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## Iran Successfully Launches Three Satellites into Orbit

Iran has successfully put three homegrown satellites into orbit with a minimum altitude of 450 kilometers and a maximum of 1,100 kilometers above the Earth's surface. Mahda, Keyhan-2 and Hatef-1 satellites were launched from Imam Khomeini Space Launch Terminal in Semnan Province on Sunday by the Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite launch vehicle, which is manufactured by the Iranian Defense Ministry, Press TV reported.

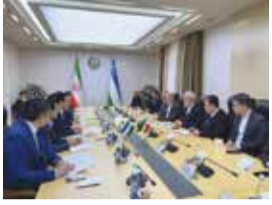
Mahda is a research satellite designed, manufactured, assembled and tested at the Iranian Space Research Center. Weighing 32 kilograms, it is a lightweight satellite developed to test advanced satellite subsystems. Mahda's main task is to assess the performance of the Simorgh launcher in multiple injections of space cargo in low altitudes, as well as to evaluate new designs and the reliability of indigenous technologies in space.

Keyhan-2 and Hatef-1 nanosatellites were also designed and developed for launch by Iran Electronics Industries, a state-owned subsidiary of the Defense Ministry. Both are cubic nanosatellites weighing less than 10 kilograms. Keyhan-2 is developed for space-based positioning. It has status determination and control subsystems to aim stably and precisely towards the Earth. Hatef-1 seeks proving the use of nar-

rowband communication technology in the Internet of Things (IoT). Despite sanctions imposed by Western countries in recent years, Iran has managed to take giant strides in the civilian space program. It is among the world's top 10 countries capable of developing and launching satellites. Last week, the Aerospace Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched Soraya satellite into orbit, using the Qaem 100

satellite carrier. Iran's Telecoms Minister Issa Zarepour said that, for the first time, Simorgh simultaneously put Mahda satellite and two other research payloads into orbit, adding that Mahda's signal was received. "I congratulate this important achievement to the beloved people and space experts, especially my colleagues, at the Iranian Space Research Center and the Defense Ministry," he noted.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Tehran, Tashkent emphasize developing trade ties**

Officials from Iran and Uzbekistan stressed the need to expand cooperation in the fields of trade, economy and energy.

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Abbas Aliabadi and his accompanying delegation, during a visit to the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, held talks with the ministers of industry and energy of Uzbekistan to broaden bilateral ties in trade, economic and energy fields, reported Tasnim News Agency.

The two sides weighed plans for developing bilateral relations and discussed issues of mutual interest.

Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran Mahdi Zeyghami, Deputy Minister of Industry for transportation affairs Manouchehr Manteqi, Deputy Minister of Industry for equipment and machinery affairs Mohammad Mousavi, and Deputy Minister of Industry for mining and mineral processing affairs Reza Mohtashamipour accompanied Aliabadi on his visit to Uzbekistan. Meeting with Iranian businesspersons in Uzbekistan was also on the agenda of the Iranian delegation during the visit to the Central Asian country.

**IRGC seizes foreign vessel carrying 'smuggled' fuel**

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps seized Sunday a foreign oil tanker carrying around two million litres of "smuggled fuel" near the country's southern coast, local media reported.

"A foreign vessel with the flag of a country from Oceania was identified with two million litres of smuggled diesel," reported Tasnim News Agency.

The ship "was seized in accordance with a court order," the agency said, quoting IRGC commander Heydar Honaryan.

Fourteen crew members were also arrested, he noted, saying they were nationals of "two Asian countries", without specifying which.

Iran, a major oil producer, has among the cheapest petrol prices in the world, which encourages fuel trafficking. Iranian forces regularly target tankers illegally transporting fuel in the Persian Gulf.

**Annual grain output up 3%**

Grain production in Iran topped 23 million tons in 2023, registering a more than three-percent growth compared to a year earlier, according to the statistics of the US Department of Agriculture.

In a report on the situation of agricultural production in the world in 2023, the production of wheat in Iran was estimated at 14 million tons, showing a six-percent hike compared to a year before, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Iran had produced 800,000

tons of wheat in 2022, the department added.

According to the report, the total production of wheat in the world in 2023 stood at 785 million tons, registering a 0.5 percent decline compared to a year before. China was introduced as the largest producer of wheat in the world in 2023, producing 136 million tons, followed by the European Union and India.

Iran ranked 15th in the world in production of wheat.

"Barley" is another im-

portant grain produced in the country, the report said, adding that Iran produced three million tons of barley in 2023, showing no change compared to a year earlier.

Some 142 million tons of barley were produced in the world in 2023, showing a six percent slump compared to a year before.

In barley production, Iran stood in 10th place in 2023. The report added that about 4.5 million tons of other species of grain were produced in Iran in 2023.

**65 tons of Iranian saffron smuggled in nine months**

About 65 tons of saffron were smuggled from Iran during the first nine months of the current Iranian year (March 21-December 21, 2023), of which 90 percent were destined to Afghanistan as the remaining 10 percent were smuggled to Arab countries.

Announcing the above, Mohammadali Rezaei, the head of the Union of Exporters of Medicinal Plants, Food Products and Saffron of Iran added that

most of the saffron that is sold in the world markets as Spanish saffron goes from Iran to Spain in bulk, ILNA reported.

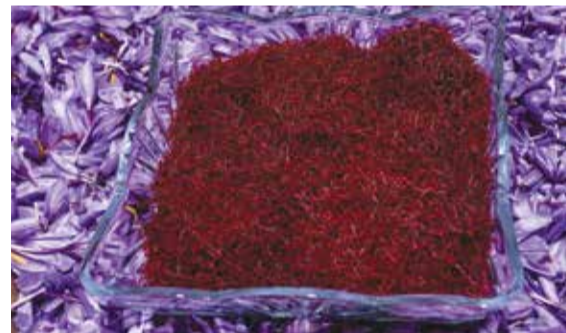
In the past years, Iran's annual production of saffron reached 500 tons, but in recent years this figure has decreased to 300 to 400 tons, he said.

"Afghanistan is a member of the World Trade Organization, and WTO member states are exempt from paying taxes in trade with

each other, as a result, saffron smuggled from Iran is sold under the Afghan

brand in global markets at lower prices."

The saffron harvest this



[Iranian] year has decreased by 40 percent compared to last year, Rezaei said, explaining that the decrease was due to the increase in cultivation costs, climate tensions as well as water shortages in some areas.

He put the annual consumption of saffron in Iran at 40 to 50 tons, noting that Iranian saffron enjoys higher quality compared to the products of other countries.

A total of 90 percent of the

saffron that is produced in the world is cultivated in Iran, but Iran's share of the global saffron market is 16 percent, Rezaei criticized, stating that the turnover of saffron market around the globe stands at about \$1.1 billion.

In addition to Iran, saffron is harvested in Afghanistan, Greece, Spain, China and Turkey, but Spain has the pole position in the global saffron market, he concluded.

**Iran, Saudi Arabia to launch direct shipping line**

Iran and Saudi Arabia plan to set up a direct shipping line between Kangan, in the southern Iranian province of Bushehr, and Dammam, in eastern Saudi Arabia, in a bid to boost trade between the two countries.

Governor of Bushehr Ahmad Mohammadzadeh said late on Saturday that the launch of the shipping line between Iran and Saudi Arabia was decided in a recent visit by Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari to the province as part of efforts to increase Iran's trade volume with countries in the Persian Gulf, IRNA reported. Mohammadzadeh also said that development projects introduced in Kangan are close to being finished, adding that large vessels can dock in the port in the near future.

Local officials consider the development of the maritime economy in Kangan to be important, he noted, adding that authorities plan to set up an industrial zone for knowledge-based companies in the region to serve the needs of the oil, gas, and petrochemical industries that exist in the port.

**Iran exports 10.5m tons of cement to 25 countries in nine months**

Iran exported 10.5 million tons of cement to 25 countries, including Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria, over the nine months, to November 21, 2023, an industry source announced.

Secretary of Iran's Cement Industry Producers Association Ali Akbar Alvandian said that some 60 million tons of cement were consumed domestically during the nine months, IRNA reported.

Alvandian said cement production in Iran rose in the nine months to late November thanks to stable supply of electricity and fuel to manufacturers, adding that the situation could further improve in the coming years.

He further noted that Iran was the fourth-largest cement producer in the world some two decades ago, when investment in the industry was at its highest. Iran produces some 90 million tons of cement per annum, Alvandian said, adding that production capacity is expected to increase by 8.8 million tons in the coming years with the launch of 13 projects.

**Tehran to host 21st WOODEX expo**

The 21st Iran International Exhibition of Wood, Raw Materials, Accessories, and Fitting Machinery & Related Industries for Furniture, dubbed "WOODEX Expo 2024," will be inaugurated in Tehran on Thursday.

The secretary of the Iranian Wood Industry Employers' Association said the exhibition's objective is to provide the participants and exhibitors with information on the latest developments in Iran's wood

industry, reported Tasnim News Agency. Speaking at a news conference held ahead of organizing the exhibition, Ali Moghanlou also said that \$80 million worth of various kinds of compressed

wood sheets was exported from the country last year. He stated that the production process of the wood industry in the country is on a growing path. The exhibition will run through February 4, 2024.

# History of human settlement in Tehran pushed back

## Iranica Desk

Archaeologists conducting field research at Qomiabad Hill in Shahr-e Rey, south of Tehran, have reported new findings that could push back the history of human settlement in the Tehran plain by tens of thousands of years, possibly to more than 40,000 years ago.

This recent discovery was made in an area where one of its ancient hills was destroyed with the permission of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Tehran Province, motivating some archaeologists to visit the site. Although there are no remaining traces of that hill, which does not have a

specific name and has been denied historical significance by the Cultural Heritage Organization, archaeologists have found new discoveries by examining the remaining area and hill, which they believe will change the history of Tehran.

Morteza Hesari, a faculty member of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, who visited Quiambao village, has reported new findings in this area related to the Paleolithic period, located in the south of Tehran. He explained that during a visit to Qomiabad Hill, they observed stone

tools from the Paleolithic period. As a result, they requested Fereydoon Biglari, an archaeologist and head of the Paleolithic Section of the National Museum of Iran, to conduct a field visit to the site.

Following a visit to the area, Biglari said that little information was previously available about the Paleolithic period in Tehran Province, mentioning that it was limited to a few findings dating back to this period. However, he noted that they had uncovered a wide distribution of stone artifacts in Qomiabad Hill. He further added, "During this visit, we encountered samples related to the carving and production of stone tools on the

surface of the hills."

Additionally, he described the surface of the hill as being covered with sediment containing pieces of flint, obsidian, and other workable stones that were used for carving and tool-making during the Middle Paleolithic period.

Biglari emphasized, "Based on the new findings, the history of human settlement in Tehran has been pushed back tens of thousands of years, to more than 40,000 years ago, and possibly even up to around 80,000 years ago. The skeletal remains of humans found in several caves indicate that Neanderthals lived in parts of Iran during the Middle Paleolithic period. However, further research is needed to obtain more information about this location."

## Experience nostalgia in Puppet & Toy Museum of Kashan

### Iranica Desk

In addition to the archaeological marvels of Kashan, a city in Isfahan Province, such as the Historical Tabatabaei House and Ameri House, the splendid Kashan Bazaar, and the mesmerizing Agha Bozorg Mosque, the city still holds wonders and surprises waiting to be explored.

For those who long for simpler times, the Kashan Puppet & Toy Museum (Guesthouse) offers a journey back to the carefree days of yore, where one could run in joy across a beautiful yard. As a city steeped in history and culture, Kashan boasts numerous museums, and the Puppet & Toy Museum stands out

as one of its top attractions, housing a renowned collection of historic toys. Walking through the museum and gazing at old toys and puppets evokes nostalgic sentiments for visitors of all ages. The entire building is adorned with a diverse array of toys from various time periods and origins.

The museum showcases local native toys and puppets as well as toys from around the world, some dating back 150 years. Each section holds a wealth of historical significance. Other sections feature a variety of antique puppets representing Iran's folklore, including witches, wizards, demons, and warriors, each with their own origin stories. One section is dedicated to the remains of the llam rain puppets, voodoo-like figures hung on holy trees by the women of llam during dry seasons to dispel the bad luck of drought and bring rain.

International toys



visitiran.ir

are also on display, including a replica of the first plastic toy brought to Iran by the 19th-century king Nassereddin Shah Qajar as a gift to one of his favorite mistresses. Additionally, visitors can view an Italian-made replica of Pinocchio, along with several vintage German wooden horses and Tunisian toy soldiers. The diverse exhibits and historical details make the Kashan Toy & Puppet Museum a must-see attraction.

What truly sets this museum apart is its accommodation quarters. Staying in the museum's rooms allows visitors to fully immerse themselves in its ambiance. Guests can also take part in toy-making workshops, creating local crafts with their own hands.

### Activities and entertainment

Puppet shows are a highlight, featuring a variety of classic and traditional char-

acters and their respective stories and adventures. Colorful, funny, and charming puppets entertain guests throughout the evening with a unique box-play puppet show that uses a chest as the stage instead of traditional red curtains. The museum also features a traditional Persian sharbat house, offering a variety of traditional and organic drinks, as well as herbal teas and snacks for guests to enjoy.



reiseniran.de

## Gazans torn between pride, frustration after ICJ ruling

In the Palestinian territory's southern city of Rafah, more than a million displaced people are struggling to survive amid bombardment and severe shortages of basic supplies.

Some who had access to electricity gathered around a television Friday to watch the International Court of Justice make an initial ruling on the genocide case brought by South Africa against Israel.

"I feel proud of the court's decision, it's the first time that the world's telling Israel that it crosses all lines and international law," said Maha Yasin, who was forced to flee from the northern Gaza City to Rafah.

"At least I feel that the world has started to feel for us, and that our blood, our martyrs, our physical, and mental loss is not in vain," the 42-year-old asserted.

More than 26,000 people have been killed in Gaza, about 70 percent of them women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

The war erupted on October 7, 2023, with an unprecedented Hamas attack which resulted in about 1,140 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of official Israeli figures.

Fighters also seized about 250 captives and Israel says around 132 of them remain in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 28 dead captives.

The Israeli military has laid to waste swathes of Gaza in its blistering assault, with 1.7 million people forced to flee their homes according to the United Nations.

### 'Stop the war'

Abu Mohammed Zaquout, 55, reached Rafah with dozens of relatives who were crammed into a tent unfit for the harsh winter weather.

"I was pinning my hopes on the court ordering a stop to the war," he said.

"But I am happy that I lived to see the day when the world is saying to Israel that it is criminal and its war unethical," added Zaquout.

The ICJ's landmark decision also said Israel must facilitate "urgently needed" humanitarian aid to Gaza, where the limited number of trucks that enter are often swamped by people desperate for food.

Zaquout supported the court's ruling, but said it would not be enough to stop the suffering.

"We need to see an end to the war on the ground. No one can bear it anymore," he told AFP.

The court session was closely watched around the world and in the occupied West Bank, where residents gathered at a cinema in Ramallah.

"Thank you, South Africa" placards were on display, but attendees were disappointed the court stopped short of ordering an immediate halt to hostilities.

"It is unacceptable for the world to stand today — after more than a hundred days — and still watch, and not make an immediate decision to stop the fire, bring in food and medicine, and evacuate the wounded," said Hala Abu Gharbiyeh, with a South African flag in her hand.

A metres-high statue of South Africa's anti-apartheid hero Nelson Mandela stands in Ramallah, while earlier this month Palestinians raised the country's flag over the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

Back at the cinema, Palestinian Mais Shabana said she was disappointed with the court's response to the South Africa case.

"We were very optimistic, but now we are not happy. We feel that the court could have clearly decided that there would be a ceasefire," she said.

AFP



↑ Palestinians attend a live projection of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) hearing of the case brought by South Africa against Israel, at the Ramallah municipality in the occupied West Bank on January 26, 2024.

● AFP

# ICJ verdict a game-changer for Palestinians

## Israel accused of largest modern genocide



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

On Friday, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued its initial verdict on South Africa's complaint against Israel, in which the former accused the latter of genocide against the people of Gaza. While the ruling does not explicitly order an immediate cease-fire, legal and political experts around the world view the ICJ's five provisional measures as a triumph for the Palestinians. To shed more light on the matter, Iran Daily has interviewed Mohsen Baharvand, Iran's former ambassador to Britain.

**IRAN DAILY: Why did the ICJ refrain from ordering a cease-fire in Gaza in the case of South Africa's complaint?**

**BAHARVAND:** South Africa has levied charges of genocide against Israel. Genocide carries its own definition, implying that the accused has deliberately massacred individuals of the same nationality, race, or religion with prior intention. Proving the intent behind genocide can be a lengthy process. As the ICJ has not yet had enough time to establish the occurrence of such atrocities, ordering a cease-fire would not have been feasible. In essence, the obstacle was a technical one, as the genocide allegation remains unproven.

**So, what advantages does the ICJ's initial ruling offer the Palestinians, and what disadvantages does it impose on Israel?**

Firstly, Israel's claim that the ICJ lacks jurisdiction to hear South Africa's case against it has been dismissed, affirming the ICJ's authority to review the case. Furthermore, while the court has not yet confirmed the occurrence of genocide, it has not rejected the accusation either, leaving Israel under the cloud of suspicion. As an impartial international institution, the ICJ acknowledges the possibility of genocide by Israel in Gaza and emphasizes the need for humanitarian aid to reach the region.

Additionally, its provisional measures work against Israel's interests and in favor of the people of Gaza and Palestine. Another significant aspect of these emergency orders is that Israel must identify and punish those who incite or endorse genocide. If Is-

rael fails to comply, other countries can file complaints against Israeli perpetrators in their own domestic courts or even in the International Criminal Court. All in all, these temporary orders have dealt blows to Israel, while favoring South Africa and the Palestinian people.

**According to some experts in international relations, these provisional measures of the ICJ can also be placed on the agenda of the UN Security Council as a consultative document. Algeria has even requested an emergency meeting of the Security Council immediately after these orders were issued.**

Yes, this is true. Algeria has called for a meeting of the Security Council to set up mechanisms for implementing these provisional measures of the court. In other words, it is asking the council to guarantee that these measures will be carried out. The technical barrier that prevented the ICJ

from issuing a cease-fire order doesn't exist in the Security Council. The court's provisional measures can be presented as a consultative document, on which ground an order for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza may be issued. However, the primary obstacle to calling for a cease-fire in the Security Council is the support of the United States for Israel and its veto power. Every time a request for a cease-fire has been put to a vote in the council, America has vetoed it.

**Some believe that the ICJ's provisional measures and the fact that the court accepted the jurisdiction of the genocide charge were a fundamental blow to the international status of the Israeli regime, especially in the eyes of the world's public opinion. Do you agree?**

Yes, Israel's position has surely been damaged. However, Israel had already lost its credibility due to its countless crimes in the past. In such cases, both the court's out-



↓ Pro-Palestinian protesters pose for a photo in front of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as judges rule on emergency measures against Israel in The Hague, Netherlands, on January 26, 2024.

● REUTERS





come, i.e., the final verdict issued, and the process of handling the case are significant.

The court has not yet delivered a final decision, and it may take some time for the review and issuance of a decision. However, the process of handling the case itself holds importance. Accusing Israel of genocide has generated various international reactions and placed this regime under international pressure. Israel must be held accountable for the allegations and for complying with the temporary orders.

**The issue of the Gaza war and Israeli crimes has now entered new phases, namely of accusing Israel of genocide and the violation of human rights and international conventions related to wars. Why do you think America, which claims to champion human rights in the world, remains a staunch support-**

#### er of Israel?

Unconditional support for Israel is part of the US strategy. For instance, Washington, in response to the same court decision, labeled it as meritless. Despite being a member of the International Court of Justice, it cannot jump to conclusions. Like other countries, the US can express its opinion during the content review of the case. However, here, it cannot impose its viewpoint on others and obstruct the proceedings and voting through veto power, as it does in the Security Council. The United States has long been openly undermining international law, which has cost it its moral advantage in the world. Hence, it can no longer be said that the US maintains its former position as a champion of human rights. In effect, the issuance of provisional court measures favoring Palestinians as well as Washington's open opposition to the measures will further weaken its international standing.

## It may be genocide, but it won't be stopped



By Chris Hedges  
Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist

### OPINION

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) refused to implement the most crucial demand made by South African jurists: "Israel shall immediately suspend its military operations in and against Gaza." But at the same time, it delivered a devastating blow to the foundational myth of Israel. Israel, which paints itself as eternally persecuted, has been credibly accused of committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Palestinians are the victims, not the perpetrators, of the "crime of crimes". A people, once in need of protection from genocide, are now potentially committing it. The court's ruling questions the very raison d'être of the "Jewish State" and challenges the impunity Israel has enjoyed since its founding 75 years ago.



▶ Palestinians flee the north Gaza Strip through the Salaheddine road in the Zeitoun district on the southern outskirts of Gaza City, with Israeli army tanks closely following them on November 24, 2023.  
● AFP

The ICJ ordered Israel to take six provisional measures to prevent acts of genocide, measures that will be very difficult if not impossible to fulfill if Israel continues its saturation bombing of Gaza and wholesale targeting of vital infrastructure.

The court called on Israel "to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide". It demanded Israel "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance". It ordered Israel to protect Palestinian civilians. It called on Israel to protect some 50,000 women giving birth in Gaza. It ordered Israel to take "effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip". The court ordered Israel to "take all measures within its power" to prevent the crimes that amount to genocide such as "killing, causing serious bodily and mental harm, inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, and imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group".

Israel was ordered to report back in one month to explain what it had done to implement the provisional measures.

Gaza was pounded with bombs, missiles, and artillery shells as the ruling was read in The Hague. Since October 7, more than 26,000 Palestinians have been killed. Almost 65,000 have been wounded, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Thousands more are missing. The carnage continues. This is the cold reality.

Translated into the vernacular, the court is saying Israel must feed and provide medical care for the victims, cease public statements advocating genocide, preserve evidence of genocide, and stop killing Palestinian civilians. Come back and report in a month. It is hard to see how these provisional measures can be achieved if the carnage in Gaza continues.

"Without a ceasefire, the order doesn't actually work," Naledi Pandor, South Africa's minister of international relations, stated bluntly after the ruling. Time is not on the side of the Palestinians. Thousands of Palestinians will die within a month. Palestinians in Gaza make up 80 percent of all the people facing famine or catastrophic hunger worldwide, according to the

United Nations. The entire population of Gaza by early February is projected to lack sufficient food, with half a million people suffering from starvation, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, drawing on data from UN agencies and NGOs. The famine is engineered by Israel.

At best, the court — while it will not rule for a few years on whether Israel is committing genocide — has given legal license to use the word "genocide" to describe what Israel is doing in Gaza. This is very significant, but it is not enough, given the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

Israel has dropped almost 30,000 bombs and shells on Gaza — eight times more bombs than the US dropped on Iraq during six years of war. It has used hundreds of 2,000-pound bombs to obliterate densely populated areas, including refugee camps. These "bunker buster" bombs have a kill radius of a thousand feet. The Israeli aerial assault is unlike anything seen since Vietnam. Gaza, only 20 miles long and five miles wide, is rapidly becoming, by design, uninhabitable.

Israel will no doubt continue its assault, arguing that it is not in violation of the court's directives. In addition, the Biden administration will undoubtedly veto the resolution at the Security Council demanding Israel implement the provisional measures. The General Assembly, if the Security Council does not endorse the measures, can vote again calling for a ceasefire, but has no power to enforce it.

The only active resistance to halt the Gaza genocide is provided by Yemen's Red Sea blockade. Yemen, which was under siege for eight years by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Britain, and the US, experienced over 400,000 deaths from starvation, lack of health care, infectious diseases, and the deliberate bombing of schools, hospitals, infrastructure, residential areas, markets, funerals, and weddings. Yemenis know too

well — since at least 2017 multiple UN agencies have described Yemen as experiencing "the largest humanitarian crisis in the world" — what the Palestinians are enduring.

Yemen's resistance — when the history of this genocide is written — will set it apart from nearly every other nation. The rest of the world, including the Arab world, retreats into toothless rhetorical condemnations or actively supports Israel's obliteration of Gaza and its 2.3 million inhabitants.

The Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth reported that the US has sent 230 cargo planes and 20 ships filled with artillery shells, armored vehicles, and combat equipment to Israel since the attacks of October 7, in which some 1,200 Israelis were killed. US weapons and military equipment are being shipped to Israel — which is running out of munitions — from the British base RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, according to the UK investigative website Declassified UK. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported that more than 40 US and 20 British transport aircraft, along with seven heavy-lift helicopters, have flown into RAF Akrotiri, a 40-minute flight from Tel Aviv. Germany reportedly plans to provide 10,000 rounds of 120mm precision ammunition to Israel. If the court rules against Israel, these countries will be recognized by the world's most important international court as accomplices to genocide.

It is clear from the ruling that the court is fully aware of the magnitude of Israel's crimes. This makes the decision not to call for the immediate suspension of Israeli military activity in and against Gaza all the more distressing. But the court did deliver a devastating blow to the mystique Israel has used since its founding to carry out its settler colonial project against the indigenous inhabitants of historic Palestine. It made the word genocide, when applied to Israel, credible.

The full article first appeared in ScheerPost.



▶ Pro-Palestine activists wave flags as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) President Joan E. Donoghue delivers the court's ruling on the genocide case against Israel, in The Hague, Netherlands, on January 26, 2024.  
● PATRICK POST/AP





## Brazilian Osmar named Persepolis manager for the rest of the season

Gulf Pro League champion for the rest of the season. Numerous names, including Vladimir Petkovic and Portuguese Jose Peseiro, had been

### Sports Desk

Weeks of speculations and rumors swirling around the Persepolis bench came to an end as Brazilian Osmar Loss Vieira was appointed as the manager of the Persian

● borna.news

brought up in the media for the job but the 48-year-old Brazilian – an assistant to former coach Yahya Golmohammadi – was eventually handed the helm after Croatian Branko Ivankovich rejected a third approach by the Reds on Saturday due to “family and personal” reasons. A three-time league champion with Persepolis, Golmohamma-

di stepped down from his role following a 1-1 at Mes Rafsanjan on the first day of the new year, putting a lid on months of rift with club chairman Reza Darvish.

Ivankovich, whose Oman team crashed out of the AFC Asian Cup group stage on Thursday, was the club's prime candidate for the vacant role but he made it clear that he has no intention of returning to the Iranian top flight, where he had also lifted the trophy on three occasions before parting ways with the Reds in 2019.

Osmar, now with the team in a training camp in Dubai, first joined Persepolis as a number two to Golmohammadi for the start of the 2022/23 season. “Osmar has a decent knowl-

edge of the team, the opponents, and the competitions, while enjoying a friendly relationship with the players. He also played his part in helping Persepolis win a league and cup double last season,” the club's statement read after his appointment.

Before leaving for Iran, Osmar worked as a first-team assistant and academy coach in his home country for the best part of his managerial career, while spending short and unimpressive spells as the manager of Corinthians and Juventude.

His appointment drew criticism from parts of the Reds supporters on social media as they were expecting a more high-profile face on the bench in chasing a seventh league

crown in eight years.

Persepolis is third in the Iranian league table with 30 points after 15 matches – trailing archrival Esteghlal and Sepahan by two and one points respectively.

However, the Brazilian, who is believed to have the backing of senior Persepolis players, will be privileged to have a reinforced squad for the second part of the season after Qatari fullback Abdelkarim Hassan signed for the club, while former Persepolis striker Issa Alekassir rejoined from Sepahan last week.

Osmar's first game in the new role will come at home against second-tier side Naft Gachsaran in the Hazfi Cup on February 9.

## James' triple-double lifts Lakers over Warriors in second OT

**BBC** – LeBron James helped the Los Angeles Lakers to a thrilling 145-144 overtime win against the Golden State Warriors as he secured bragging rights over Steph Curry. James, the oldest player in the NBA at 39, scored 36 points plus a career-high 20 rebounds and 12 assists.

James secured victory by sinking his two free throws with just a second remaining on the clock.

Curry managed a game-high 46 points and seven assists on the losing side.

Four-time MVP James acknowledged his duel with Curry was one he would look back fondly on when his career

is over.

“Steph came to me after the game and said ‘how does it keep getting better?’” James said.

“It's something that you will truly take all in when you are done playing.

“When you are able to watch with your grandkids and say that I played against one of the best ever to play this game.”

The Warriors grabbed a one-point lead thanks to a superb 28-foot, three-point jumper from Curry with 5.2 seconds left.

Klay Thompson took the game into the second period of overtime after his 25-foot three pointer with seven seconds

remaining before James had the final word.

Elsewhere, NBA defending champions Denver Nuggets clinched a 111-105 win over Philadelphia 76ers, who were without star centre Joel Embiid.

Embiid became one of only 10 players in NBA history to score 70 or more points in a game when the 76ers beat the San Antonio Spurs 133-123 last week.

Reigning MVP Embiid went through his pre-match warm-up but was withdrawn by the team's medical staff with soreness in his knee.

It was the 11th game Embiid has missed this season, and he can only afford to sit out six more to remain eligible for the league's awards, including MVP.

Two-time MVP winner Nikola Jokic top scored with 26 points and 16 rebounds for the Nuggets, while Jamal Murray added 23 points.



Lakers forward LeBron James (8) shoots during an NBA win against the Warriors in San Francisco, CA, US, on January 27, 2024.

● DARREN YAMASHITA/USA TODAY SPORTS

## Xavi announces Barca exit plan after Villarreal defeat

**REUTERS** – Barcelona manager Xavi Hernandez said on Saturday that he had decided to step down at the end of the season after his side lost 5-3 at home to Villarreal in LaLiga, their third defeat in their last five games in all competitions.

Barca are third in the table on 44 points, 10 behind leaders Real Madrid and eight adrift of second-placed Girona.

“I'd like to announce that as of June 30 I will not continue as Barca coach,” he told a press conference after meeting with club president Joan Laporta for over half an hour.

“It is a situation of common sense and I have decided that on June 30th I will not continue as Barca coach.

“I think the club needs a change of dynamic and I told the president Joan Laporta. As a fan, thinking about the club and the players, I think they will be freed up and will be calmer.

“I think the best thing to do is to leave on June 30th. Having said that, I will give my all for the four months that are left, I think we can have a good season and I hope that the dynamic will change. I believe I am doing the right thing.”

Xavi played for Barcelona for 17 years, making 767 appearances

and winning 25 trophies, including four Champions League titles and eight LaLiga crowns.

But despite being a club great and winning LaLiga last term, Barca's stuttering campaign has put Xavi under pressure.

They were thrashed by Real in the Spanish Super Cup final earlier in January and knocked out in the Copa del Rey quarter-finals by Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday. Barca face last season's Italian champions Napoli in a Champions League last-16 tie.

“I had a very human conversation with the president (Laporta), with a lot of common sense. The trust is absolute, he even got a little emotional,” 44-year-old Xavi added.

“But I think it is time. I'm not driven by financial matters, but by my heart. I think it's the best thing for the club. I don't want to be a problem for the club in my heart.

“This game today is an example that we need a change of direction because it has been unfortunate and it is a time to change this dynamic. I can't remember a game as cruel as today.

“I insist. I don't want to be a problem but a solution and I believe that between now and June I can still be a solution.”

Barca's on-field struggles are a

reflection of the turmoil off the pitch at the club, including deepening financial problems and a refereeing scandal that could drag on for years.

Spanish prosecutors in March 2023 filed a complaint over alleged payments by Barca from 2001 to 2018 totalling more than 7.3 million euros (\$7.92 million) to firms owned by former refereeing official Jose Maria Enriquez Negreira.

A Barcelona court has agreed to take on the case.

Barca already face huge financial challenges related to their massive wage bill and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and a 1.6 billion-euro Camp Nou stadium renovation project.



● AP

## Bayern sign defender Boey from Galatasaray for €30m

**REUTERS** – Injury-hit Bayern Munich have signed fullback Sacha Boey from Galatasaray (GSRAY.IS), opens new tab on a contract until 2028, the German champions said on Sunday.

The 23-year-old former France youth international had joined Galatasaray on a four-year contract in 2021 from Stade Rennais.

He scored his first Champions League goal for the club in a 2-2 draw against Copenhagen on Sept. 20 2023.

Turkish Super League champions Galatasaray said in a statement that Bayern would pay a fee of 30 million euros (\$32.59 million).

“Sacha Boey is a very quick and physically very strong right back who



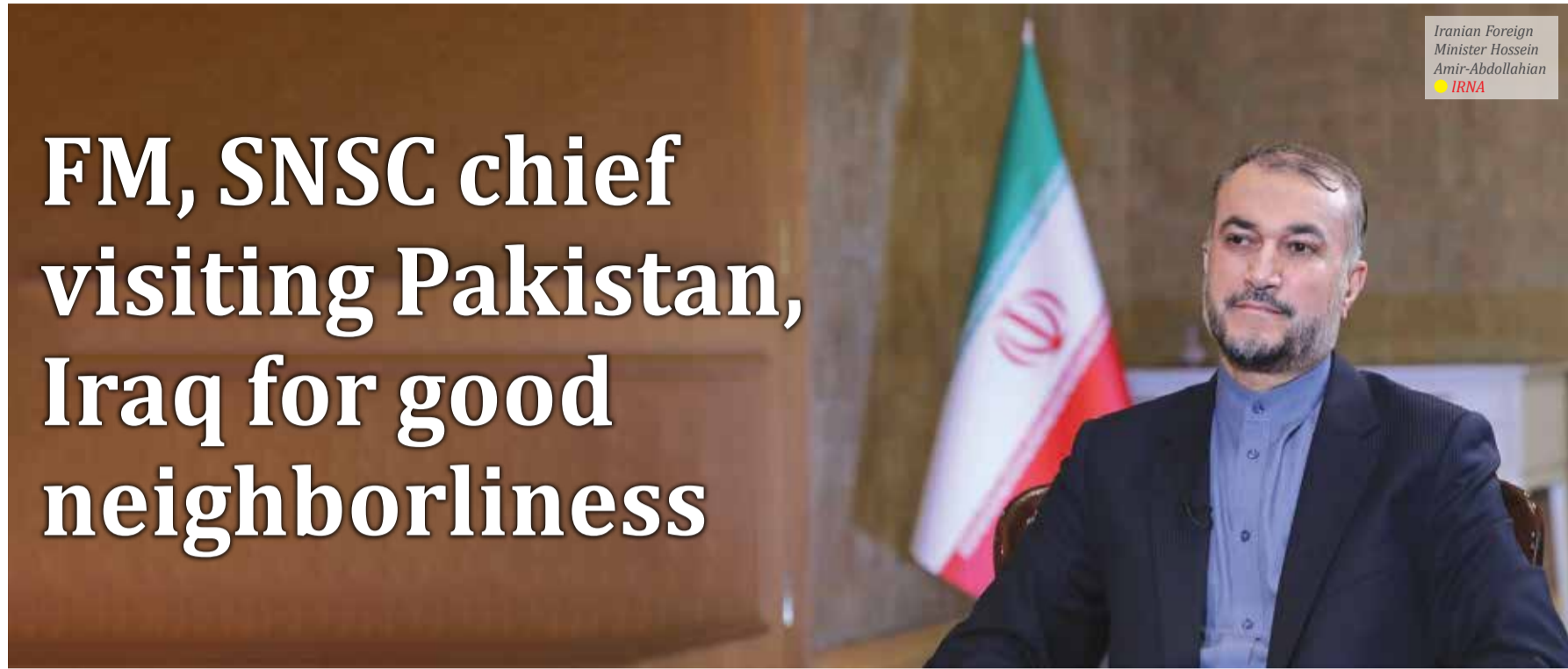
puts in a lot of kilometres in each game and does not shy away from a one-on-one,” said Bayern sports director Christoph Freund. “He will improve our defensive quality.”

The Bavarians, second in the Bundesliga behind Bayer Leverkusen, have been struggling with a growing list of injury absences including defensive stalwarts Dayot

Upamecano and Konrad Laimer, who were injured in their mid-week win over Union Berlin and will be out for weeks.

Defensive midfielder Joshua Kimmich was also injured in that game, while defenders Kim Min-jae and Noussair Mazraoui are on international duty and right back Bouna Sarr is injured.

● REUTERS



# FM, SNSC chief visiting Pakistan, Iraq for good neighborliness

**National Desk**  
Iranian Foreign Minister and Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) will soon travel to Pakistan and Iraq, respectively, in response to recent tensions between Iran and its neighboring countries. Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Sunday warned against the enemies' attempts to use terrorism as a tool against the country's good neighborliness policy, saying he

will visit Pakistan on Monday, while Ali Akbar Ahmadian will visit Iraq soon to resolve the recent issues, IRNA reported. "With a special focus on the good neighborliness policy, we have seen and defined security at the heart of the good neighborliness policy. We will never allow the enemies to target the friendship, peace and security of the region," Amir-Abdollahian said at the 7th Conference on Multilateralism in the

History of Iran's Foreign Relations in Tehran. He further said that over the past days, there have been terrorist moves in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and areas in Pakistan's Balochistan Province. Iran, he added, held constructive talks with Pakistani and Iraqi officials in a bid to protect the security of the country and its borders as well as that of the region. The discussions focused on a joint understanding and

political solutions to the occurrences in Pakistan's Balochistan and Iraq's Kurdistan, Amir-Abdollahian noted. Earlier this month, Iran and Pakistan witnessed an escalation of cross-border tensions over Iran's counter-terrorism operations. On January 16, Iran launched simultaneous drone and missile attacks on two bases of Jaish al-Adl, a terror outfit that was formed in 2012 and has conducted several attacks

on Iranian soil in recent years. The group claimed responsibility for an attack in December 2023 on a police station in the southeastern city of Rask that killed at least 11 Iranian police officers. On January 10, another attack by the group on a police station in the city killed one officer. Also, characterizing it a response to Tehran's operation against terrorist bases inside Pakistan, nine people, including four children,

were killed after Islamabad admitted attacking a village in Saravan in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchistan Province. Pakistan carried out the strikes on January 18 against what it called bases of the separatist Baloch Liberation Front and Baloch Liberation Army in regions close to Iran's border. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) also launched missile strikes on an Israeli spy base in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

## Bright future in Iran-Pakistan relations

By Seyed Reza Sadroddini  
Middle East affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Iran's foreign minister has traveled to Pakistan and the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council is scheduled to visit Iraq, in line with Iran's policy of strengthening relations with neighboring countries. Iraq and Pakistan are among the neighboring countries which have good relations with Iran, and it seems that the trips by the Iranian officials to these countries are aimed at developing relations between Iran and these countries, as the three countries still have capacities for expansion of relations. Tehran and Islamabad have a lot in common in the economic, political and cultural fields. The two countries have a long common border of 900 kilometers, which can be an opportunity for the two countries. The two Islamic states share many views on the major issues of the Islamic world, including the issue of Palestine. However, both Tehran and Islamabad are aware that there are ill-wishers who are awaiting an opportunity to create tensions between the two countries. Considering long and good neighborliness and relations between the two countries, it seems that Iranian and Pakistani officials have overcome a brief tension created between the two neighbors and are looking to the future. Pakistan's ambassador to Tehran has recently said that the time is ripe for turning a new leaf in bilateral relations. His remarks indicate that the two countries are determined to shape a better future in their relations. Iran's products and energy can meet a part of Pakistan's needs. Both countries also can reach agreement on Iran's investment in Pakistan's various projects. Pakistan's agricultural products can also explore new markets inside Iran. Therefore, Iran's top diplomat's visit to Pakistan can be considered a political-economic trip to stabilize and develop relations between the two neighbors. Tehran and Islamabad are both scarred by terrorism – the issue that has brought closer the two countries for more cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Israel's criminal actions in Gaza have created a complicated situation in the region. As one of the pillars of stability in the Middle East region, Iran has had various consultations to counter efforts by trans-regional powers to disturb the stability of the region. Therefore, the visit by Iranian officials to Pakistan and Iraq should be evaluated in this regard. Especially, the recent developments in the region, such as the Israeli genocidal acts in Gaza, have confirmed Tehran's positive role.

# Nations pausing UN Gaza funding could be violating genocide convention: Expert



A UN expert warned Sunday that countries defunding the UN agency for Palestinian refugees were breaching a court order to provide effective aid in Gaza and could be violating the international genocide convention. A number of donor coun-

tries – including Australia, Britain, Finland, Germany and Italy – on Saturday followed the lead of the US in suspending additional funding to UNRWA, Reuters reported. That came after Israel alleged that several of the UN agency's staff members

were involved in Hamas's October 7 attack. Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, warned that the decision to pause funding to UNRWA "overtly defies" the order by the International Court of Justice to allow effective humanitarian assistance to reach Gazans. "This will entail legal responsibilities – or the demise of the (international) legal system," she wrote on X. UNRWA reacted to the allegations by firing several staff and promising a thorough investigation into the unspecified claims, but Israel has nonetheless

vowed to stop the agency's work in Gaza after the war. The row between Israel and UNRWA follows the UN's International Court of Justice ruling on Friday that Israel must prevent possible acts of genocide in the conflict and allow more aid into Gaza. Albanese, who is an independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, but who does not speak on behalf of the UN, highlighted the timing of the defunding decisions. "The day after ICJ concluded that Israel is plausibly committing genocide in Gaza, some states decided to defund UNRWA," she said. By doing so, she said,

countries are "collectively punishing millions of Palestinians at the most critical time, and most likely violating their obligations under the Genocide Convention". Also, UN officials and aid groups called for the countries to reconsider their defunding decision on Sunday, warning that its life-saving aid for some two million people in Gaza was in jeopardy. "While I understand their concerns – I was myself horrified by these accusations – I strongly appeal to the governments that have suspended their contributions to, at least, guarantee the continuity of UNRWA's operations,"

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday, vowing to hold to account "any UN employee involved in acts of terror". Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA commissioner-general, also urged countries to "reconsider their decisions before UNRWA is forced to suspend its humanitarian response." At least 26,422 people have been killed in Israel's war on Gaza, the enclave's health ministry said. With flows of aid like food and medicine into the territory just a trickle of pre-conflict levels, deaths from preventable diseases as well as the risk of famine are growing, aid officials say.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iranian destroyer attracts customers after round-the-world mission

Many foreign countries have become interested in purchasing Iran's homegrown Dena destroyer, which has circumnavigated the world as part of the 86th flotilla, said Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani. The Dena destroyer, which has circumnavigated the globe without any breakdown, or even a mere fracture in its antennas, has attracted many customers after the mission, the navy commander said on Sunday, Tasnim News Agency reported. Pointing to Iran's success in

developing indigenous maritime methods and navigational techniques for riding out storms, the commander said the 86th flotilla's contact with Iran was not disconnected even for a second during its mission. The Iranian Navy's 86th flotilla, comprising the Dena destroyer and the Makran forward base ship, left Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas in September 2022, and returned home in May 2023, after sailing 63,000 kilometers of sea routes. Dena is a Mowj-class destroyer that joined the Ira-

nian Navy in June 2021. The military vessel is equipped with anti-ship cruise missiles, torpedoes and naval cannons. Makran is a forward base ship weighing 121,000 tons. The warship can carry five helicopters and is employed for providing logistical support for combat warships.



TASNIM

# Type and volume of Islamic states' exports to Israel

## Which Muslim countries are filling the gas tank of the killing machine?

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei urged Muslim states on Nov. 19, 2023 to

"prevent energy and commodities from reaching the Zionist regime." Currently, certain Muslim nations export various

types of goods to Israel. The following infographic, using reliable sources, sheds light on the volume of those exports.

