

Leader urges Muslim nations to cut off Israel's vital arteries

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called on Muslim countries to cut off their political and economic relations with the Israeli regime.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks on Tuesday during a meeting with those in charge of a congress of 24,000 martyrs of Tehran Province, Press TV reported.

The Leader criticized officials of the Muslim countries for making "wrong"

statements about Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, saying they raise issues such as a cease-fire, which is beyond their control and lies in the hands of the Israeli regime.

"The issue that is in the hands of the officials of the Muslim countries is to cut off the vital lifelines of the Zionist regime," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

"Muslim countries should sever their political and economic ties with the Zionist regime, and not help this regime."

The Leader asserted that the Palestinian nation will emerge victorious despite hardships and inappropriate conduct of the authorities of Muslim countries.

Since the beginning of Israel's onslaught on the Gaza Strip, at least 25,490 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory, mostly women and children.

However, resistance groups in Gaza have managed to inflict heavy losses on the Israeli army.



● khamenei.ir

24 Israeli soldiers killed in deadliest day of Gaza invasion

Israel said Tuesday 24 soldiers were killed in the biggest single-day losses since the start of its ground war in Gaza amid growing pressure on the regime to find a way to end the conflict. The heavy clashes came US media reported a new Israeli proposal for a deal that would involve a two-month pause in fighting.

Twenty-four soldiers were killed on Monday, with the army saying 21 of them were reservists slain when rocket-propelled grenade fire hit a tank and two buildings they were trying to blow up. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said an investigation was launched

into the "disaster" and that Israel "must learn the necessary lessons". Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the "deaths of 24 of our fighters, our best sons... is a heavy blow".

On the ground, fighting raged in Khan Yunis, the biggest city in southern Gaza, which the army said it had "encircled".

Witnesses said powerful explosions rocked Khan Yunis, as well as Deir al-Balah in north Gaza and Rafah in the south.

The Gaza war broke out with Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attacks, which resulted in the deaths of about

1,140 people in Israel.

In response, Israel has carried out a relentless offensive that has killed at least 25,490 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

The Hamas attack also saw about 250 hostages seized, and Israel says around 132 remain in Gaza. That number includes the bodies of at least 28 dead hostages, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

A week-long truce in November saw 105 hostages released, the Israelis among them in exchange for Palestin-

ian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

New truce deal

US news outlet Axios reported on Monday night that Israel had proposed to Hamas, via Qatari and Egyptian mediators, a new deal to free all the hostages.

The report, citing unnamed Israeli officials, said the proposed deal would be carried out in multiple stages, and would also involve the release of an undetermined number of Palestinian prisoners.

US State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said Washington still be-

lieved "a two-state solution, a creation of a Palestinian state, is the only path that gets us out of this endless cycle of violence".

Netanyahu has steadfastly rejected calls for the creation of a Palestinian state.

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell on Tuesday said that Israel cannot be allowed to unilaterally block the creation of a Palestinian state after the war in Gaza.

"One thing is clear - Israel cannot have the veto right to the self-determination of the Palestinian people," Borrell told a Brussels press conference with his Egyptian counterpart.

New reforms - a progressive nation

Against the backdrop of ongoing geopolitical changes and global conflicts, 2023 has become a difficult year for the economies of the countries of the Central Asian region. However, among the states of the region, the Republic of Kazakhstan managed to achieve certain economic successes due to the internal political reforms carried out by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, which were also voiced by him during an interview published on January 3, 2024 in the newspaper «Egemen Qazaqstan» (Independent Kazakhstan).

Indeed, according to analysts from the International Monetary Fund, by the end of 2023, the volume of GDP in current prices in Kazakhstan should be over 259 billion US dollars, which is 15% more than in 2022. This is the most significant nominal growth in Central Asia. In 2024, growth is projected to be 4.2%. The positive economic situation in Kazakhstan opens up opportunities for foreign companies and potential investors to turn their attention to the rapidly developing economy of the leading country in the region.

Among the Central Asian states, the Republic of Kazakhstan stands out as the largest country and a key player in the region. The Republic of Kazakhstan occupies a strategic position between the huge economies of Europe and Asia, which is especially reflected in the development of alternative trade routes, including «The Trans-Caspian International Transport Route» (TITR). The logistics project, stretching from Europe through Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and then through the Black Sea to Turkey, represents a new «transport artery» for the transit of goods.

In addition, Kazakhstan could become a key supplier of important metals and rare earth minerals, which are also in increasing demand from Western industry. Thus, currently Kazakh companies produce 18 of the 30 rare earth metals that are important for the EU economy, including titanium, beryllium, tantalum and niobium. This need was emphasized during the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to the Republic of Kazakhstan in November 2023, which led to the conclusion of important deals for Paris for the purchase of necessary minerals and metals.

According to a report by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, despite uncertainty regarding oil prices and the negative impact of the Ukrainian-Russian war on the work of the Caspian Oil Pipeline Consortium to the export of Kazakh oil, the Republic of Kazakhstan's economy is projected to grow by 5% in 2023 and 2024. Thus, there is a significant growth in sectors such as trade, retail trade, wholesale trade and construction. In addition, public and private investment has increased in various areas, including infrastructure, transport and warehousing, which indicates the growing role of Almaty city as a center for the distribution of

services in the Central Asian markets.

Despite improvements of the economic conditions in the Republic of Kazakhstan, international organizations continue to criticize the lack of a competitive political environment and freedom of the press in the country's electoral processes. However, in order to build a «new Kazakhstan», President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev took the first and necessary steps towards his election slogan «a fair state, a fair economy and a fair society». In fact, the Republic of Kazakhstan has many short, medium and long-term plans for its political, economic, social and diplomatic development, which creates a predictable and sustainable market for foreign investors.

At the same time, there are many rumors among the world expert community about a planned referendum on the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which would allow President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to again take part in the presidential elections. In his interview, the President of Kazakhstan denied these rumors, noting that the provision on a one-time presidential term in the Constitution is unchanged, as well as the rules on independence, unitarity, territorial integrity and the form of government of the state.

The holding of the World Nomad Games in Kazakhstan in 2024 also seems to be a big event. They are important both for the popularization of national sports and a healthy lifestyle, and for the expansion of cultural and humanitarian ties between fraternal peoples - heirs of nomadic civilization. As international observers note, although the tourism sector will not be able to match the revenues from oil and gas exports in the near future, investment in tourism will be a step in the right direction that will not harm Kazakhstan's brand image in the world. On the other hand, Kazakhstan's strategic approach is also decisive for its international economic attractiveness. The Republic of Kazakhstan strives to maintain friendly relations with the largest world powers - Russia, China, the EU and the USA, which is a manifestation of the strategy of «multi-vector foreign policy» of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Thus, while not openly supporting Russia's actions in Ukraine, Astana also tried to prevent the escalation of tensions with Moscow by taking steps to prevent circumvention of Western sanctions against Russia, including a system of checks and balances in its financial and trading systems to ensure compliance with international sanctions.

The ongoing reforms, as well as the goals for further economic development, voiced by President K. Tokayev in an interview published on January 3, 2024, suggest that the leading Central Asian Republic is slowly but surely moving towards achieving its goals of building a democratic legal state with a new economic model attractive for international investment.

Iran's FM: US, UK attacks on Yemen 'strategic mistake'

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said the decision made by the US and Britain to launch strikes on Yemen was "a strategic mistake".

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in New York where he is scheduled to take part in a meeting of the UN Security Council on Palestine.

"We sent out a strongly-worded message and stern warning to Americans. The decision by the United States and the United Kingdom to jointly attack areas in Yemen poses threats to regional peace and security, and expands the scope of the [Gaza] war," he added. He emphasized that he had sharply criticized London for escalation of tensions in the Red Sea and launching military strikes against Yemen, and described the moves as "a strategic mistake" during a meeting with his British counterpart David Cameron on the sidelines of the 54th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in the Swiss city of Davos.

On Monday, US and British forces launched strikes at eight different locations in Yemen, with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands, according to a joint statement signed by the six countries.

A senior US military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said rough-

ly 25 to 30 munitions were fired, including from warplanes launched from a US aircraft carrier.

So far, eight rounds of strikes over the past month have failed to stop attacks by Yemeni Armed Forces against shipping linked to the Israeli regime.

Strikes won't go 'unpunished'

Military strikes by the United States and Britain will not go "unpunished," Yemen's Ansarallah resistance movement warned on Tuesday.

"These attacks will not go unanswered and unpunished," military spokesman Yahya Saree posted on X, formerly Twitter, listing raids in Sana'a, Hodeida, Ta'ez and Al-Bayda provinces.

Senior officials from Yemen's Ansarallah movement strongly condemned the latest US and UK strikes against the Arab country, stressing that such assaults will not deter Yemeni armed forces from pressing ahead with their operations against ships bound to Israeli ports.

Yemeni forces say they will continue to block Israeli ships or vessels heading to ports in the occupied Palestinian lands until the Tel Aviv regime's aggression stops and the siege on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip is lifted.

Yemenis have declared their open support for Palestine's struggle against the Israeli regime since it launched a devastating war on Gaza on October 7.



● A British Air Force Typhoon takes off to carry out airstrikes on Yemen from RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus on January 22, 2024.
● AFP