instead, these works convey the artist's emotions and thoughts, creating a completely spiritual aspect for this style.

Finally, the fourth important feature of abstract works is their spontaneity. Unlike planned designs, abstract works often come into existence without primary sketches, relying on the creative process, where form and color are dictated by the artist's subconscious and emotions.

Najafi's vivid color palette and textures created solely through color define the prominent features of his abstract expressionist pieces. Additionally, he began creating works in the minimalist style, influenced by the principles of order and logic rooted in his management principles.

Explaining the characteristics of minimalism, Najafi noted that he views minimalism as a subcategory of abstract art, emphasizing the simplicity derived from complete abstraction.

He described minimalist works as having less variety in visual elements, unity, transparency, and simplicity, all aimed at establishing a straightforward connection with the viewer.

"The distinct characteristics of minimalist art include the use of geometric shapes, precise and controlled execution, repetition of elements, logical balance, and the utilization of single colors," he said.

According to Najafi, the absence of

hidden meanings or the need for in-depth analysis distinguishes minimalist art, as it communicates directly with the viewer without intricate visual formulas.

Najafi considers minimalist works not only as aesthetically pleasing, with their unique beauty derived from simplicity, but also as representations of absolute concepts, evolution, and certainty. As he continues to explore the realms of abstract expressionism and minimalism, Najafi's artworks offer viewers a journey through the harmonious interplay of form, color, and thoughtful simplicity.

## Positive outlook for art business in Iran

Najafi expressed his optimism about the future of the art market in Iran, asserting that the outlook is always positive and hopeful. However, success in the competitive art business requires a balance between creativity, innovation, and maintaining authenticity. Regardless of economic conditions, there is always demand, customers, and an appealing market for quality artwork.

With strategic planning and scientific art marketing, sustainable success can be achieved in any market. Najafi outlined his long-term goals, focusing on strategic planning for his own works and those of fellow Iranian visual artists, aiming to introduce them to international markets and secure a significant market share in the global art scene.

