

Iran slams 'unwarranted' war on Yemen

US not in proxy war with Iran: *Biden*

International Desk

Iran lambasted the United States and Britain for their "unwarranted" war on Yemen as a US-led coalition carried out a new strike on the Arab country on Saturday. On Friday, a US-led coalition launched its first military strike on Yemen after the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday passed a resolution condemning "in the strongest terms" the multiple attacks by the Yemeni forces on Israel-bound ships. During recent months, Yemen's armed forces have been staging missile and drone strikes against vessels linked to the Israeli regime or those heading to Israeli ports in support of war-hit Palestinians in Gaza, which has been under Israel's brutal attacks since October 7. "This unwarranted war violates Yemen's sovereignty, international law, the UN Charter, and Security Council resolutions, jeopardizing regional peace and security," the Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations said in a statement on Friday, posted on X. Iran slammed the US and UK's "illegal actions," saying that "their opposition to Russia's amendments to the [UN] resolution hints at a premeditated intention to commit this aggression." Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian also wrote on X: "Instead of a military attack on Yemen, the White House should immediately stop all military and security cooperation with Tel Aviv

against the people of Gaza and the West Bank so that security returns to the entire region." The United States has been providing Israel with unbridled military and political support in its onslaught against Gaza, arming Tel Aviv with more than 10,000 tons of military hardware. The US has also cast its veto against all United Nations Security Council resolutions that have called for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza. Referring to the Yemeni strikes, Amir-Abdollahian wrote, "Yemen's measure in support of Gaza's women and children and confrontation against the Israeli regime's genocide is commendable."

Fresh strikes

The US carried out a fresh strike Saturday on Yemen, targeting a radar site after the Ansarallah resistance movement in Yemen warned of further attacks on ships in the Red Sea. The strike came a day after US and British forces hit scores of targets across the country, heightening fears that Israel's onslaught on the Gaza Strip could engulf the wider region. The US Central Command said Saturday's strike was "a follow-on action on a specific military target" related to the previous day's strikes. Ansarallah's official media earlier said, Al-Dailami airbase in Yemen's capital of Sana'a had been struck in the latest bombardment. "All American-British interests



This satellite picture shows destroyed shelters in Hodeida airfield in Hodeida, Yemen, on January 12, 2024, after airstrikes by the United States and Britain. ● MAXAR TECHNOLOGIES/AFP

have become legitimate targets" following the strikes, Ansarallah's Supreme Political Council said. Ansarallah's Deputy Foreign Minister Hussein al-Ezzi said the United States and Britain would "have to prepare to pay a heavy price". UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on all sides "not to escalate" in the interest of regional peace and stability, his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. Many regional countries, even US allies, have condemned the coalition's attacks and expressed concern about the extension of the conflict across the region.

Division in West

Meanwhile, Italy, Spain and France

stood out by not taking part in US and British strikes against Yemen and not signing a statement put out by 10 countries justifying the attacks. The divergence highlights divisions in the West over the US-led strikes on Yemen. US President Joe Biden called the strikes a successful "defensive action" after the "unprecedented" Red Sea attacks and said he would act again if the Ansarallah movement continued what he called their "outrageous behavior". But Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said the Western strikes would fuel "insecurity and instability in the region" while "diverting" attention

from Gaza.

Biden said Friday he's delivered a message to Iran with Thursday's airstrikes. "I've already delivered the message to Iran," Biden said when asked his message during a tour of a coffee shop in Allentown, Pennsylvania. When Biden was asked if the US is in a proxy war with Iran, he said "No. Iran does not want a war with us." The US National Security Council coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby also said that the US is "not looking for conflict with Iran," which is supporting the resistance groups across the Middle East region.

Danish court upholds jail terms for anti-Iran separatists

A Danish appeals court on Friday upheld the sentences of three members of an Iranian separatist group convicted of promoting terror in Iran and gathering information for an unnamed Saudi intelligence service. The three had been convicted and sentenced in a lower court in 2022 to six, seven and eight years in prison, respectively. They will be expelled from Denmark for good, the Eastern High Court in Copenhagen ruled, AP reported. The appeals court did not release the men's names. They will serve their time in Danish prisons, but it was unclear when they would be expelled. The three were arrested in February 2020 in the town of Ringsted, 60 kilometers (40 miles) southwest of the Danish capital of Copenhagen, and subsequently convicted of promoting terror for their roles in a deadly attack on a military parade in the southwestern Iranian city of Ahvaz in September 2018. The Eastern Court found Tuesday that the men belonged to the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahvaz and had been gathering information about individuals and organizations in Denmark and abroad, as well as on Iranian military affairs, and passing it on to Saudi intelligence. The court said one of the men who had Danish citizenship will have it revoked. Earlier this week, the court confirmed the men's February 2022 guilty verdicts by the District Court in Roskilde, which convicted them of financing and attempting to finance terrorism by obtaining 15 million kroner (\$2.2 million) and trying to obtain at least another 15 million kroner from Saudi Arabia for the separatist group. Iran has accused the separatist group of the Ahvaz terrorist attack, which killed at least 25 people. The group's ringleader Farajollah Chaab, also known as Habib Asyud, was arrested in November 2020 on the back of a set of "specialized and combined measures" by Iranian intelligence forces. The Swedish-backed terrorist was executed on May 6, 2023.

Israel presses on with Gaza offensive as war enters 100th day

International Desk

Today marks 100 days since Israel continues its deadly war in the Gaza Strip with no end in sight. Israel kept up bombardments in the besieged strip on Saturday as the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said at least 23,843 have been killed in the territory in 99 days of war. The ministry said it had regis-

tered 60,317 wounded since war erupted on October 7, while thousands remain trapped under rubble. In the southern city of Rafah, an Israeli airstrike on a house sheltering two displaced families killed 10 people, the ministry said. Holding up a photo of a dead girl with a piece of bread in her hand, Bassem Arafah, a relative, said the

families in Rafah had been eating dinner when the house was struck on Friday night. "This child died while she was hungry, while she was eating a piece of bread with nothing on it, where is the International Criminal Court to see how the children die?" Arafah said. "Where are the Muslims ... and the world leaders?" Israel claims it targets militants and does all it can to minimize harm to non-combatants as it wages urban warfare against Hamas in the densely populated Palestinian enclave. But the scale of the killing in Gaza and the dire humanitarian situation has shocked world opinion and fueled growing calls for a cease-fire. In the central Gaza Strip, residents reported intense gunbattles and tank shelling and Israeli airstrikes in Al-Bureij, Al-Nusseirat and Al-Maghazi, areas housing refugees and descendants of the 1948 war.

Israel blocks aid

Israel's latest attacks on Gaza have killed at least 151 people, including 11 in a single house, Palestinian health officials said on Friday, while the UN humanitarian office accused Israel of blocking its efforts to send aid to the north. The office said Israeli authorities were blocking its efforts to help people who had stayed in the north for fear the militants would seize supplies. "We have systematic refusal from the Israeli side of our effort to get there," said Andrea De Domenico, Head of Office for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. "In particular, they have been very systematic to not allowing us to support hospitals, which is something that is reaching a level of inhumanity that, for me, is beyond comprehension," he said.

German intervention

Meanwhile, a day after South Africa argued that Israel had committed genocidal acts in Gaza with intent from "the highest levels of state", the German government announced it will intervene as a third party at the International Court of Justice in defense of the regime. The intervention came after Israel's legal team delivered its defense at the UN court in the Hague on Friday. Israel's ally the US have also dismissed the case as groundless and vowed a robust defense. Jordan said on Friday Israeli "war crimes" against Palestinians were to blame for heightened regional tension and violence in the Red Sea which it said threatened to ignite a wider war in the Middle East. Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi voiced support for South Africa's "genocide" case against Israel at the UN's top court over the Gaza war, and said Amman was ready to submit legal documents and appear in court if the case proceeds.



People mourn over the shrouded bodies of loved ones killed during Israeli bombardment in a hospital in the southern Gaza Strip on January 13, 2024. ● AFP

Iran, Pakistan to hold naval drill in Persian Gulf

National Desk

A Pakistani naval flotilla has docked at Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas and is set to hold a joint military exercise with Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf near the Strait of Hormuz. The expansion of friendly ties between the two neighbors and the promotion of cooperation in the naval training field are among the other purposes of the Pakistani flotilla's three-day visit to Iran.

The Pakistani flotilla, comprising the Madadgar warship and Zhub maritime security vessel, was welcomed by the commanders of Iran's Navy in southern Hormuzgan Province. Rear Admiral Farhad Fattahi, a navy commander in the province, said the presence of Pakistan's training combat group in Iran will help both sides to share their naval experiences. Iranian naval forces have held several joint military drills with

foreign countries in recent years with the purpose of improving the security of international maritime trade, countering piracy and maritime terrorism, exchange of information in naval rescue and relief operations, and exchange of operational and tactical experiences. The Iranian Navy has also achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing surface and sub-surface vessels in recent years. It has also increased its presence

in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers.

