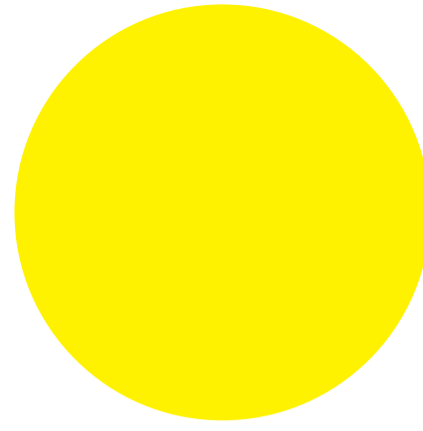


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By Ja'far Qannadbashi  
Mideast affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Following the terrorist operation in Kerman on Wednesday, and before the Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility, suspicions were initially cast on Israel. Many believe Israel is directly responsible for the terrorist operation on the fourth anniversary of the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani, the late commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). This belief is attributed to several factors. Firstly, Israel has a track record of killing innocent people, including women and children, exemplified by the recent killings in Gaza over the past three months.

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# Cargo handling in Iranian ports tops 53.5m tons



## Economy Desk

A total of 53,582,107 tons of non-oil products were loaded and unloaded in Iranian ports during the first nine months of the current Iranian year (March 21-December 21, 2023), according to figures by the country's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO). The figures indicate 21.3 percent of growth compared to the corresponding period last year, IRNA reported.

Iran has been seeking the development of its ports and transit infrastructure in recent years. As a result, the country has seen a significant growth in its

transit trade and economic prosperity.

The strategic location of Iran, as it sits at the crossroads of key shipping routes connecting Europe and Asia, has made it an important transit hub for trade in the region. The government's efforts to improve its ports and transit facilities have played a crucial role in further enhancing Iran's position as a key player in the global trade network. The development of ports in Iran has been a top priority for the government, with significant investments being made to modernize and expand key ports across the country.

The aim is to enhance the efficiency and capacity of these ports, thereby making Iran an attractive option for transit and trade. In recent years, major ports such as Bandar Abbas, Bandar Imam Khomeini, and Chabahar have seen significant upgrades in terms of infrastructure and facilities. These ports are going to be equipped with state-of-the-art technology and machinery to handle shipments more efficiently. The capacity of these ports has also been expanded to accommodate larger vessels and greater volumes of cargo.

The upgrade of ports has not only benefited Iran's

trade network but has also improved the country's economy. The increased efficiency and capacity of these ports have resulted in reduced transit times and costs for shipments passing through Iran. This has made Iran an attractive option for transit trade, with more companies and countries choosing to use Iranian ports as part of their trade routes.

The growth in transit trade has contributed positively to Iran's economy. The increased trade volume has led to a surge in revenue for the government, with the transit trade sector becoming a

significant source of income for the country. In addition, the improved transit facilities have also led to the creation of job opportunities and economic development in port cities and surrounding areas.

One of the key factors contributing to the growth of transit trade in Iran is the country's strategic location. Iran's proximity to key markets in Europe and Asia makes it an ideal transit point for trade. This has made Iran an attractive option for companies looking to streamline their supply chains and reduce transit times for their shipments.

## Iran's biggest seamless steel pipe plant opens



### Economy Desk

Iranain Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade Abbas Aliabadi inaugurated the country's biggest seamless steel pipe factory in Abhar, Zanjan Province, in northwestern Iran.

The factory is equipped with the most modern manufacturing technology for seamless steel pipe production, which has also created 1,000 jobs directly, as well as 3,000 jobs indirectly, IRNA reported.

Seamless steel pipes are perforated from whole round steel, and steel pipes without welds on the surface are called seamless steel pipes.

According to the production method, seamless steel pipes can be divided into hot-rolled seamless steel pipes, cold-rolled seamless steel pipes,

cold-drawn seamless steel pipes, extruded seamless steel pipes, and top pipes. According to the cross-sectional shape, seamless steel pipes are divided into two types: round and special-shaped. Special-shaped pipes include square, oval, triangular, hexagonal, melon seed, star, and finned pipes.

The maximum diameter is 900mm and the minimum diameter is 4mm. According to different purposes, there are thick-walled seamless steel pipes and thin-walled seamless steel pipes.

Seamless steel pipes are mainly used as petroleum geological drilling pipes, cracking pipes for petrochemical industry, boiler pipes, bearing pipes, and high-precision structural steel pipes for automobiles, tractors, and aviation.

# Iran-Russia deal, BRICS expansion spell dollar demise

## PERSPECTIVE

Last week, Iran and Russia announced to have finalized an agreement to trade in their local currencies instead of the US dollar. The agreement signed during a meeting between the governors of the two countries' central banks in Russia enables banks and economic actors to use infrastructures including non-SWIFT interbank systems to deal in local currencies.

Both Iran and Russia are subject to US sanctions, which have motivated the emerging allies to craft their own path in the global economy and break away from traditional monetary systems as countries around the world shift away from the greenback, Press TV wrote. In recent years, Russia and Iran have stepped up oil sales in alternative currencies, and found buyers in China, India and elsewhere that are happy to buy these exports often at lower prices because paying in a domestic currency rather than dollars lowers transaction costs. Last October, Royal Bank

of Canada reported that 25% of Russia's trade with countries other than China was settled with the Chinese yuan.

The US dollar's dominant role in the international monetary system has enabled the country to act as the world's watchdog and use threats of exclusion from the dollar-based financial system as a political leverage against the nations which it does not see eye to eye.

Seeing a risk that Washington could act similarly against them in the future, other governments have also moved to reduce their dependence on dollar payments.

Brazil, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have recently taken steps laying the groundwork for trade that sidesteps the dollar.

An Indian refiner took in a shipment of Emirati oil and paid for in Indian rupees after their governments signed a deal in the summer to trade in their own currencies. Brazil and China completed their first local-currency commodity transaction in the fall, involving a shipment of Bra-

zilian pulp.

And in November, China and Saudi Arabia reached a currency swap agreement worth around \$7 billion, marking another step in the dedollarization trend. China imported \$65 billion worth of Saudi crude oil in 2022, according to Chinese customs data. If Beijing can successfully develop a non-dollar oil trading architecture with Saudi Arabia, it will be able to withstand financial sanctions directed at China's oil imports.

China's leaders know that its dollar reserves, like Russia's, can be frozen, and the holdings and transactions of Chinese firms frozen and blocked. Such moves would place extraordinary stress on China's economy, which is more complexly intertwined with global trade than Russia's.

Oil is at the center of the shift. A JPMorgan report in September confirmed that more and more of the oil trade is taking place with currencies other than the dollar.

Russia has been selling in Chinese yuan, Russian rubles, Emirati dirhams and



Indian rupees, according to the Institute of International Finance. Iran, which mostly sells oil to China in yuan, also has stepped up exports.

Last year, Pakistan began paying for Russian oil shipments in the Chinese currency amid a dollar shortage in the South Asian country.

However, the most serious challenge to the dollar's dominance is coming from BRICS countries, thanks to the bloc's growing size and influence over global trade. The group of emerging countries was formed in 2006 by Brazil, Russia, India and China, with South Africa joining in 2010. BRICS rang in 2024 by in-

cluding five new countries including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Iran, and Ethiopia. However, more countries have submitted applications to join it and its de-dollarization mission, including as many as 16 new nations which may join BRICS in 2024.

Egypt, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia surround the Suez Canal, a key passage for goods to flow into international markets that gives BRICS influence over 12% of all global trade.

In August last year, Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called for the BRICS nations to create a common currency for trade and investment between each other.

BRICS is also looking to create their own internet services and not depend on American technology for news and social media. Last summer, 10 ASEAN countries agreed to stop trading in the US dollar and use native currencies for cross-border settlements. The bloc comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam which are likely on the list of applicants to join BRICS.

In a recent op-ed for the Foreign Policy magazine, former White House economist Joe Sullivan warned that a BRICS currency could topple the dollar and put it in a similar position as the British pound, which slipped from international dominance in the 1800s. Sullivan touched on major sway of the bloc in commodities markets where Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the

UAE are among the world's top exporters of fossil fuels, while Brazil, China, and Russia are major exporters of precious metals.

Saudi Arabia, Sullivan said, owns over \$100 billion in US bonds, which has helped bring BRICS' total holdings in US Treasury over \$1 trillion.

If countries ditch the dollar, the currency will circulate back to the US and lead to inflation where the prices of housing, rent, and basic daily necessities will skyrocket and become unaffordable.

The remaining countries which have not removed the dollar from their economic cycle would have to share the burden with the United States.

De-dollarization would also neutralize US sanctions against countries such as Iran and Russia and ease up commercial exchanges among them. Moreover, it would lead to economic pressure on Western countries, prompting Europe to carry out trade in euro and any currencies other than the dollar, sending the greenback further into a tailspin.



# Rostam Giv Cistern, a historical marvel in Yazd

## Iranica Desk

The Rostam Giv Cistern, known as Ab Anbar-e Rostam Giv in Persian, is situated in the city of Yazd, in the central province of Yazd. Built in 1941, it is a nationally registered attraction and is renowned for its charming brick dome accompanied by four tall windcatchers. The intricate brickwork decorations visible in the windcatchers and throughout the water reservoir serve as prominent and undeniable examples of ancient and beautiful Iranian architecture, captivating every tourist.

Located in the Zoroastrian neighborhood of the city, at the corner of Mehr Alley on the outskirts of Basij Boulevard, the Rostam Giv Cistern benefits from a convenient location for attracting tourists and visitors.

Water storage is crucial for residents of water-scarce areas, and ancestors addressed this issue by constructing structures like the Rostam Giv Cistern. These structures can be seen as examples of the art and innovation of ancient people. Often built in a concealed manner, sometimes underground, they would fill up with rainwater or streams in different seasons, playing a significant role in providing water for the people in these areas.

In the past, water reservoirs were divided into two types: public and private. The first type was usually a single building in neighborhoods and caravanserais along caravan routes, while the second type was built within personal homes based on the homeowner's income and financial ability. They consisted of various parts, including water storage, a cover for concealing the source, windcatchers, stairs, distribution channels, and an entrance adorned with the architecture of that era.

The cisterns in Yazd, due to the warm climate of the province, feature several



● [intoday.ir](http://intoday.ir)

wind catchers on top of them. Most of these structures have two wind catchers, but some of them were built with four, five, and even six wind catchers, depending on their size and extent. Other notable features of these buildings include domed ceilings constructed using bricks and clay. The domed ceilings, in-

● [destinationiran.com](http://destinationiran.com)

tegrated wind catchers, multiple stairs used to access the water gathering area, and the decorative elements, often in the form of brickwork, are prominent examples of Iranian architecture that have been preserved for future generations.

It is interesting to note that there are more than 60 cisterns in Yazd Province, most of which have been registered as national historical sites.

## History

Rostam Giv Cistern is one of the several water reservoirs built in Yazd. According to historical documents, it was



● [fardanews.com](http://fardanews.com)

constructed in the early years of World War II in 1940, and its construction took about two years. Apparently, the architecture of the Rostam Giv Cistern was overseen by Haji Mohammad Ebrahim Khorramshahi. The restoration and renovation plan of the Rostam Giv Cistern, as one of the historical buildings

of Yazd, was implemented by the city's municipality in 2018. This historical site was registered as one of Iran's national monuments in 1996. Due to the drying of the qanats, this water reservoir is devoid of water; the water for the houses is supplied from the city's pipeline system.

## Architecture

The Rostam Giv Cistern is situated on layers of clay soil, and its dome is designed in the shape of a turnip, adorned with a beautiful cypress pattern using bricks. Adjacent to it are four tall, four-sided wind towers, also embellished with intricate brickwork decorations. The cistern boasts a large cylindrical tank capable of holding approximately 2,300 cubic meters of water, with a mouth diameter of 14 meters and a depth of 15 meters. The construction of this building utilized Sarouj bricks, known for their durability.

The cypress pattern on the dome symbolizes eternity. An interesting feature of the Rostam Giv Cistern is the incorporation of two separate mouths for use by Zoroastrians and Muslims, situated in neighborhoods two kilometers apart from each other. In a land where water holds immense importance, neither Zoroastrians nor Muslims are willing to allocate water exclusively for themselves. The presence of water has been a unifying factor among people in various neighborhoods of Iranian cities.

Fortunately, the Rostam Giv Cistern has been restored and is well-maintained. When visiting, it is important to ensure the protection and preservation of this historical site. Visiting this water reservoir, especially at sunset, promises to be a truly enjoyable experience. Please note that the cistern is closed, and access to its interior space is not possible.

## Persian art scholarship in early 20th-century Poland

Newly independent and confident, early 20th-century Poland increased its scholarly activity, including research on Oriental art. The growth of Polish scholarship in Persian art reflected a general current in international art history and museology. In the wake of the landmark exhibition and international congress on Persian art, especially the London Burlington House exhibition of Persian art in 1931 that served as a point of reference for a series of similar events worldwide, Poland also organized its first exhibition of Persian art in Warsaw four years later, in 1935. Organized jointly by the Polish Society of Fine Arts and the Polish-Iranian Society, it exhibited 281 items, mainly arms and armour, manuscripts, carpets and textiles from local collections. Apart from its large scale by the Central European standard, the importance of this exhibition lies in the fact that most of the exhibits were destroyed or disappeared during the following decade. The exhibition was accompanied by a handbook which emphasised the impact of Persian art on Polish culture.

Independence generated a far-reaching intellectual and scientific revival during the interwar period. The main centres of Oriental studies were established at Lwów, Warsaw, Kraków and Wilno (now Vilnius, Lithuania). Literature and

philology were particularly important fields of research, with Ananiasz Zajęczkowski (1903-1970) and Franciszek Machalski (1904-1979) as the leading exponents. Persian art studies had reached maturity with the publication of Tadeusz Makowski's (1878-1956) pioneering essays, which were based on years of extensive archival research in Islamic art in Poland in the 17th and 18th centuries. These postulate that the nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth came increasingly under the influence of neighbouring Muslim territories, and developed a strong affinity for Persian visual culture, to the extent that the latter began to overshadow the West European outlook of Poland.

While Makowski did not emphasise manuscripts and their literary contents, he set the standard for Polish research on the arts of Islam, also giving impulse for further investigations into Persian art of both pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. Makowski was a specialist of the "Sarmatian" culture and art of his native Lwów. Yet his main contribution to the Polish scholarship of Persian art was clearly his link with the international scholarly community.

In the Survey of Persian Art, edited by Arthur Upham Pope (1881-1969) and Phyllis Ackerman (1893-1977), he contributed an essay to the chapter of carpets, together with Pope

and Heinrich Jacoby (1889-1964), demonstrating his reputation as an expert of Persian carpets within the international Islamic art community at that time. At the same time the art historian and keeper Stefan Saturnin Komornicki (1887-1942) published the first scientific description of manuscript painting from the Princes Czartoryski Library in 1935. In this work, he made comparisons between various paintings in the collection, discussing their stylistic connections, and suggesting attributions to particular schools or artists. Based on the comparative method, his stylistic analysis is thorough and comprehensive, and what is unique is that this method was developed independently from the almost contemporaneous Persian Miniature Painting (1933) by Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray, which became the standard monograph in the western scholarship of Persian painting. Compared to this catalogue-style book, often abbreviated "BWG," Komornicki's work is more meticulous in certain aspects, chiefly because of its relatively narrow scope that made it possible to have a careful look at details, such as iconography and composition.

Despite a potential as a leading centre of Persian and Islamic art studies in Central Europe in terms of collections and researchers, the pre-war scholarly movement was tragically



▲ Garden carpet, National Museum in Krakow, Poland

interrupted after 1939. Many Persian works of art disappeared from the Polish collections or dispersed, and it took several decades to resume systematic research, based on pre-war results.

Nevertheless, the history of collecting and studying Persian manuscripts in Poland presents a continuous growth of interest from mediaeval times to recent times. Beginning with trade contacts, the knowledge of Persian arts devel-

oped from a taste for material culture and fashion towards the sphere of the written word. This later phase, in turn, was born as a more or less amateurish literary interest, typical of the early 19th century, but matured into a more professional and scholarly approach promoted by the development of Persian studies in the early 20th century. Persian manuscript collections are therefore the physical vestiges of these intellectual developments in Poland.



# Public opinion cannot change US policies



● GETTY IMAGES

By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

Public outcry against Israeli war crimes in the Gaza Strip is visibly evident across various cities in the United States, a staunch supporter of Israel. From large-scale street protests to online advocacy campaigns, there has been an unprecedented display of solidarity with Palestinians since Israel waged a devastating war against the besieged enclave in a disproportionate response to a surprise attack by Hamas on October 7. Surprisingly, findings from a survey conducted by Harvard University revealed that 51% of American youths desire the dismantling of the "state" of Israel, favoring its replacement with a Palestinian state. Could the influential role of public opinion potentially instigate changes in American policies? Iran Daily has spoken with Jahanbakhsh Izadi, an international relations expert and university lecturer to get his take on this matter.

**In the past three months, as Israeli crimes in Gaza have crossed all boundaries, we have witnessed mass public protests. Do you believe that such pressure from public opinion can potentially prompt a shift in America's support policy toward Israel?**

A: The influence of public opinion within American society extends beyond the confines of the Gaza incident. There are multiple factors to which public opinion reacts. Alongside the massive demonstrations and support campaigns for the people of Gaza, there exists a presence of Zionist Christians, comprising about 80 million individuals, who envision the resurgence of the promised savior, the Israeli regime, as a pivotal aspiration. They have a radio station with an extensive listenership of 24 million.

In the US, whenever an issue garners prominence in public opinion, particularly those that challenge existing policies, the government has the capability to manage the fervor through fabricating its own narratives. Essentially, the political system controls the anger or agitation within public opinion. For instance, when widespread protests emerged against Israel and America's supportive stance toward the regime, we witnessed politicians and statesmen exerting pressure on Israel to let in aid to civilians, or called on it to stop targeting non-combatants. Even the United States did not veto a Security Council resolution aimed at providing aid and merely abstained. Such stances and measures appear to be in line with the policy of controlling or pacifying public opinion.

While I acknowledge the impact of public opinion in shaping policies, it should not be viewed as an absolute proposition. Influ-

ence is contingent upon the national interests of the United States. For instance, the US remained involved in Afghanistan for two decades and engaged in a decade-long conflict in Vietnam, despite public opinion opposing such policies. Therefore, I do not believe that public protests in the US alone will result in a change in American policy toward Israel. It seems that America's strategic interests currently align with Israel's in containing Hamas.

**Recently, the results of a survey conducted by Harvard University revealed that 51% of young Americans advocate for the dissolution of the Israeli state and the establishment of a Palestinian state, in contrast to the current stance of the country. What's your insight about such a gulf between American public opinion and decision-makers?**

A: American society has evolved into a polarized entity. From the perspective of American strategists, this polarization is the root cause of the United States' diminishing influence. When discussing the global decline of America, many intellectuals and think tanks look for its root cause within US internal dynamics. The widening divide within American society weakens the nation's resolve to exert global dominance. This divergence is manifesting in various arenas, such as the situations in Gaza and Ukraine, where the United States has failed to achieve its objectives. Therefore, it is crucial for American intellectuals and think tanks



to acknowledge the impact of public opinion and assess to what extent American positions on conflicts like Gaza or Ukraine exacerbate internal polarization.

**The Harvard University survey results indicate a deepening polarization within American society and a disconnect between official government policies and public sentiment. Could this compel American decision-makers to alter their approach toward Israel and Palestine?**

A: No, it is unlikely. The nature of America's relationship with Israel is of strategic importance, rendering public opposition insufficient to induce change, particularly in the short and medium term. Joe Biden, a representative of the more pacifist party in America namely the doves, has expressed that if Israel didn't exist, it would need to be created. He has also made it unequivocally clear that he is a Zionist. Consider, then, how close are the relationship of the US hawks with Israel. The United States views Israel as its sole strategic and dependable ally in the West Asian region. While public sentiment may manifest in protests, expressing opposition toward Israel and even American policies, it cannot alter the strategic nature of the American-Israeli bonds.

**Regardless of the level of influence public opinion holds in shaping American policies, the Harvard University survey has unexpectedly revealed shifts within American society. In this**

**very society where the political system exerts control or manages public sentiment through various means, a striking 51% of young individuals have viewpoints that diverge from their government's positions. The pressing question arises: is this opposition merely an outburst of excitement and protest directed toward democratic politicians, or does it represent a form of activism aimed at instigating profound social change?**

Public opinion experiences fluctuations influenced by emerging technologies, particularly within the realm of media, and American society is no exception to this trend. While it is true that a portion of these demonstrations and protests can be attributed to transient expressions of public sentiment and humanitarian concerns, it would be erroneous to categorize all of them as mere reactions.

Certain attitudes and reactions within public opinion constitute active engagement. As we assert the polarization of American society, it becomes evident that a fundamental form of activism is emerging within this societal fabric, one that critiques and protests against prevailing policies, with a focus on shaping the future. This implies that individuals hold distinct visions for themselves and the future of America. A profound debate is taking place within the community, weighing the options of maintaining America's global presence or shifting attention inward. Substantial segments of the American population advocate for relinquishing at least some spheres of influence and redirecting focus internally. Thus, fundamental changes have taken root in American society that are incongruent with prevailing policies.



# Support for child-killing monster to backfire

## Global public opinion against 'monstrosity of century'

### PERSPECTIVE

International Desk

The number of casualties among the people of Gaza as a result of the Israeli regime's aerial and ground attacks has exceeded 21,000. In recent days, a video has been circulated on social media featuring an Israeli soldier present in Gaza, revealing the peak of Israel's brutality. He shame-

lessly admits to killing a 12-year-old girl, stating, "We search for children to target, but there are no more children left!" Perhaps the most poignant or authentic expression of Israel's actions in Gaza has been articulated by Francesca Albanese, a UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Affairs. According to her, what Israel is doing to the Palestinians, especially in Gaza, is "the monstrosity of our century". Israel's nature over the past 70 years has, to some extent, become intertwined with this barbarism.

The historical oppression of Palestinians by Israel is not a new phenomenon, although in the Gaza war this oppression and atrocity have reached their zenith. However, amid this, two noteworthy phenomena have emerged that have both contributed to a better understanding of the nature of the Israeli regime for the global public and led to astonishment and indignation worldwide.

What has aided in the revelation of the Israeli regime's nature is the role played by unofficial media during the Gaza war, breaking the monopoly of information and analysis. Official media outlets are predominantly supportive of Zionism, and the voice of Palestinian victims was either lost or minimally heard within this Western media empire that supports Israel. Now, with the help of social networks, this monopoly has been shattered, and the global public has witnessed images of the inhumane actions of Israelis against the people of Palestine and Gaza without the usual censorship seen in official media.

Simultaneously, what has caused global astonishment is the indifference and silence of Western governments in the face of this magnitude of crimes committed by a regime against its people. These crimes, without a doubt, include acts that leave no room for doubt, such as "genocide" and "war crimes". This indifference, silence, and even support from mostly Western governments for Israel have undermined international institutions such as the United Nations, as efforts to pass

a cease-fire resolution in the UN Security Council have so far yielded no results. Therefore, we are now faced with global astonishment in the face of significant silence from many world governments regarding the war crimes of the Israeli regime.

Although, by the prevailing international system, these governments play a fundamental role, during more than three months of Israeli attacks on Gaza, non-state actors or unofficial players have proven to be influential. It seems that the effects of the roles played by these unofficial actors will gradually become more apparent in the future. Among the most prominent examples of the role of these non-state actors are the large-scale protests worldwide, especially in Western countries, expressing solidarity with the plight of the Palestinians and condemning Israeli atrocities.

These protests, especially in Western countries, presented a clear contrast between the official positions of governments and politicians and the sentiments of the general public. In fact, Palestine and Israel have now become a central and debatable issue in Western countries, revealing a significant gap between governments and their people. Now, a much larger number of people in Western countries, especially in the United States, openly question why their taxes should be spent supporting Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people. These questions, and the serious ambiguities created about Western claims such

as human rights values, may further widen the gap between governments and nations and manifest their results in elections and the broadening of protests.

From this perspective, a recent survey at Harvard University in the United States is noteworthy. The results of this survey confirm the claim that global public opinion, especially in the West and the United States, opposes their governments' supportive positions toward Israel. According to this survey, 51% of American youths (18 to 24 years old) demand the end of the Israeli regime and the establishment of a Palestinian government. Moreover, over 60% of American youths, contrary to the explicit positions of their governments, have emphasized that the October 7 Hamas attack on occupied lands was a response to Palestinian dissatisfaction with Israel.

If such surveys were conducted in other Western countries such as the UK, France, Canada, Germany, etc., it is not far-fetched to think that the results would be similar to those in America or close to them. This statement reflects the reality that global public opinion and the governments supporting Israel follow very different paths. While governments, due to political and party interests, remain silent about the atrocities of the century, people are not indifferent. No rational and sane person can associate with the child killing monster in the uniform of an Israeli soldier.

## US, Israel running out of options



By Syed Ali Hassan  
Iran Daily's  
correspondent  
in Pakistan

It has been over two months since the commencement of Israeli aggression on Gaza following Hamas's surprise attack on southern Israel. Continuous Israeli bombings and ground offensives have turned Gaza into ruins, resulting in the martyrdom of nearly 22,000 Palestinians, over a third of whom are children. The Israeli war on Gaza can now be considered one of the world's worst genocides, which is surprising, to say the least, since Jews have been victims of genocide themselves.

The declared objective of the Israeli offensive was not merely to end Hamas's control over Gaza, but to wipe it off the map completely. However, two months later, Hamas is very much alive, and its popularity has risen among Arab youths. Since day one, defense analysts questioned Israel's self-proclaimed goal of eliminating Hamas.

To make the matters more complicated, Yemen's Houthis (Ansarullah) has since responded to Israeli atrocities in Gaza, showcasing Muslim and human solidarity. Despite being a resistance group with limited military power, Ansarullah's actions have drawn the ire of the United States and its ally Israel. The US is rallying its European allies to address Yemen's military attacks and simultaneously exerting intense pressure on the rulers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to use force against Yemen. However, any steps taken by these two countries against Yemen could lead to internal turmoil, as it would be contrary to the aspirations of the Islamic Ummah. American diplomats stationed in Arab countries have conveyed to Washington that Arab youths are extremely agitated over the Palestinian massacre caused by Israeli bombings in Gaza. Arab governments, refraining from vilifying Hamas as they did in the early days of the war, are now faced with the challenge of navigating their ties. Saudi Arabia's desire to normalize ties with Israel has been undermined by Hamas in particular.

Israel has yet to achieve its goal of eliminating Hamas, and its economic losses are irreparable. The United States, hesitant to intervene in the Red Sea single-handedly, has formed a maritime task force with its allied countries. Yet, Yemen has issued a warning to countries involved in the formation of the US-led maritime task force, urging them to refrain from using force in the Red Sea. Yemen explicitly stated that it would only block the passage of commercial ships bound for Israel, while keeping the commercial sea route open for other nations.

The Defense Minister of the Houthi government Major General Mohammad al-Atifi declared on Monday that they possess an abundance of weapons capable of sinking enemy warships, submarines, and aircraft carriers. It is expected that Turkey will take practical steps taken against Israel as well, since it can disrupt gas flow through the oil pipeline that connects Azerbaijan to Israel, making Tel Aviv vulnerable to a crisis.

As Israel's options dwindle and the bloodshed in Palestine ignites global outrage, the US faces not only the anger of Arabs and Muslims but also discontent from the people of Europe and America.





## Brazilian Silva rejoins Esteghlal

Sports Desk

Brazilian center-back Raphael Silva rejoined Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal as a free agent on a season-and-a-half long contract.

Silva, 31, first signed for Esteghlal from Saudi side Al Faisaly in March 2022 and made 42 appearances for the Tehran Blues before parting ways with the club by the end of last season.

He was part of the team under ex-manager Farhad Majidi, which lifted the Iranian top-flight trophy in the 2021/22 campaign without conceding a single defeat.

An Iranian Super Cup winner in 2022, Silva finished third in the league with Esteghlal last season and settled for the runner-up spot in the Iranian Hazfi Cup after a 2-1 loss to archrival Persepolis in May.

The Brazilian is the first winter signing by Esteghlal head coach Javad Nekounam, who, on his first season in charge, has led the Blues to the top spot of the Iranian league table with 31 points

– one clear of Sepahan and two above defending champion Persepolis – before the mid-season break.

● khabarvarzeshi.com



## Basketball great Haddadi back to Iranian league

Sports Desk

Hamed Haddadi, widely regarded as the greatest Iranian basketball player of all time, made a dramatic return to the Iranian Pro League by signing for Palayesh Naft Abadan until the end of the season.

A former center of the NBA franchises Memphis Grizzlies and Phoenix Suns, Haddadi, 38, joined the Iranian club after four years with China's Sichuan Blue Whales.

A three-time FIBA Asia Cup champion with Iran, and a four-time MVP in the competition, the 7-foot-2 center called time on his international duty after country's final outing in last September's FIBA World Cup against Lebanon in Jakarta, Indonesia.

His previous appearance in the Iranian league came with Petrochimi Bandar Imam in 2018. Palayesh Naft Abadan is sixth in the 12-team table after 12 rounds of matches.



## Nuggets' Jokic banks in half-court miracle at buzzer to stun Warriors



Nuggets' Nikola Jokic (15) hits a game-winning three-pointer over Warriors' Kevon Looney during an NBA game in Chase Center, San Francisco, CA, US, on January 4, 2024.

● SCOTT STRAZZANTE/AP

THE GUARDIAN – With three seconds left in a tie game, Denver Nuggets coach Michael Malone set up Nikola Jokic to be the safety valve on an inbound pass at the far end. Jamal Murray, the first option, wasn't available up the sideline. Neither was second-choice Kentavious Caldwell-Pope.

Instead, Aaron Gordon got the ball

to Jokic, who took three dribbles across half-court, stopped and launched a 40-footer over Kevon Looney from the right sideline that banked in as time expired. That have the Nuggets a stunning 130-127 victory over the Golden State Warriors Thursday night after trailing by 18 points in the fourth quarter. They closed with

a 25-4 run.

Jokic had 34 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds. He tied it at 127 with a short jumper with 26 seconds left. Golden State's final possession ended with Stephen Curry's turnover, setting the stage for Jokic's winner.

Malone said he told Jokic during the timeout to "take two dribbles over half-court and shoot."

"And he executed the play to perfection," Malone said. "But great players make great plays. And Nikola catching the ball and making something happen behind that is just incredible."

Jokic said he was just trying to "get a little bit closer and just throw it to the basket."

"I think those shots are the easiest shots to take," Jokic said. "You don't have any other option."

The defending champion Nuggets have won 11 of 13 and six straight on the road. They sent the Warriors – who failed to get back to .500 after snapping a three-game skid Tuesday night – to a 1-3 start on their seven-game homestand. Golden State has blown several double-digit leads this season.

Aaron Gordon scored 30 points for Denver, and Jamal Murray had 25. Curry led Golden State with 30 points. Klay Thompson added 24.

"Some are a little bit easier to swallow than others," Curry said. "This one is definitely tough."

Golden State pulled away in the third quarter, outscoring Denver 44-24 after trailing by double-digits early in the half. The Warriors had a 19-6 midway through the quarter, with Brandin Podziemski hitting three corner three-pointers for a 107-94 lead going into the fourth quarter.

The Nuggets took a 70-63 lead into halftime, shooting 62% from the field.

Malone said he was most proud of his team responding down big to the Warriors on the road.

"When you get down to this team, it's very easily drop your head in this building with that crowd," Malone said. "And that's probably the thing I was most pleased with tonight is that everybody – coaches, players, we just stayed the course even after that third quarter which they dominated."



## Paralympian Pistorius released on parole

BBC – Paralympian Oscar Pistorius has been freed on parole from a South African jail, nearly 11 years after murdering his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. Officials confirmed Pistorius was "at home" on

Friday morning, having served half of his more than 13-year sentence.

Ms Steenkamp's mother said she accepted the decision to release the former athlete – but added her family was the one

"serving a life sentence". Pistorius, now 37, shot Ms Steenkamp multiple times in 2013 through a door. The double amputee later claimed he had mistaken her for a burglar.

Pistorius was eventually convicted of murder in 2015 after an appeal court overturned an earlier verdict of culpable homicide. Under South African law, all offenders are entitled to be considered for parole once they have served half their total sentence, which for Pistorius was finally set in 2017 at 13 years and five months.

He will live under strict conditions – including being unable to speak to the media – until his sentence expires in 2029.

Pistorius first went to prison in October 2014, shortly after his initial conviction. There was a

period between 2015 and 2016 when he was released under house arrest before his conviction was changed and sentenced lengthened.

Pistorius's lower legs were amputated when he was less than a year old. He subsequently relied on prosthetics and became a world-renowned athlete known as the "blade runner".

He had a successful career on the track, first at the Paralympics, winning multiple golds, and then cementing his reputation after competing against non-disabled athletes at the London Olympics in 2012. The murder of Ms Steenkamp just six months later, and the subsequent trials, dominated headlines around the world.

## Ten Hag had 'very positive' talks with Ratcliffe

BBC – Erik ten Hag says he has held "very positive" meetings with Manchester United's new investors Ineos.

Manager Ten Hag met Sir Jim Ratcliffe at United's training ground on Tuesday. On his first visit since the agreement to buy 25% of the club was announced on Christmas Eve, Ten Hag said he spent "many hours" with Ratcliffe and Ineos representatives Sir Dave Brailsford and John-Claude Blanc.

The deal is set to be ratified by the Premier League in six to eight weeks.

"It was a very positive," Ten Hag said.

"We had a long meeting, for many hours we sit together, on many issues we were on the same page. It was a very constructive meeting and we're looking forward to working with each other."

It is expected Ineos will make significant changes to the structure of United, although stock market regulations prevent that from happening at the moment.

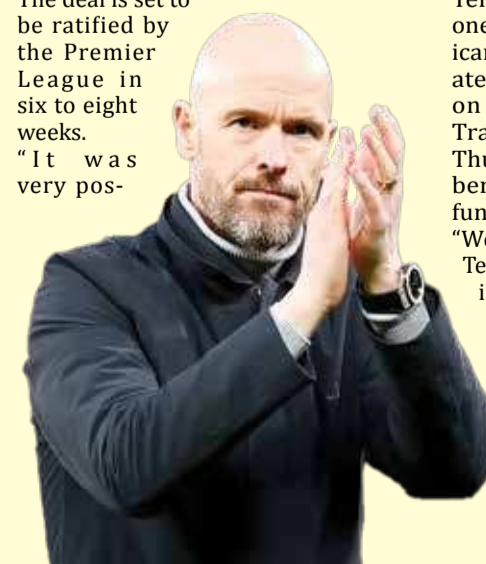
Ten Hag says it is too soon for anyone to make decisions of such significance given Ratcliffe and his associates only arrived in the north west on Tuesday, spending time at Old Trafford on Tuesday and again on Thursday to get to know staff members and understand how the club functions.

"We have to let it settle down," said Ten Hag. "They are just coming in and introducing themselves. They have good ideas, so we have to see what we can integrate. We will work together but you can't tell that after one day. We have had our debates about strategies and I think we will come together."

● GETTY IMAGES



● GETTY IMAGES





# Victims Laid to Rest

Raisi vows revenge at 'appropriate time, place'  
Several arrested over Daesh bombings in Kerman

## National Desk

Iran held a funeral on Friday for the 89 people killed in the Daesh suicide bombings in the southern province of Kerman, with the president warning that the armed forces will retaliate for the attacks at the appropriate time and place. The funeral took place at the Imam Ali Mosque in Kerman, where crowds gathered in front of dozens of coffins wrapped in the Iranian flag. The suicide bombings struck crowds in the southern city, where many had gathered on Wednesday to mark the fourth anniversary of the US assassination of Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani – the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). The attack killed 89 people, raising an earlier toll following the deaths of several of the wounded. The victims include multiple women and children

and at least a dozen Afghan nationals. Speaking at the funeral ceremony of the victims of the blasts on Friday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned that Iran's armed forces will retaliate for the terrorist attacks at the appropriate time and place. "I assure the people that the initiative is in the hands of our forces and that the time and place will be determined by our forces," he said. "The enemy has seen and experienced the power of the Islamic Republic many times and I assure you that the enemy will see the power of the Islamic Republic concerning the latest cases." In a statement published Thursday on Telegram, the Daesh terrorist group said two of its members "activated their explosives vests" at the gathering.

## US and Israeli mercenaries

Daesh "has disappeared

nowadays," said IRGC chief Hossein Salami during the funeral ceremony, arguing the terrorists "only act as mercenaries" for US and Israeli interests.

The United States rejected any suggestion that it or its ally Israel were behind the bombings, while Israel did not comment.

Salami vowed that Iran "will find you wherever you are," referring to any Daesh members behind the bombing plot.

Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi told state TV that "some individuals involved in the attack have been arrested," without elaborating.

The site of the explosions was 1.5km and 2.7km from the burial place of Gen. Soleimani, where it was not possible to pass through the inspection gates in the area.

Iranian investigators had already confirmed that the first blast at least was the work of a "suicide bomber" and believed the trigger for

the second was "very probably another suicide bomber," the official news agency IRNA had reported earlier, citing an "informed source".

## Global condemnations

The terrorist attack has drawn condemnations from many countries and international bodies.

The United Nations Security Council in a statement issued on Thursday condemned the terrorist attack on Wednesday.

"The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the cowardly terrorist attack in the city of Kerman, the Islamic Republic of Iran on 3 January."

Expressing condolences to the families of the victims and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the UN body added, "The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers, and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism



MEHR

accountable and bring them to justice."

The Security Council urged all states to cooperate actively with the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to punish the criminals responsible for carrying out the terrorist act.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also issued a statement on Wednesday "strongly" condemning the terrorist attack in Kerman.

"The secretary-general strongly condemns the attack today on a memorial ceremony in Kerman city

in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The secretary-general calls for those responsible to be held accountable," deputy spokesperson Florencia Soto Nino told reporters.

The European Union's high representative also issued a statement on behalf of the EU.

It said the EU condemns in the strongest terms the bombing in the city of Kerman in Iran. This shocking act of terror has cost the lives of innocent civilians, with many injured. The EU expresses its sol-

idarity with the Iranian people. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families.

Pope Francis also expressed his heartfelt condolences, sorrow, and prayers for those who were killed or injured by explosions in Kerman and for those who mourn their loss.

Leaders from Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and other countries from across the globe have likewise voiced strong condemnation of the atrocity.

## Arab states slam Israeli calls for Gazans' emigration

### International Desk

Several Persian Gulf Arab states on Thursday strongly condemned comments by two Israeli ministers calling for Palestinians to emigrate from the Gaza Strip. Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir on Monday called for promoting "a solution to encourage the emigration of Gaza's residents" and the re-establishment of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory, a day after far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich made similar comments, AFP reported. Saudi Arabia "categorically condemns and rejects the comments of the two min-

isters", the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The kingdom called on the international community to act in the face of the Israeli cabinet's "persistence" in violating international law "through its statements and actions".

Qatar, which played a mediating role in the temporary truce between Israel and Palestinian resistance group Hamas at the end of November, also "condemned in the strongest terms" the comments made by the two ministers.

"The policy of collective punishment and forced displacement practiced by the occupation authorities against the inhabitants of

Gaza will not change the fact that Gaza is Palestinian land and will remain Palestinian," reads a statement published by Qatar's Foreign Ministry. Kuwait followed suit, warning against "Israeli plans to displace Gaza residents in particular, and the Palestinian people in general".

The United Arab Emirates, which normalized ties with Israel in 2020, also "condemned in the strongest terms the extremist statements" of the two ministers. The United States, France and the European Union have also denounced the comments.

The Israeli cabinet under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not officially suggested plans to evict Gazans or to send Jewish settlers back to the territory since the conflict broke out in October.

The fighting erupted after Hamas resistance group attacked Israel on October 7, resulting in the deaths of around 1,140 people.

In response, Israel launched bombardment and a ground invasion that has reduced swathes of Gaza to rubble and claimed at least 22,600 people lives, according to the territory's health ministry.

The vast majority of Gaza's

residents have been forced out of their homes by nearly three months of war.

Israel's defense minister has also publicly presented for the first-time proposals for the post-war administration of Gaza.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's plan for the "day after", shared with the media late Thursday but not yet adopted by Israel's war cabinet, says that neither Israel nor Hamas will govern Gaza and rejects future Jewish settlements there.

The minister's broad outline was unveiled on the eve of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's fourth trip to the region since October 7. Questions over the future of the besieged Palestinian territory have multiplied as Israel insists it will continue with its military operations despite international calls for a cease-fire.

Much of the Gaza Strip has been reduced to rubble, while civilian deaths have soared.

Bombing continued in the southern areas of Khan Yunis and Rafah as well as parts of central Gaza, according to AFP correspondents.

The Gaza health ministry on Friday said it had recorded 162 deaths in 24 hours.

## Bonds between Israel and Daesh in terror

By Ja'far Qannadhashi  
Mideast affairs expert

OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

Following the terrorist operation in Kerman on Wednesday, and before the Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility, suspicions were initially cast on Israel. Many believe Israel is directly responsible for the terrorist operation on the fourth anniversary of the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani, the late commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). This belief is attributed to several factors. Firstly, Israel has a track record of killing innocent people, including women and children, exemplified by the recent killings in Gaza over the past three months. Secondly, Israel carried out several terrorist actions in the past few days, targeting an Iranian military adviser in Syria and orchestrating another terrorist act in Lebanon that resulted in the death of prominent Hamas figure Saleh al-Arouri. Therefore, it was assumed that the ter-

rorist operation in Kerman followed Israel's consistent pattern. The third factor is that Israel has faced severe blows from General Soleimani, making it conceivable that they seek revenge during the anniversary of his martyrdom by targeting his followers.

Therefore, the people had the right to consider Israel as the perpetrator of this terrorist operation. However, despite the acknowledgment from Daesh, there are still ambiguities in this matter. Moreover, one cannot deny the links and connections between Israel and Daesh. Some media outlets in Iran have characterized the terrorist group's claim of responsibility for the terrorist operation in Kerman as unclear. They note differences in this claim compared to the group's past statements, particularly the delay in taking responsibility. Another ambiguity arises from the fact that, contrary to previous cases, they did not show the faces of the suicide attackers. Therefore, according to some media or analysts, it is not far-fetched to suggest that Israel may have been the primary instigator of the terrorist operation in Kerman, with Daesh acting

as the executor. I believe that even if Israel was not directly responsible for this terrorist operation, there are significant links and connections between Israel and Daesh, as the regime was fundamentally involved in the creation of Daesh, and the terrorist group had also acted in line with Israel's goals. Therefore, I doubt that Israel was unaware of this operation. Consequently, the Iranian people's demand for a response to this terrorist act is justified, especially considering Israel's recent atrocities in Gaza, fueling strong sentiments against the Israeli regime. Iranian authorities have also emphasized taking revenge for both this terrorist act and the Jan. 2 assassination of a military adviser in Syria at an appropriate time and place.

In my opinion, Iran's emphasis on the timing and location reflects a strategic and responsible approach to avoid falling into Israel's traps. While Israel lacks the desire and capability for an extensive war, it attempts to manipulate Iran and the United States into a confrontation, creating a secure margin for itself.



People carrying some of their belongings arrive in Rafah on the southern Gaza Strip on January 4, 2024, after fleeing from Khan Yunis amid continuing Israel's attacks.

AFP

## Over 11,000 qualified for parliamentary elections: Constitutional Council

### National Desk

Iran's Constitutional Council said on Friday that more than 11,000 people have been qualified for the March parliamentary elections. The spokesman of the Constitutional Council, Hadi Tahan Nazif,

said that the final list of candidates has been sent to the Interior Ministry.

He said that more than 21,000 people were eligible to register for the elections, of whom around 11,000 have been approved by the council. Tahan Nazif added that 26 current

lawmakers have been disqualified. To secure victory and serve as a lawmaker for a four-year term in the 290-seat Parliament, a candidate needs to attain a minimum of 20 percent of the votes cast in its constituency. Iran will hold the 12th parliamen-

tary elections on March 1 – the day which also sees elections for the Assembly of Experts.

Tahan Nazif also said that the names of the qualified candidates for the Assembly of Experts elections will be announced on January 24.



## Repatriated Achaemenid artifacts set for exhibition in Iran



Arts & Culture Desk

ILNA – An exhibition featuring recently repatriated Achaemenid artifacts will soon take place, announced director general of the General Office of Museums in the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Hadi Mirzaei. Mirzaei mentioned that the exhibition is scheduled to open in late January, allowing researchers, enthusiasts, and the general public to view the artifacts. According to American authorities, the remaining tablets are expected to be delivered to Iran in the year 2024.

The treasured tablets were returned home on September 21 by the plane carrying President Ebrahim Raisi, who addressed the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly during his visit to New York.

This shipment, containing Achaemenid tablets, marks the fifth consignment to be returned to the country. The tablets, totaling 836 small inscribed pieces in Aramaic and 2,670 large inscribed pieces in Elamite, weighing 75 kilograms, have been delivered to the National Museum of Iran.

Although there were plans to showcase part of these tablets after quarantine and examination, despite several assurances from officials, the unveiling has yet to occur.

Mirzaei provided details about another batch of Achaemenid tablets held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, which were returned to Iran on the latest trip of the president. After receiving them, the inscriptions are being translated, and preparations are underway for their display in the Ancient Iran Hall of the National Museum of Iran.

## Silent monologues on display in Tehran

ILNA – A group exhibition titled 'Silent Monologues' opened in Tehran's Entezami Gallery on January 5, showcasing 40 artworks by 20 artists.

Curated by Mina Aalipour, the event brings together a diverse lineup of participants, including Sahar Mosleh, Atiye Sadat E'tesami, Donya Rezazadeh, Farhikhteh Montazeri, Maryam Khaleqizadeh, Shahram Rafiepour, and Farshid Fakhri among others.

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# Minister: Kerman terrorist attack will go down in history

## Artists condemn Daesh bombings



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili condemned the terrorist attack that occurred in Kerman on January 3. In a message he denounced the "Ameri-

can-Israeli" perpetrators, linking the incident to the mourning procession for General Qassem Soleimani, IRNA reported. Esmaeili expressed condolences to the Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the families affected by the tragic event.

The minister emphasized that history would not forget this treacherous act, and future generations would judge such terrorist acts against Iran. Numerous artists from various fields, including cinema, theater, television, and music, joined in

expressing solidarity and condemning the inhumane act. Personal statements were shared online by artists like Reza Mirkarimi, Reza Kianian, Mohammareza Golzar, and others, denouncing the attack and expressing condolences



for the victims. In the field of music, figures such as Alireza Qorbani, Homayoun Shajarian, and Salar Aqili condemned the terrorist act and offered condolences for the innocent lives lost. The terrorist attack took place during the com-

memoration of the fourth anniversary of the martyrdom of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, leading to casualties and injuries among the mourners. Nearly 100 people lost their lives in the tragic incident in Kerman.

## Iranian caricatures on Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on view in Basra

Arts & Culture Desk

A group exhibition of Iranian caricatures centered around Operation Al-Aqsa Storm opened at the College of Fine Art, University of Basra in Iraq on January 4.

The festival opened in close collaboration with Khuzestan's Art Bureau and the College of Fine Arts, University of Basrah, IRNA wrote. Among the prominent figures present at the

opening ceremony were Mohammad Shahbazi, the head of Khuzestan's Art Bureau, Reza Maleki, the cultural attaché of Iran in Basra, and Seyyed Amirnasr Javid, the deputy head of the Art Bureau for



international affairs. The works on display are created by artists such as Seyyed Massoud Shojai Tabatabai, Mohammad-Hossein Nirumand,

and Maziar Bijani. The event, which aims to strengthen artistic ties between artists from Khuzestan and Basra, the second-largest province in

Iraq, also includes several workshops and sessions to improve communications and collaboration between artists from both countries.

The caricature exhibition, themed "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm," showcases works related to Palestinians.

It serves as an expression of solidarity from Iranian artists with the oppressed people of Palestine, aiming to preserve and disseminate valuable works in the field of resistance.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
 Cartoonist



## Book Aid International donated 1.2m books in 2023

Book Aid International donated 1.2 million books to readers in 22 different countries in 2023, published by the likes of Bloomsbury, Macmillan, Cambridge University Press (CUP), Oxford University Press (OUP) and Pearson.

As part of a three-year Power of Books strategy, Book Aid International has been attempting to reach those who face the greatest barriers to reading. This has included focusing on supporting refugees and working with part-

ners across Africa and the Middle East to offer thousands of people who have fled conflicts the chance to read. In 2023 alone, 74,000 books reached refugees through their work, the bookseller.com reported. Another campaign which was launched this year, Generation Reader, has seen 152,000 brand new books being gifted within its first year, with the potential to reach 1.1 million readers. Working with partners such as AfriKids in Ghana the charity wants to create safe spaces for

children to read. Alison Tweed, Book Aid International's chief executive, also commented: "Last year proved to be a challenging year – with the devastating impact of climate change, ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza and the ever-rising cost of living which has tipped so many individuals and communities into real hardship. We know that the books we send are giving millions of people the opportunity to read and the power to transform their lives."