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# Borrell slams US hypocrisy over Gaza

# US gives both weapons and moral advice

EDITORIAL

Threats by Israel's warmonger Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for a ground attack on Rafah, in the southernmost region of the Gaza Strip, have caused fear and concern about another humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian enclave. Since the beginning of Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip, more than 28,000 people have been killed and over one and a half million displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in Rafah. Israeli airstrikes on Rafah began two days ago, and the authorities in Tel Aviv have declared their intention to carry out a ground attack on this

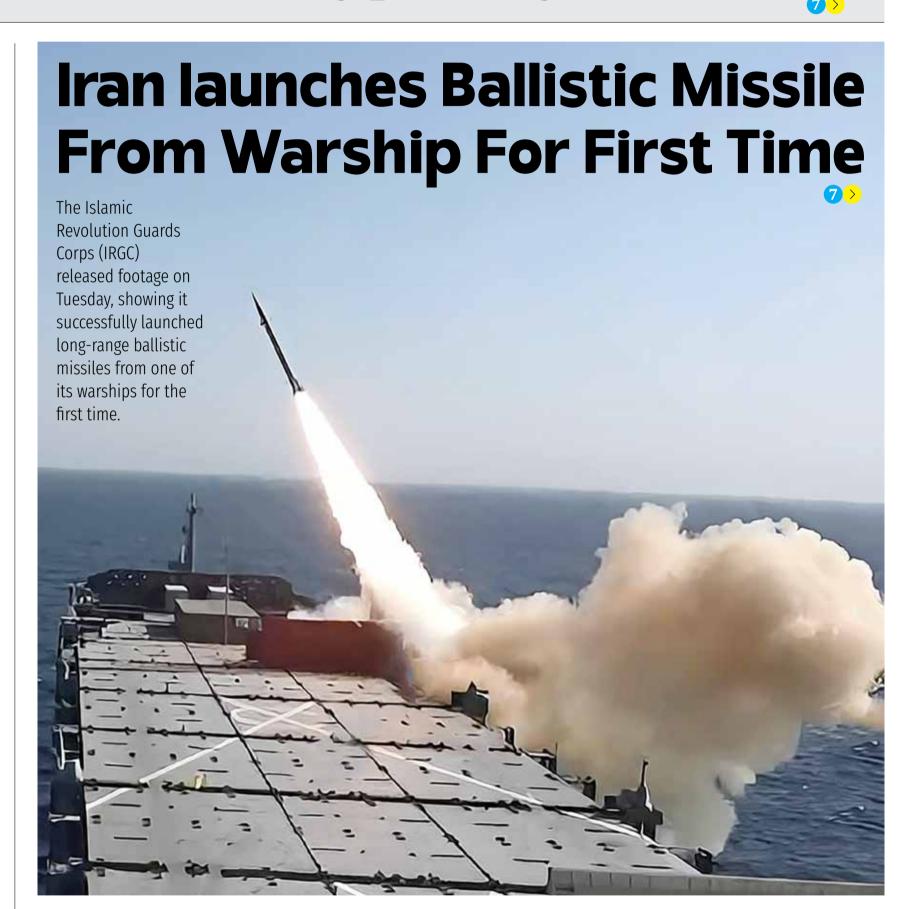
Media reports suggest Rafah is grappling with severe shortages of food, medicine and basic needs and the looming land invasion could double the disaster.

The United Nations, the European Union, and some supporters of Israel, such as the US and Britain, have issued warnings against aggression. British Foreign Secretary David Cameron has expressed concern about the assault on Rafah, and some US officials say President Joe Biden has stressed in a phone call with Netanyahu that the safety of over one million people must be ensured before proceeding with the Rafah operation. However, it appears that these warnings, expressions of concern, or recommendations to separate fighters from civilians have had little impact as the Israeli military has not hesitated to commit any crime over the past four months. Now, a possible attack on Rafah could be the final chapter in Israel's genocide in Gaza, while Western states, led by the US and the UK, remain mere onlookers, offering moral warnings and advice to the most immoral army and "state" in the world.

The unfortunate contradiction lies in the fact that while these states offer moral advice condemning the killing of civilians and the need to provide aid to the displaced people of Gaza, their military equipment and hardware are en route to Israel. They fail to realize that they are also complicit in Israel's genocide of innocent Gazans.

The contradiction is so glaring and striking that it has drawn criticism from EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell, who implored the Westerners. "Stop saying please and start doing something," Borrell said.

Borrell's intended task is to prevent Western countries, especially the US, from supplying arms to Israel, but they refuse to take action. Undoubtedly, the US stands as an accomplice to Israel's crimes in the court of history and must be held accountable.





Harandi Museum Garden in Kerman hosting two museums





Taremi set for Inter medical ahead of summer move:

Fabrizio Romano





Domestic & Int'l

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### **Overhauling** power stations saves Iran \$200m annually



The high technical know-how of Iranian experts and their skills in overhauling power stations equipment has saved the country \$200 million in a year, announced the CEO of the Iran Power Plant Repairs Company (IPRC).

The country has no dependency on foreign countries in repair and maintenance services of thermal power plants, Masoud Moradi stated, reported IRNA.

In addition to meeting domestic demands, the country currently exports techno-engineering services to regional countries in the field of repairing power plant units, he stated. Iran holds the top rank in the Middle East in the field of overhauling thermal power plant units, as the country has managed to be among the top five countries in terms of manufacturing power plant turbines in the world, the official noted.

### Tehran, Moscow keen to promote agricultural cooperation

Officials from Iran and Russia stressed expanding cooperation in the fields of agriculture and veterinary medicine.

Head of the Iran Veterinary Organization (IVO) Moitaba Norouzi held a meeting with Head of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision (Rosselkhoznadzor) Sergei Dankvert in Moscow to discuss bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest, reported Tasnim News Agency

The Iranian side called for boosting mutual cooperation and removing trade barriers in the way of the export of Iranian fishery and dairy products to Russia. During the meeting, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was inked between the two sides in the fields of veterinary quarantine, plant protection and expansion of cooperation between the two countries in imports and exports. An expert-level technical meeting was recently held between the deputy head of the Iran Veterinary Organization and Deputy Head of the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Konstantin Savenkov, in line with removing the problems ahead of exporting Iran's dairy and aquatic products to the Russian Federation.

# New refineries to raise refining capacity by 30%: Official

The construction of petro refineries across Iran will increase the country's refining capacity by 30 percent, which is currently at 2.3 million barrels per year, announced the deputy oil minister for planning

"Creating capacity and completing the value chain in the oil industry is one of the priorities of the Oil Ministry aimed at preventing sales of unprocessed oil as well as creating added value for the country," Houshang Falahatian said, reported IRNA.

International energy companies predict that the demand for petrochemical products will increase significantly in the coming years, and therefore the development of petro refineries seems a necessity in Iran. Development of petro refineries is much easier and relatively cheaper in Iran than in other countries, so the country can play a role in regulating the price of petrochemical products in the world due to its access to energy sources along with its capacity for the development of petro refineries.

And most importantly, if the country's refining capacity expanded to the level of crude oil feed produced in the country, the sanctions on Iran's oil industry would be practically ineffective.

In March 2023, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated the first section of the second phase of the development plan of Abadan oil refinery in Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan near the coast of the Persian Gulf despite years of Western sanctions against the Islamic Republic. The first section of the second phase will raise production capacity at the site by thousands of barrels of crude oil per day.

Promoting the quality of the products to meet the Euro 5 emission standard, lowering the production level of Mazut heavy fuel oil from the existing 45 to 26 percent, elevating the production level of liquefied natural gas (LNG), diesel fuel and gasoline by 53, 23 and 6 percent respectively,



and generation of 7,000 jobs have been described as the primary objectives of the second phase of the development plan.

A hydrogen production unit (HPU), hydrocracker unit

(HCU), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) production unit, crude oil distillation unit (CDU), vacuum distillation unit (VDU), utility facilities and other installations have

been constructed as part of

the project.

The first section of the second phase of the development plan of Abadan oil refinery was put into operation thanks to the strenuous efforts made by

Iranian knowledge-based companies, as well as the high technical know-how and expertise of Iranian engineers in defiance of Western sanctions and coercive measures.

# Iran's trade with Islamic world grew 25% in 2022: *OIC*

The Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) announced a 25 percent growth in trade between Iran and other Muslim countries in 2022, introducing Iran as the 12th largest trader in the Islamic world. In its latest report on the trade situation in the Islamic world, the organization put the growth in the value of the trade exchanges between Iran and other Muslim countries in 2022 at 25 percent, reported Tasnim News Agency.

The report put the total value of the trade exchanges among member states of the organization in 2021 at over \$735 billion.

According to the estimates, the value of trade exchanges among 57 member states of the

The total value of Iran's trade exchanges with Islamic countries in 2022 topped \$15.54 billion, showing a 25 percent growth compared to a year earlier, which stood at over \$12.46 billion. According to this report, Iran's trade exchanges with Islamic countries have increased by 45% in the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi, growing from \$10 billion in 2020 to more than \$15 billion in 2022. The report also showed that Iran's exports to Islamic countries registered an 18 percent hike in 2022 compared to the vear before

Iran imported more than \$7 billion worth of products from the countries of the Islamic world in 2022, showing a 32 percent growth compared to a year earlier, the report added.

non-oil goods between Iran and 15 neighboring states during the first 10 months of the current Iranian year (started on March 21, 2023) has reached \$50 billion, announced an official last week.

The value of trade exchanges between Iran and 15 neighboring states registered a 1.8 percent growth from March 21, 2023 to January 22, 2024, Rouhollah Latifi, said the spokesman for the trade promotion commission of Iran's House of Industry, Mine and Trade, according to IRNA.

He noted that more than 79 million tons of goods, valued at over \$49 billion, were exchanged between Iran and 15 neighboring states in the 10-month period. In this timespan, Iran

valued at over \$23 billion, to the neighboring states, Latifi added.

In return, Iran has imported more than 19 million tons of products, valued at over \$26 billion, between March 21, 2023 and January 22, 2024, showing a 53.4 and 57.2 percent growth in weight and value, respectively, compared to the same period last year. Five countries, namely Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan were Iran's top five export target markets among neighboring states, he

Latifi stated that Iran has imported \$17 billion, \$6 billion, \$1.5 billion, \$778 million, and \$527 million worth of products from the UAE, Turkey, Russia, Oman

# exported more than 60 and Pakistan, respecorganization increased million tons of goods, to \$873 billion in 2022. The value of trade in tively.

### **Bitcoin breaks** \$50,000 for first time since 2021



Bitcoin spiked above \$50,000 Tuesday for the first time in more than two years as investors grow optimistic that global approval of broader trading in the unit will ramp up demand.

The cryptocurrency has enjoyed a strong run in recent months, fuelled by expectations US lawmakers would allow the creation of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that track the price and let the public invest in crypto without directly purchasing it, AFP wrote. After initially dropping in reaction to last month's green light by Washington, bitcoin has rallied about 25 percent since January 22.

That advance saw it hit as much as \$50,328, according to Bloomberg data, its highest level since late 2021 and observers were optimistic about the outlook "Enthusiast buyers bring in more enthusiast buyers pushing prices further up," Fadi Aboualfa, of Copper Technologies said. "The cryptocurrency has momentum on the back of several green weeks and has a large chance of going up further when markets see weekly movements upwards of 10 percent 0330 GMT Tuesday, bitcoin had dropped slightly, to \$49.950. The currency remains well below its record value of almost \$69,000 in 2020, but the rally marks a recovery following a series of high-profile scandals and collapses that rocked the crypto industry. FTX, the world's second-biggest crypto exchange, dramatically went under last year, and its boss Sam Bankman-Fried faces up to 110 years in prison for what prosecutors described as one of the biggest financial frauds in American history". And in November, Changpeng "CZ" Zhao stepped down as CEO of Binance – the world's biggest crypto exchange after he and the company pleaded guilty to sweeping money laundering violations. Bitcoin has also been boosted by hopes that the US Federal Reserve will start to cut interest rates this year as inflation eases. The asset's value has been driven by the supply crunch expected next year because of an event called "halving". Bitcoin is created - or "mined" - as a reward when powerful computers solve complex problems.

(as we saw last week)." By

# Harandi Museum Garden in Kerman hosting two museums

#### Iranica Desk

The old houses and buildings of every city are indicative of its historical wealth, and the city of Kerman is no exception, boasting a large number of valuable artifacts. Among its attractions is the Harandi Museum Garden, a remnant of the Qajar period, located in the city center, where elements of both Iranian and non-Iranian architecture are beautifully combined. This complex consists of a garden, a central building, and other side sections. Today, it hosts an archaeological museum and a collection of traditional instruments.

During the Qajar period, numerous gardens were constructed in Kerman, and Harandi Garden is one of them. It was built on the outskirts of Kerman in 1873 by Mohammad Rezakhan Adel al-Sultan, a military official of the region. The plan for the central building of the

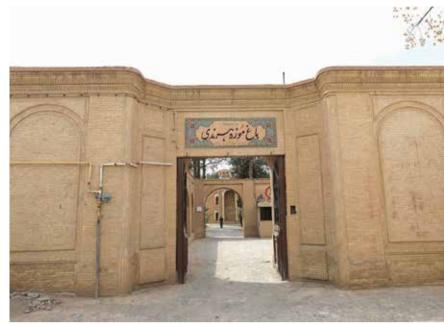
Esfandiari, the son of Adel al-Sultan, from France around 1877. The building's design is a combination of a French plan and Iranian archi-

In 1934, the garden was sold to Abolqassem Harandi, a prominent merchant of Kerman. In 1970, the building and a part of the garden were donated to the Ministry of Culture and Arts to be converted into a museum. After some time, the rest of the garden was also purchased by the Ministry of Culture and Arts. In 1975, the garden was registered as a national monument

In 1989, the Cultural Heritage Organization purchased a series of musical instruments from Iraj Golsorkhi, a music composer. Master Hossein Masoud Kermani, an employee of the Cultural Heritage Organization and the last maker of the ancient method of making

the tar instrument, announced in 1999 his intention to launch a musical instrument museum in Kerman. Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, the then head of the organization, welcomed this proposal, and the Cultural Heritage Organization inaugurated it in 2001. The central building was also launched as the Kerman Archaeological Museum in 2003.

The garden of the complex features unique elements of Iranian gardens, while the central building showcases a fusion of Iranian and European architectural features. Archaeological Museum, housed within the complex, contains four rooms where discovered artifacts such as pottery, stone, metal, glass vessels, and stone inscriptions from various periods, including the Islamic era, are preserved. Most of the historical artifacts have been obtained from the Halil-Rud area (liroft) and Shahdad.







### **Central building**

The central building, a two-story structure, presents a blend of non-Iranian and Iranian architectural elements. Covering an area of 2,000 square meters, it is situated to the north of the garden, adjacent to the fountains. The building features a low-depth domed roof, and its floor, originally made of traditional bricks, has been replaced with ceramics.

Currently, the ground floor of the central building has been repurposed into a museum of traditional instruments, while the upper floor now houses an archaeo-

Outbuildings such as the servants' quarters, bathhouse, kitchen, and stable were originally constructed in the garden. However, today, no remains of the stable and storage areas exist, and the kitchen is utilized as an administrative building.

### **Oanat**

Another highlight of the Harandi Museum Garden is its ganat. Historically, qanats were utilized to transport water from wells to the surface. The ganat of the Harandi Museum Garden is situated at the end of the garden, near the pond.

Previously, two water paths from the Tahmasbabad and Hassanabad qanats flowed through the garden. Additionally, a designated area for the servants' residence near the main entrance has since vanished.

### **Green space**

In the past, the garden was home to fruit trees such as fig, mulberry, apple, grape, pomegranate and barberry, of which only pomegranate trees remain today. Additionally, ornamental flowers like roses adorn the Harandi Museum Garden.

### **Traditional Instruments**

The Traditional Instruments Museum features 32 display cases safeguarding over 250 unique traditional instruments, including five crafted by Hossein Masoud. Masoud has generously donated several instruments to the Kerman Traditional Instruments Museum.

Within the Kerman Traditional Instruments Museum, an information section offers audio and visual services through software, hardware, internet, and video. Additionally, the museum houses a dedicated study center for research and exploration in the field of traditional Iranian music.

Visitors can use the audio system in the display cases to acquaint themselves with the playing techniques and melodies of the instruments performed by renowned music masters. Annually, the museum hosts "A Night with Iranian Traditional Music," featuring performances by music masters and pioneers using ancient instruments. The museum is adorned with beautiful paintings on the walls and alongside the display cases, showcasing pleasant images and poems about authentic Iranian music. Additionally, the museum features images of great artists and pioneers of Iranian music. The museum also houses around 300 old photos from the Qajar period with a musical theme, some of which are on display.







### **Archaeological Museum**

The Archaeological Museum aims to showcase the ancient civilizations of the southeastern region of Iran and their connections with neighboring civilizations. The museum is divided into two main sections: Pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, and includes multiple pavilions such as:

Shahdad Pavilion: This pavilion displays artifacts from the archaeological excavations of the Shahdad ancient site, including various types of pottery, stone, and metal (bronze) vessels dating back to the third and fourth millennia BCE.

Among the other artifacts in this showcase are delicate necklaces and stone vessels re $sembling \, do ats. \\$ 

Jazmourian Pavilion: The discovered artifacts from Jazmourian (inland basin in Kerman Province) include various delicate grey pottery with beautiful patterns. The artifacts from this period belong to the late third millennium and the early second millennium BCE. Remarkable examples in the collection are the bronze axes that were obtained from Jiroft, the western marshes of Jazmourian, and from unauthorized excavations. Other important findings from the Jazmourian region belong to the Seleucid, Parthian, and a mix of Greek, Central Asian, Indian, and Central Iranian plateau cultures. These findings include ceramic cups, plates, jars, and rhytons ending with the heads of animals such as horses, sheep, cows, and half-human beings.

The Achaemenid bronze mortar is one of the most significant artifacts in the Harandi Garden Museum.

Islamic Era Pavilion: The glazed pottery, metal, and glass objects such as various vessels, oil lamps, and perfume bottles, as well as stone inscriptions from different Islamic periods, adorn this showcase.

Number Four Pavilion: This section mostly consists of various engraved pottery and beautiful small bronze animals found in the excavations of Jiroft. Other important artifacts in this section include bronze vessels discovered in Bazenian







# Different rules keep US supplying weapons to Israel



Top US officials quietly reviewed more than a dozen incidents of alleged gross violations of human rights by Israeli security forces since 2020 but have gone to great lengths to preserve continued access to US weapons for the units responsible for the alleged violations, contributing — former US officials say — to the sense of impunity with which Israel has approached its war in Gaza. An estimated 28,000 Palestinians, mostly women, and children, have been killed by Israeli forces since Hamas's October7attackonIsrael, a death toll that has spurred condemnation of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been criticized for failing to rein in Israel's "indiscriminate" bombing of Gaza. An investigation by the Guardian, which was based

and US President Joe Biden, who on a review of internal State Department documents and interviews with people familiar with sensitive internal deliberations, reveals how special mechanisms have been used over the last few years to shield Israel from US human rights laws, even as other allies' military units who receive US support - including, sources say, Ukraine — have privately been sanctioned and faced consequences for committing human rights violations. State Department officials have in effect been able to circumvent the US law that is meant to prevent US complicity in human rights violations by foreign military units — the 1990s era Leahy law, named after the now-retired Vermont senator Patrick Leahy because, former officials say, extraordinary internal State Department policies have been put in place that show extreme deference to

the Israeli cabinet. No such

any other US ally.

special arrangements exist for



US Air Force personnel unload a KC-135 Stratotanker at an undisclosed location, designated by the military as within the US Central Command "area of responsibility," on October 23, 2023.

The lack of enforcement of the Leahy law in Israel appears especially troubling to its namesake. In a statement to the Guardian, the former Vermont senator said the purpose of the Leahy law was to shield the US from culpability for gross violations of human rights by foreign security forces that receive US aid and deter future violations.

"But the law has not been applied consistently, and what we have seen in the West Bank and Gaza is a stark example of that. Over many years, I urged successive US administrations to apply the law there, but it has not happened," Leahy said.

Among the incidents that have been reviewed since 2020 were the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, the Palestinian-American journalist who was shot by Israeli forces in May 2022; the death of Omar Assad, a 78-year-old Palestinian-American, who died in January 2022 after being held in Israeli custody; and the alleged extrajudicial killing of Ahmad Abdu, a 25-year-old who was shot at dawn by Israeli forces in May 2021 while sitting in his car.

Internal State Department documents show that the incidents were reviewed under a little-known process established by the State Department in 2020 known as the Israel Leahy Vetting Forum (ILVF), in which representatives from relevant State Department bureaus examine reports of alleged human rights violations by Israeli forces.

Under the Leahy law, for most countries and in most cases, a foreign military unit is granted US military assistance or training after it is vetted by the State Department for any reported human rights violations. The law prohibits the Department of State and the Department of Defense from providing funds, assistance, or training to foreign security force units where there is "credible information" that the forces have committed a gross violation of human rights.

But people familiar with the process who spoke on the condition of anonymity said Israel has benefitted from extraordinary policies inside the ILVF, details of which have not previously been

"Nobody said it, but everyone knew the rules were different for Israel. No one

will ever admit that, but it's the truth," said one former State Department offi-

First, under the Israel process, all of the parties involved in an ILVF review must reach a consensus that a potential violation has occurred, and must then be approved by the Deputy Secretary of State, according to three people familiar with internal deliberations. In theory, a single bureau could raise a potential violation to the Deputy Secretary of State level as part of a "split memo", in which other bureaus would air their disagreement, but no such thing has occurred.

to claims, creating what some former officials said were significant delays. No other country must be consulted under State Department procedures, former officials said.

"Part of the reason why the ILVF has never worked is that the process is so gummed up with delay mechanisms that exist for no other country," the former State Department official said.

### 'A broad impunity'

Some experts see a connection between the US's hands-off approach to Israel on human rights violations and Israel's conmay say that I srael should abide by international humanitarian law. We may say that it should not expand settlements. But when it comes to actual consequences, there aren't any."

Paul also sees the lack of Leahy law enforcement having an effect on how Israeli units are conducting themselves. By not pressing Israel on Leahy violations and not designating individual Israeli units as gross violators of human rights, Paul said the US has enabled a culture of impunity at the unit level, which he said "we see on the ground in Gaza today" in the actions of some Israeli soldiers, including videos that have circulated showing Israeli soldiers ransacking private homes in Gaza, destroying civilian property, and using racist language.

Nowhere is the US's double standard on Israel more apparent than in a 2021 agreement that was signed by a senior State Department official, Jessica Lewis, who serves as assistant secretary for political affairs, and the Israel ambassador to the US, Michael Herzog.

The two-page 2021 agreement, which has received little media attention, formalized changes in the Leahy law and included a statement about how Israel has a "robust, independent, and effective legal system, including its military justice system". The US signed more than two dozen similar agreements with other countries at that time — including Greece, Jordan, Georgia, Ukraine, and Latvia — but none contained language endorsing the other countries' military justice systems.

Former officials who spoke to the Guardian said they did not know how the language came to be included in the US-Israel agreement, but speculated it was likely added by Israel.

Tim Rieser, a longtime senior adviser to Leahy, who helped write the Leahy law in the 1990s, said the inclusion of the language was likely intended to help Israel avoid scrutiny under the Leahy law because it suggests as a matter of fact that Israel's military justice system is independent enough to address any alleged human rights violations.

"The language added to the US-Israel agreement, without any consultation with Congress, is factually inaccurate and



Former US secretary of state John Kerry (3rd-R) walks with then-senator Patrick Leahy (2nd-R) of Vermont outside the US Senate Chamber in Washington D.C. on September 9, 2015. US STATE DEPARTMENT

Among the groups that are involved in the process are the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the Bureau of Political-military Affairs, and the US embassy in Jerusalem.

For other countries, former officials said, such a Leahy law determination is made by State Department staff, does not require the consensus of all parties, and would not require notification of and approval by the Secretary of State or deputy.

Second, Israel must be consulted about alleged human rights violations that are under review and has 90 days to respond duct in the war in Gaza. Israel receives \$3.8bn in military assistance annually, and the Biden administration twice bypassed Congress last month to deliver an additional \$250m in weapons. Progressive Democrats led by Bernie Sanders, the independent Vermont senator, have called for aid to Israel being conditioned on the US investigating potential human rights violations by Israel in its war in Gaza.

"I think Israel feels a broad impunity when it comes to consequences within the US for its actions," said Josh Paul, a former State Department official who has emerged as a vocal critic of the Biden administration policies on Israel. "We

wrongly suggests that the [Leahy] Law doesn'tneed to be applied," Rieser said. Few organizations have been as critical of Israel's military justice system as B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights

"The military law enforcement system is used by Israel as a whitewash mechanism whose purpose is to block any criticism of Israel's and the army's policies in the territories. The percentage of convictions of soldiers is close to zero, even for the most serious violations," said Dror Sadot, B'Tselem spokesperson.

Paul, the former State Department official who resigned from his post in protest against the Biden administration's "blind support for one side", said he had long argued internally that the US ought not to consider Israel's military

justice system as a "responsible functional justice system" when it comes to abuses.

"I think the track record is really one of slaps on the wrist, temporary demotions, and short-term suspensions even for really serious violations," said Paul.

For advocates of the Leahy law, like Rieser, the lack of accountability for the killing of Abu Akleh, the prominent Al Jazeera journalist, is particularly galling and has been the subject of criticism by senior Democrats on Capitol Hill.

Abu Akleh was killed by a bullet that hit the back of her head while covering an Israeli operation in the West Bank city of Jenin. A CNN investigation found that there was no active combat or Palestinian fighters near Abu Akleh in the moments before she was killed, and

footage obtained by the network corroborated witness testimony that suggested Israeli forces had taken aim at the journalist.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) apologized for the killing last year, but the military advocate general's office in Israel said in a statement that it did not intend to pursue criminal charges or prosecutions of any of the soldiers involved.

### 'A disturbing number of reports'

Rieser said there is a long history of correspondence — from the George W. Bush administration through to the Biden administration — between Leahy and successive secretaries of state seeking answers to why the Leahy law was not being implemented in cases involving killings of Palestinians.

In a May 2002 letter to then-secretary Colin Powell, who served in the Bush administration, Leahy raised concerns that the Leahy law was not being applied to the Middle East.

In a January 2009 letter to then-secretary Condoleezza Rice, Leahy expressed incredulity that the State Department was "unaware" of a single incident involving the IDF that would trigger the Leahy law.

A month later, Leahy sent a new letter to then-secretary Hillary Clinton, who was serving under the Obama administration. He attached copies of correspondents he had sent her predecessor. A February 2016 letter from Leahy to then-secretary of state John Kerry cited a "disturbing number of reports of possible gross violations of human rights by security forces in Israel and Egypt",

including "extrajudicial killings by Israeli military and police".

An October 2017 letter to Rex Tillerson, who served as secretary of state under Donald Trump, queried what steps the US embassy in Israel was taking to ensure the Leahy law was being applied to the IDF.

Later, in a May 2018 letter from Leahy to then-secretary of state Mike Pompeo, who served in the Trump administration, Leahy sought a Leahy law review of the shooting deaths of about 100 Palestinian protesters from Gaza who had been killed since March of that year.

Several other letters from Leahy refer to gross violations of human rights by the IDF. None of the cases ever led to a unit being punished.

The full article first appeared on The Guardian.

# Demands for Canada to stop supplying weapons to Israel grow louder



complicated efforts to end the transfers.

Human rights advocates are accusing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government of misleading the public over weapons sales to Israel, which have come under greater scrutiny amid the deadly Israeli bombardment of Gaza.

At issue is legislation that prohibits the government from exporting military equipment to foreign actors if there is a risk it can be used in human rights abuses.

But regulatory loopholes, combined with a lack of clarity over what Canada sends to Israel, have

Dozens of Canadian civil society groups this month urged Trudeau to end arms exports to Israel, arguing they violate Canadian and international law because the weapons could be used in the Gaza Strip.

But in the face of mounting pressure since Israel's war on Gaza began on October 7, Canada's foreign affairs ministry has tried to downplay the state's role in helping Israel build its arsenal. "Global Affairs Canada can confirm that Canada has not received any requests, and therefore not issued any permits, for full weapon systems for major conventional arms or light weapons to Israel for over 30 years," the department told Al Jazeera in an email on Friday.

"The permits which have been granted since October 7, 2023, are for the export of non-lethal equipment."

But advocates say this misrepresents the total volume of Canada's military exports to Israel, which totalled more than \$15m (\$21.3m Canadian) in 2022, according to the government's own figures.

It also shines a spotlight on the nation's

longstanding lack of transparency around these transfers.

"Canadian companies have exported over [\$84m, \$114m Canadian] in military goods to Israel since 2015 when the Trudeau government was elected," said Michael Bueckert, vice president of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, an advocacy group.

"And they have continued to approve arms exports since October 7 despite the clear risk of genocide in Gaza," Bueckerttold Al Jazeera.

"Unable to defend its own policy, this government is misleading Canadians into thinking that we aren't exporting weapons to Israel at all. As Canadians increasingly demand that their government impose an arms embargo on Israel, politicians are trying to pretend that the arms trade doesn't exist."

### Lackofinformation

While Canada may not transfer full weapons systems to Israel, the two countries enjoy "a consistent arms trade relationship", said Kelsey Gallagher, a researcher at Project Plough-

shares, a peace research institute.

The vast majority of Canada's military exports to Israel come in the form of parts and components. These typically fall into three categories, Gallagher explained: electronics and space equipment; military aerospace exports and components; and finally, bombs, missiles, rockets, and general military explosives and components.

But beyond these broad categories, which were gleaned by examining Canada's own domestic and international reports on weapons exports, Gallagher said it remains unclear "what these actual pieces of technology are".

"We don't know what companies are exporting them. We don't know exactly what their end use is," he told Al Jazeera.

Global Affairs Canada did not immediately respond to Al Jazeera's question about what "non-lethal equipment" the government has approved for export to Israel since October 7.

"What does this mean? No one knows because there's no definition of that, and it really could be quite a number



Pro-Palestinian protesters gather outside weapons manufacturer INKAS in Toronto, Canada, on October 30, 2023. INKAS supplies military equipment to Israel.

WRWCANADA

of things," said Henry Off, a Toronto-based lawyer and board member of the group Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAIHR).

Human rights lawyers and activists also suspect that Canadian military components are reaching Israel via the United States, including for installation in fighter jets such as the F-35 aircraft. But these transfers are difficult to track because a decades-old deal between Canada and the US — 1956's Defence Production Sharing Agreement — has created "a unique and comprehensive set of loopholes that are afforded to Canadian arms transfers to the US", said Gallagher.

"These exports are treated with zero transparency. There is no regulation of, or reporting of, the transfer of Canadian-made military components to the US, including those that could be re-transferred to Israel." he said.

Despite these hurdles, Canadian human rights advocates are pressuring the government to end its weapons sales to Israel, particularly in light of the Israeli military's continued assault on Gaza.

Over 28,000 Palestinians have been killed over the past four months and rights advocates have meticulously documented the impact on the ground of Israel's indiscriminate bombing, and its vast destruction of the enclave. The world's top court, the International Court of Justice, also determined last month that Palestinians in Gaza face a plausible risk of genocide.

Against that backdrop, eliminating weapons transfers to Israel is effectively a demand for "Canada [to] abide by its own laws", said Off, the Toronto lawyer.

The full article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



# Court orders Netherlands to stop F-35 parts delivery to Israel

*AFP* – The Netherlands must stop delivering parts for F-35 fighter jets used by Israel in the Gaza Strip, after a Dutch court on February 12 upheld an appeal by human rights organisations

The groups had argued that supplying the parts contributed to alleged violations of international law by Israel in its war with Hamas.

"The court orders the State to cease all actual export and transit of F-35 parts with final destination [in] Israel within seven days after service of this judgement," said the ruling. The US-owned F-35 parts are stored at a

warehouse in the Netherlands and then shipped to several partners, including Israel, via existing export agreements.

"In doing so, the Netherlands is contributing to serious violations of humanitarian law of war in Gaza," the rights groups argue.

The International Court of Justice in The Hague, which rules on disputes between states, has said Israel must do everything possible to prevent genocidal acts in Gaza. That ruling "strengthens our confidence in a positive ruling in our case", said PAX Netherlands, one of the rights groups involved in the appeal.

**Sports** 

# Taremi set for Inter medical ahead of summer move: Fabrizio Romano

#### **Sports Desk**

Porto striker Mahdi Taremi is set to undergo medical tests at Internazionale in the coming days ahead of a free transfer to the Serie A giant in the summer, according to Italian journalist Fabrizio Romano.

Best known for his transfer news and predictions, Romano wrote on X that the verbal agreement between the Nerazzurri and the 31-year-old Iranian has been in place for a month.

The contract will be "valid until June 2026" with the option to be extended for an additional season, Romano added.

When asked about the club's approach for Taremi and Napoli's Polish midfielder Piotr Zielinski, Inter sporting director Piero Ausilio said last week: "There's no point in hiding, these are situations we are working on. We don't like to give times, dates or ultimatums, we have informed the respective clubs that we are

negotiating, there have been contacts and let's see if this will lead to something defini-

Taremi came close to joining Inter archrival Milan last summer, only to see the deal fall through on the deadline day after the striker's camp and the Rossoneri failed to reach agreement on personal terms. La Gazzetta dello Sport journalist Nicolo Schira had reported that Taremi, who will replace Chilean Alexis Sanchez at Inter, will earn €3.5 million per season.

Having joined Porto from fellow-Portuguese club Rio Ave in 2020, Taremi finished as the leading marksman in the Primeira Liga last season with 22 strikes, but has had a below-par run in the ongoing campaign, by his own standards, managing only three goals in 16 league appearances, plus a couple of strikes in the Champions League group

Taremi made a cameo appear-

ance for Porto in the 3-2 away defeat against Arouca on Monday after spending four weeks on international duty in the AFC Asian Cup in Qatar, where he bagged three goals before Iran suffered a last-four 3-2 defeat against the host and eventual champion.

Sitting third in the domestic league table, Porto will host Arsenal in the Champions League last-16 first leg next week, with Inter, seven points clear of Juventus on top of the Serie A table, taking on Atletico Madrid in Milan's Stadio

Giuseppe Meazza. Taremi will become the fourth Iranian in the history of the Italian top flight, following former Perugia players Rahman Rezaei and Ali Samereh in the early 2000s, as well as international teammate Sardar Azmoun, who signed for AS Roma on a season-long loan from Leverkusen last June.



### AFC Champions League:

### Sepahan looking to build on home turf return in Al Hilal test



### **Sports Desk**

Sepahan supporters will get to see their team in Isfahan's Nagsh-e Jahan Stadium for the first time in the AFC Champions League this season as the Persian Gulf Pro League club will be back in action after six weeks on Thursday.

Awaiting the Iranian side in the last-16 round of the Asian elite clubs' event is the Saudi powerhouse Al Hilal – the most decorated side in the competition with four trophies. which settled for a runner-up spot behind Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan last season.

Sepahan had a first home game in the group phase against Al Ittihad called off by the Asian Football Confederation and was handed a 3-0 loss for what the continent's governing body of the sport described as the club's failure to "comply with and implement existing safety rules [of the competition]."

The Isfahan-based club was then forced to play its next two home fixtures against AGMK and Air Force Club in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Sepahan manager Jose Morais will hope to have his five Iranian players in top form after they spent four weeks on international duty at the Asian Cup in Qatar, where Iran suffered a last-four setback against the host last Wednesday.

International fullback Ramin Rezaeian, who started five of Iran's six outings in Qatar, will be the player to watch in the Sepahan shirt as he bagged four goals and an assist to help Sepahan progress as one of the three best runners-up across the five West Zone groups.

Shahriar Moghanlou and Reza Asadi, the top two leading marksmen in the Iranian top flight with nine and eight goals respectively, are also expected to lead the line for Sepahan despite making cameo contributions to Iran's Asian Cup campaign.

Sepahan will be without young midfield prodigy Mohammad-Javad Hosseinnejad and center-back Hadi Mohammadi for Thursday's encounter following red cards against Air Force Club in the penultimate round of group fixtures.

Having won Group D with five victories in six matches - including a double against Iranian minnow side Nassaji Mazandaran – Al Hilal will head into Thursday's game fresh from a 2-0 victory over domestic archrival Al Nassr in the Riyadh Season Cup last Thursday.

Nine Al Hilal players, including AFC Player of the Year Salem Al Dawsari, were involved in the Asian Cup but returned to club training following the Green Falcons' last-16 defeat against South Korea a fortnight ago. Serbian striker Aleksandar Mitrovic - one of Al Hilal's marquee signings during a summer of spending spree

- has been in dazzling form this season, scoring 17 goals in as many Saudi Pro League appearances, plus five strikes in the continental tour-

The second leg of the tie will be staged in Riyadh's Prince Faisal bin Fahd Stadium in eight days.

### Iranian girls dominate Day 1 of Taekwondo Fajr Open

### **Sports Desk**

Iranian contestants stole the show on the first day of the Taekwondo Fajr Open in Tehran, collecting 15 of the 16 medals – including a clean sweep of golds - up for grabs across the four women's weight

Ma'soumeh Ranjbar came out on top against fellow-Iranian Bahareh Fereydooni to walk away with the ultimate prize in the -46kg contests on Monday, with Parnia Salmani and reigning world and Asian junior champion Sogand Shiri sharing the third podium.

The -53kg final showpiece saw Ghazal Soltani - a 2017 world cadet gold medalist - defeat Saba Beigi, while Niki Yousefi claimed a consolation bronze alongside Kazakhstan's Aidana Sundetbay.

Asma Sedaqat, meanwhile, came out victorious against Hasti Mohammadi for the -62kg gold with Hadis Ammareh and Sheida Mohammadi completing yet another all-Iranian podium.

Elham Haqiqi took Iran's gold tally to four thanks to a victory over Sara Soufi in the -73kg final.

Arezou Bahrami and Asal Saberi took the bronze medals of the class.

More than 340 participants from 12 countries, as well as a refugees team, will be taking part at the 33rd edition of the four-day event.

The competition will be followed by the 6th World Taekwondo President's Cup and the 12th Asian Taekwondo Clubs Championships in the Iranian capital's Taekwondo House until February 22.



# Borrell slams US hypocrisy over Gaza



European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell sharply criticized the US administration for lamenting the growing death toll in Gaza while. at the same time, providing Israel with weapons to prop up its military campaign.

Speaking in Brussels on Monday, hours after Israeli forces bombarded the southern Gazan town of Rafah, Borrell called on Washington to stop pleading with Israel to cease the killing of civilians and to start "doing something" instead. "How many times have you heard the most

prominent leaders and foreign ministers around the world saying, 'Too many people are being killed'? President Biden said, 'This is over the top'," Borrell said, referring to Biden's recent remarks, according to Euronews

"Well, if you believe that too many people are being killed, maybe you should provide less arms in order to prevent so many people being killed." "It is a little bit contradictory to continue saying that there are too many people being killed, please take care of people, please don't kill so many," he went on. "Stop saying please and start doing something." The reproach came

hours after an appeals court in the Netherlands ordered the government to halt deliveries of parts of F-35 fighter jets to Israel for fears Dutch exports could be contributing to violations of international law in light of the International

Court of Justice ruling. The US administration has in recent months bypassed Congress to continue sending weapons to Israel, whilst also calling for restraint in its war on Gaza, which

has claimed the lives of more than 28,000 Palestinians.

It is estimated that Israel has received more military aid from the US than any other nation since the 1950s, owing to a long-standing, bipartisan policy of support.

"If the international community believes that this is a slaughter, that too many people are being killed, maybe they have to think about the provision of arms," Borrell said.

Data shared with Euronews suggests many more EU countries - including Italy and Germany – have also provided Israel with some of the military equipment and components used in its offensives.

The Delas research cen-

ter claims Europeans are together "one of Israel's main suppliers of military systems and equipment" behind the US, and that member states have licensed military contracts worth over €2 billion to Israel, including for ammunition, weapon firing equipment and components for military aircraft and vehicles.

Borrell's remarks came as the Israeli regime is preparing for a ground offensive into the crowded southern Gaza city of Rafah where about 1.4 million displaced Palestinians are struggling to survive in shelters and tent camps.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to send ground troops into Rafah.

Aid groups and foreign governments have voiced deep concern over the potentially disastrous consequences of expanding operations in Rafah, which they say would worsen an already dire humanitarian

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### Iran launches **ballistic** missile from warship for first time



#### **National Desk**

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) released footage on Tuesday, showing it successfully launched long-range ballistic missiles from one of its warships for the first time.

According to IRNA, the IRGC's Navy is now capable of carrying ballistic missiles with a range of 1,750 kilometers.

The two Fateh-class missiles successfully hit the targets in Iran's central desert, Dasht-e Kavir.

Chief Commander of the IRGC Major General Hossein Salami said on Monday that the achievement means that the IRGC will have the capacity to hit any target because its ocean-cruising warships can sail to any location around the world.

Salami said the long-range ballistic missiles were fired in joint cooperation between the IRGC Aerospace Force and the IRGC Navy. The development comes amid Iran's growing success in expansion of its defensive missile program. The country has used the missiles in attacks in recent years on terrorist targets located as far as the Mediterranean Sea. However, Iran has repeatedly declared that its missile capabilities are solely used for deterrence and defense.

### Iran wins rulings in five international

cases: VP

Iran's Vice President for Legal Affairs Mohammad Dehgan said the Islamic Republic has recently won rulings in five international cases.

Dehgan said that one case pertains a number of Iranian schools which had been confiscated in some Persian Gulf littoral states, Press TV reported. The case was followed up by domestic courts and a verdict was issued in favor of Iran, he added.

Dehqan also pointed to another legal case in which the Supreme Court of Luxembourg issued a judgment in October 2023 on the release of 1.7 billion dollars of Iran's frozen assets in the European country.

According to the verdict, the legal obstacles to access the 1.7 billion dollars of the foreign currency assets of the Central Bank of Iran in Luxembourg have been removed. The vice president noted that further information would be announced later regarding the other cases.

## Iran denounces US approach toward expansion of war in region

Iranian Foreign Minister In a meeting with Emir

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian denounced US "contradictory" approach toward the expansion of Gaza war into the re-

of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on Tuesday, the Iranian foreign minister said that the US claims it does not want to expand the war in the Middle East region while it launches

strikes on Yemen, Iraq and Svria.

During the meeting, Amir-Abdollahian also praised the "constructive" relations of cooperation between the Islamic Republic and Qatar on regional and international issues.

The Iranian foreign minister also hailed Qatar's mediating role in certain cases related to Iran. Cooperation between Tehran and Doha, Amir-Abdollahian said, contributes to regional and international peace

On Israel's bloody campaign in the besieged Gaza Strip, Iran's foreign minister underscored the need for accelerating joint efforts by Tehran and Doha towards a political solution.

The Emir of Qatar, for his part said that Tehran-Doha ties are closer than ever, which

demonstrates the two countries' progress in advancing relations. He appreciated Iran's diplomatic efforts in supporting the Palestinians and pursuing a political solution to end the war in Gaza

Separately on Tuesday, Amir-Abdollahian met with Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, to discuss the latest developments in Gaza. Amir-Abdollahian ar-

rived in Doha on Monday as part of his regional tour that began on Friday and earlier took him to Syria and Lebanon.

During his stay in Qatar, the foreign minister also held talks with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani.



# Over 28,000 deaths

### **Cyberattack hits Iran Parliament websites**

### **National Desk**

The websites of Iran's Parliament and its affiliated news agency went down Tuesday after they were targeted by hackers.

According to a statement by the Iranian Parliament, the websites of the Parliament and Khane Mellat (ICANA. ir) news agency were hacked and became unavailable since Tuesday morning due to a cyberattack.

The statement said the scale of the cyberattack is under investigation by expert technical teams.

A hacking group called 'Uprising till Overthrow," affiliated with anti-Iran terrorist group, Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (мко), claimed responsibility for the attack. Iran considers the MKO a terrorist organization.

In a statement on its Telegram channel, the group claimed it hacked 600 servers affiliated with Iran's Parliament and released hundreds of pages of hacked material on its Telegram

The Parliament's statement said that the initial inves-

tigation shows that some documents released by the hackers have been fabricated.

The cyberattack took place less than three weeks before Iran goes to the polls to elect a new Parliament on March 1.

Websites linked to Iran's government and affiliated media outlets have suffered several cyberattacks over the years.

A December cyberattack disrupted fuel sales at 60 percent of Iran's petrol stations for weeks before services were fully resumed.

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Ali Mehran



# **'Lovely Phantom'** unveiled

Iraqi official's kiss on Iranian pilot's forehead



Staff writer

The book 'Lovely Phantom' was unveiled at the Iran Cultural & Press Institute on Tuesday, recounting conversations with five phantom pilots of the Iranian Air Force who defended Iran against the Ba'athist invasion during the early months of the Iraqi-imposed war (1980-1988).

The book's writer, Sadeq Vafaei, discussed the book in a conversation with Mohammad Atighehchi, Muhammad Sadiq Qaderi, Mohammad Reza Salavati, and Ja'far Emadi.

Mahmoud Zarrabi was one of the prominent Iranian pilots who died a few months ago. A chapter of the book features interviews with some of his colleagues, depicting the bravery and contributions of this pilot. The unveiling ceremony was



attended by former Iranian Air Force pilots including Qaderi, a phantom pilot who was captured by the Iraqi Army in the early days of the war, shared memories of his 10-year captivity in Iraq, and remembered some of his martyred comrades. In the book's introduction, it is written: "During the Iraqi-imposed war, the Iranian Air Force. in view of its mission and quick response along with the effective use of military tools, swiftly made a response to Ba'athist Iraqi Army invasions by reaching high-value enemy targets deep within their territory. This was done with great power, strength, and speed, disrupting the enemy's equations in the quickest possible time."

Qaderi recounted an incident during his captivity, "One day, while I was injured, they took me to the office of a leader of the Mukhabarat, the Iraqi intelligence service, Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti. They handed me a prepared text full of insults on the Islamic Republic of Iran, the army, and the air force, and asked me to read it aloud in front of the cameras."

He continued, "I laughed and told them I have nothing to say to you, and I won't read this

"They broke my hand, but I raised my other hand and said, 'You can break my other hand, too, but I won't read this text.'

Then, they showed me a picture of my wife and children, saving they could take us out of the country and offer many benefits if I cooperated. However, I stood firm, saying I am an officer and value my colleagues. I am proud of them, and I won't say anything against them."

According to Qaderi, the Iraqi official came forward, kissed his forehead, and said, "I wished an Iraqi officer held captive in Iran would resist like you."

### Malaysia to host Iranian Film Festival



**Arts & Culture Desk** 

Six Iranian films will be held in the cinemas of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and Penang as part of the Iranian Film Festival in

Malaysia from February 29 to March 10, announced Iranian Cultural Attaché in Malaysia, Habib Reza Arzani.

The festival is supported by the Islamic Culture and Rela-

tions Organization (ICRO) and the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Malaysia, aiming to strengthen cultural ties between the two nations, IRNA wrote

Arzani highlighted Iran's cinematic achievements post-Islamic Revolution, emphasizing the increase in film production, expansion of cinema halls, global participation in significant film events, and the introduction of young Iranian filmmakers.

He underlined the festival's role in familiarizing Malaysians with the world of Iranian cinema.

The cultural figure stressed the festival's significance in promoting cultural values, religion, and ethics of the Iranian society.

Arzani expressed optimism, referencing the success of the Iranian Film Festival in 2018, noting an increase in films and the presence of Iranian directors, making this year's event more attractive.

The films, including 'Hanas' (2022), 'The Painting Pool' (2013), 'Track 143' (2014), 'Bodyguard' (2016), 'No Prior Appointment' (2022), and 'Today' (2014), will be screened at GSC cinemas in Kuala Lum-



pur and Penang.

Arzani announced the participation of Iranian directors Behrouz Shoeibi and Narges Abyar, representing the creative minds of Iranian cinema, in the festival's opening ceremonies in Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

Arzani noted the festival's consideration of the Palestine issue in film selection.

### 500 signatories criticize PEN America's stance on literary figures killed in Gaza

An open letter from writers and literary professionals to PEN America calling on the organization to take a stronger stance on the Israel-Gaza war has reached more than 500 signatories, including writers Roxane Gay, Maaza Mengiste and Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah.

The letter, dated 3 February but still open to signatures, condemns PEN America for being "silent" about "Palestinian journalists, writers, and poets murdered by Israel" outside of "press releases buried on its website", The Guardian report-

Four days later, on 7 February, PEN America published a press release stating it was "anguished about the direct impact of the current conflict between Israel

and Hamas on writers, artists,

"We hope that the multinational negotiations now under way will lead to a mutually agreed upon ceasefire, ending deadly airstrikes, and that a resolution can be reached that will save lives in the region, preserve rich and varied cultures, and pave the way toward a lasting peace that enables freedom and creativity for all," it added. However, several authors responded critically to the statement. "Don't "hope" for a ceasefire, PEN America, CALL for one like other PEN Centers have done," wrote novelist Eman Quotah in a post on X.

The 3 February letter, cosigned by writers including Jamel Brinkley, Saeed Jones and Laura van

den Berg, called on PEN America to "wake up from its own silent, tepid, neither-here-nor-there, self-congratulatory middle of the road and take an actual stand against an actual geno-

cide". It added that PEN America should "find the same zeal and passion" as it has for banned books to speak out "about actual human beings" in Palestine. The letter said that PEN Amer-



ica should "disband" if it "cannot live up to its mission of protecting, platforming, and amplifying those writers made most marginalised by nefarious forces". It also criticized the organization for hosting an event featuring Mayim Bialik, who has opposed calls for Israel to agree to a ceasefire, and asked for PEN America to apologise to Palestinian-American writer Randa Jarrar, who was dragged out of the event for protesting. "While most protesters left after expressing themselves, one declined and was removed by security. We regret that this step had to be taken in order for the event to proceed," PEN America wrote in a statement.

PEN America also refutes the fact that it has been "silent" on the war. "Since Oct 7, PEN America has responded to the crisis in Israel and Gaza with nearly two dozen statements on the crisis itself and the resulting fallout for free expression and free speech in response to the conflict", a spokesperson told the Guardian.

The open letter has coincided with #BooksforGaza, a fundraising sale of signed books donated by authors including Salman Rushdie, Sally Rooney, Ali Smith and Kamila Shamsie. The auction, which ends on Monday evening, has raised over £55,000 for The Ghassan Abu Sittah Children's Fund, an organization that helps transport injured Gazan children to Lebanon for medical and social treatment and care.