

Leader: All factions should be able to run for elections

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses a group of people from Kerman and Khuzestan provinces in Tehran on December 23, 2023.

leader.ir

National Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Saturday that the ground should be prepared for the participation of different political factions in the upcoming parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections. Addressing a group of Iranians in Tehran, Ayatollah Khamenei said that the strong presence and active participation of the people in the elections brings about national unity and

security that is the basis for scientific progress, economic prosperity and solving economic, political and cultural problems, IRNA reported. He said that the solutions to the country's problems are elections, warning against certain efforts to discourage people from the ballot boxes. "Some people constantly remind us of the country's problems in order to discourage people, while the solutions to the problems are elections, and to solve the problems, one should

participate in elections," the Leader said, according to Press TV. "Elections are the basis of transformation. Elections prevent dictatorship, chaos and insecurity," Ayatollah Khamenei added. The Leader touched on the concept of the Islamic Republic, explaining that the words "Islamic" and "Republic" are both related to elections. With Iran facing parliamentary and Experts Assembly elections on March 1, Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian people "should

be prepared for these two important elections in the best possible way." "One is the election of the Assembly of Experts for the Leadership, the importance of which lies in the fact that it can choose the right leader for the country when necessary, and over time it can and should take care of maintaining the vital qualifications of leadership in the person of the existing leader. The people of Iran, the people of the provinces should pay attention, be careful and hold these elections in

the best way. "And as for the election of the Islamic Consultative Assembly which is very important, according to the Constitution, the Parliament is the one that lays the rail tracks for the future of the country. "If the country has problems, to solve these problems, there is a need for legislation and the prudent presence of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. These two elections should be held with dignity," the Leader said. Ayatollah Khamenei said

scholars, university professors, seminary instructors, radio and television, journalists, young people and people within their families have a duty to invite people to participate in the elections. "If participation is weak, the Parliament will be weak, and a weak Parliament will not have full ability to solve the problems. If we want to solve the problems, we must increase participation; this is everyone's duty. Whoever wants to solve the country's problems, this is the way."



Raisi: US has blood ...



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Raisi said that the United States and Israel should be tried in international courts for committing genocide and crimes against humanity.

He said the true face of the US and many Western countries was uncovered in the course of the genocidal campaign in Gaza. "They are not a party to peace but a party to war."

The US has vetoed any UN Security Council resolution for a cease-fire in Gaza and provided the Israeli regime with weapons and financial aid, the president said. Raisi urged an immediate end to the Israeli barbarism against an "oppressed but strong" Palestinian people.

He called for an immediate end to Israel's attacks on Gaza, lifting the blockade and opening the crossings for aid delivery as well as creating a special fund to help in the reconstruction of Gaza.

The Iranian president also warned against Washington's scheme of the "forced displacement" of Palestinians from Gaza and denounced the inaction of world leaders.

He said that it is not enough to just verbally condemn the crimes happening in Gaza, stressing that the people of the world expect action from their rulers.

Raisi said that the Palestinian issue is a central topic for Muslim nations and all free people of the world. He added that the continued occupation does not grant the occupier legitimacy, and the Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves.

The Iranian president underlined that Hamas's October 7 Operation Al-Aqsa Storm came in response to the injustices to which the Palestinian people have been exposed.

The just solution for the Palestinian people is to allow them to determine their own fate, Raisi said.



AFP

Palestinians wept and prayed for their dead on Saturday after fresh Israeli strikes followed a UN Security Council resolution that demanded more aid be allowed into Gaza but did not call for an immediate halt to fighting.

Clouds of grey and black smoke rose over Khan Yunis city in the south after strikes in the morning, and live AFPTV images showed

black smoke drifting over the territory's north. The health ministry in the Gaza Strip reported 18 people killed in a strike on a house at the central Nuseirat refugee camp, and said other targets were hit up and down the Gaza Strip. The bombardments came after the Security Council approved a resolution demanding "immediate, safe and unhindered" deliveries

Israel strikes Gaza after UN calls for more aid but not cease-fire

of life-saving aid be rushed to Gaza "at scale". It also called for creation of "conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities," but did not seek an immediate end to combat. Members had wrangled for days over the wording. At Washington's insistence, they toned down some provisions and avoided calling for a cease-fire that would stop the Israel's attacks, which began with unprecedented attacks 11 weeks ago by Hamas resistance group against Israel. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said a "humanitarian cease-fire" is the only way for aid "to be effectively delivered". The issue is not the number of aid trucks, he said, but

"the way Israel is conducting this offensive is creating massive obstacles" to aid distribution. Guterres also has paid tribute to staff of the United Nations who have been killed in Gaza. "136 of our colleagues in Gaza have been killed in 75 days — something we have never seen in UN history," Guterres wrote on X, formerly Twitter, on Saturday. "Most of our staff have been forced from their homes." The health ministry in Gaza also said on Saturday dozens of Palestinians were killed this week and publicly "executed" during an Israeli military operation in the north of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli "massacre resulted in the death of dozens" of people in the Jabalia

camp and Jabalia town, ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said in a statement. "They also executed dozens of citizens in the streets," he added. According to videos broadcast by local media, decomposing bodies were seen strewn on the streets of Jabalia. In Beit Lahia, a city in the north of the Gaza Strip, the civil defense authority said it had found on Saturday "dozens of decomposing bodies". "Most of the bodies recovered in Beit Lahia were executed in the streets and mauled by dogs," it said. On Wednesday, the United Nations human rights office said it received "disturbing" reports that Israeli troops "summarily killed" at least 11 unarmed Palestinians

in a possible war crime in Gaza. The killings were alleged to have been carried out in the Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City this week, it added. An Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, rejected the allegations as "yet another example of the partisan and prejudiced approach against Israel" by the UN body. The UN estimates the war has displaced 1.9 million of Gaza's 2.4 million population. World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said a majority of those uprooted from their homes were now going "entire days and nights without eating," and "famine is looming".

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iranian, Egyptian presidents hold first phone call in decades

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi congratulated his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on securing a third term in office as leader of the Arab world's most populous nation, hoping for the resolution of existing issues between Tehran and Cairo and the restoration of diplomatic ties. In the first telephone conversation between the two heads of state in more than four decades,

Raisi warmly felicitated the 69-year-old Egyptian politician on his reelection, Press TV reported. They also discussed developments in the Gaza Strip in light of the relentless Israeli strikes, which have killed more than 20,000 people, most of them women and children, and wounded another 53,320 individuals, and underlined the significance of unity among Muslim countries.



The two presidents also agreed to take tangible steps for the final resolution of issues between Iran and Egypt, and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. Al-Sisi was elected for a third term, securing 89.6 percent of the vote in the election held between De-

cember 10 and 12. Iran cut its diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1980 after Egypt welcomed the deposed Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, as well as for having recognized the Israeli regime. Albeit the two countries have maintained some diplomatic contacts.