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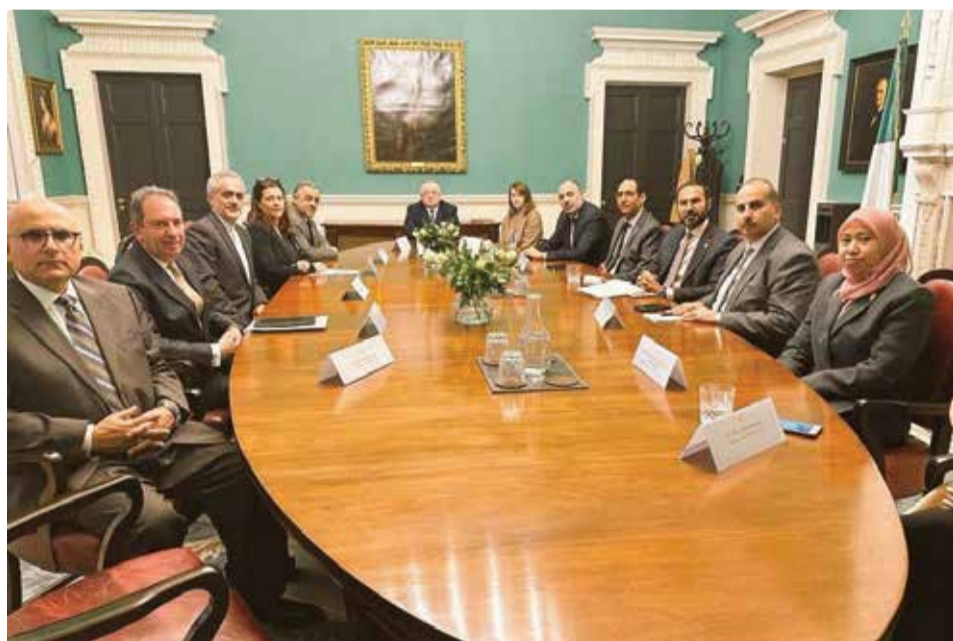
## INTERVIEW

The head of the Iran-Ireland parliamentary friendship group said that both countries have similar positions on international issues that are only converging, highlighted by the fact that they consistently condemn the crimes of the Zionist occupying regime and advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people. Eqbal Shakeri told Iran Daily in an exclusive interview that the common historical experiences and close positions of the two countries on various political and international issues have accelerated the expansion of bilateral ties.



Pro-Palestinian protesters rally outside the Irish Parliament in Dublin on November 15, 2023, in support of a motion that urged Ireland's government to back South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).  
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# Iran, Ireland positions on Palestine, int'l issues 'converging': MP



Envoys of Muslim countries to Ireland including Iran's Kazem Sharif Kazemi (3rd-L) meet with Speaker of the Irish Parliament Sean O Fearghail (C) in Dublin on November 8, 2023, to call on the country to join international efforts to halt the Israeli military operations against the people of Gaza.  
● IRNA

"Iran and Ireland have common interests in many areas, and therefore, in most cases, they have established amicable ties and signed mutually beneficial agreements," he added. For instance, the Iranian MP pointed out that members of the Irish parliament have always supported the positions of their Iranian counterparts, and "in return, we have had close cooperations in support of each other". "Since Ireland has an anti-racist and anti-imperialist

stance, it naturally has established friendly and positive relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has always supported freedom-loving and oppressed countries. We have observed this especially in the case of the Palestinian issue, as the Irish, like Iranians, have repeatedly expressed their support for Palestinians." Referring to President Ebrahim Raisi's policy of developing relations with friendly and neighboring countries, he said, "I believe the achievements of the government in developing foreign relations have

gone far beyond the anticipated plans, and through government actions, we have joined various international organizations, such as BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and expanded relations with various countries."

"Currently, there are numerous friendship groups formed between the Iranian parliament and many countries, and there is close communication among our parliament members. With other countries that we do not have joint parliamentary friendship groups, we establish communication through working groups and joint economic commissions."

According to Shakeri, the Iranian Parliament strives to have members of the parliamentary friendship groups "present and actively engaged in addressing bilateral issues" during the traveling visits of the Iranian president or officials to other countries.

The Iranian lawmaker continued: "We also hold periodic webinars with friendship groups from various countries, discussing issues related to the development of bilateral cooperation and international current affairs. In recent weeks and months, the Gaza issue has been one of the focal points of our virtual discussions and correspondences, during which we usually ask them to utilize the common capacities for resolving this crisis."

Shakeri's points are substantiated. A review of contemporary history would highlight the common grounds and shared experiences of Iran and Ireland, which, in turn, justifies the establishment of strong political relations between the two countries. Both countries have fought against colonization, in particular, and foreign domination and influence, in general, over the past century or so. It is noteworthy that this wasn't a top-down policy; rather, the people of both countries have been decisive in determining the fate of their countries.

In contemporary times, the two nations have been severely impacted by numerous negative political phenomena, as wars, foreign military interventions,



sieges, sanctions, and famines resulting from foreign occupation have been imposed on Iran and Ireland, separately. Both have paid a heavy price in their struggles for independence through popular movements and uprisings. Many lives were sacrificed in the process.

Although Ireland is a member of the European Union and many of its domestic and foreign policy decisions are made within the framework of the union's passed policies, its government has not been indifferent to national sentiments in supporting the rights of the oppressed Palestinian people.

Diplomatic relations between Iran and Ireland were established in February 1976, based on a joint statement released by the representatives of both countries in New York. Following this, the Islamic Republic of Iran appointed its ambassador to the Netherlands as its non-resident ambassador to Ireland. Ireland, in turn, opened its representative office in Tehran in 1976 by sending a chargé d'affaires to Tehran. Since then, the joint economic commission of the two countries has held meetings in Dublin and Tehran at the level of foreign ministers.