

Iran's FM calls UN inaction on Gaza 'catastrophe of diplomacy of the century'

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian denounced the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) inaction vis-à-vis the Israeli regime's genocide against the Palestinians.

"What we are witnessing today in [terms of] the UN Security Council's inaction concerning the genocide in Gaza amounts to the catastrophe of diplomacy of the century," Amir-Abdollahian said.

He made the remarks at a meeting of his counterparts from various countries, which was being held on the sidelines of the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva on Monday, Press TV reported.

Beyond doubt, this period of time would pass, despite all the travails and sufferings that it has afflicted on the oppressed and resilient people of Palestine, the top diplomat said. However, the attitude that is adopted concerning this genocide by each country or international organization "will go down in history," he asserted.

The Israeli regime launched the war following Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, a surprise operation staged by Gaza's resistance movements against the occupied territories.

As part of its consistent political patronage for the Israeli regime, the United



States, which is Tel Aviv's main benefactor, has so far vetoed three UNSC resolutions that have called for implementation of an immediate cease-fire in the Israeli onslaught.

So far, nearly 30,000 people have died in the Israeli aggression that also enjoys unreserved military and intelligence support on the part of Washington.

Amir-Abdollahian was reminding that women and children comprised around 70 percent of the deaths, saying the child fatalities

"amount to the most horrific rate of infanticide throughout human history."

'Slow death'

Amir-Abdollahian noted that, apart from those who were being killed directly during the onslaught, a whopping number of Palestinians were also suffering "slow death" as a result of a simultaneous siege that the regime was employing against the coastal sliver. The regime's "direct and intentional" attacks on health care facilities had, mean-

while, come to deprive the Palestinians of the medical equipment and drugs that were needed by tens of thousands of injured Gazans, he said.

"The wounded and even children are being operated on, without anesthetics," the foreign minister noted. He also reminded that "as a result of unsanitary conditions, infectious diseases have come to threaten the lives of more human beings every day."

Amir-Abdollahian, meanwhile, warned about the

expected dire consequences of a potential ground invasion of the southern Gaza city of Rafah, which has come to host more than half of the territory's 2.3-million-strong population, who have fled there from the ravages of the war.

He considered arming the regime amid the aggression to be an "unforgivable wrong," advising the international community to sever all their economic and commercial ties with the apartheid regime.



Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (c) meets his counterparts from various countries, in Geneva on February 26, 2024 on the sidelines of the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

● IRNA

NEWS IN BRIEF

No anti-Iran resolution to be passed in IAEA meeting: Report

International Desk

No resolution against Iran will be passed in the upcoming meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, an informed source told ISNA.

According to a confidential report seen by AFP, the agency said that Iran's estimated stockpile of enriched uranium had reached more than 27 times the limit set out in the 2015 accord.

In the report, IAEA head Rafael Grossi said, "Public statements made in Iran regarding its technical capabilities to produce nuclear weapons" have only increased "concerns about the correctness and completeness of Iran's safeguards declarations".

Ahead of an IAEA Board of Governors meeting next week, Grossi reiterated his call on Tehran to "cooperate fully and unambiguously with the agency".

Kremlin warns of conflict with NATO if alliance troops fight in Ukraine

The Kremlin warned on Tuesday that conflict between Russia and the US-led NATO military alliance would be inevitable if European members of NATO sent troops to fight in Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine has triggered the worst crisis in Russia's relations with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and President Vladimir Putin has previously warned of the dangers of a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia, Reuters reported.

French President Emmanuel Macron opened the door on Monday to European nations sending troops to Ukraine, although he cautioned that there was no consensus at this stage.

"The very fact of discussing the possibility of sending certain contingents to Ukraine from NATO countries is a very important new element," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters when asked about Macron's remarks. Asked by reporters about the risks if NATO members sent their troops to fight in Ukraine, Peskov said: "In that case, we would need to talk not about the probability, but about the inevitability (of a direct conflict)."

Peskov said that the West should ask themselves if such a scenario was in the interests of their countries and their peoples.

Hamas, Israel downplay Biden's cease-fire remarks as 'premature', 'optimistic'

International Desk

Hours after US President Joe Biden expressed hope that a cease-fire in Gaza could start by the beginning of next week, officials from Israel and the Palestinian resistance group slammed his comment as "premature" and "optimistic."

Biden said on Monday he

hoped a cease-fire in Gaza could start by next Monday, adding that Israel was ready to halt operations during the Muslim month of Ramadan as part of any deal.

Amid a spiraling humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territory, representatives from Egypt, Qatar, the United States, France and others have acted as

go-betweens for Israel and Hamas, seeking a halt to Israel's onslaught on the Gaza Strip.

Asked during an election campaign trip to New York when such an agreement might start, Biden replied, "I hope by the end of the weekend".

"My national security adviser tells me that we're close, we're close, we're

not done yet. My hope is by next Monday we'll have a cease-fire," Biden told reporters.

Downplaying Biden's remarks, a senior unnamed Israeli official told Ynet News that he "does not know what Biden's optimism is based on".

According to Reuters, a Hamas official also reacted to Biden's comments, saying that Biden's statement on Israel and Hamas agreeing on a cease-fire deal is premature and "does not match the situation on the ground."

The Hamas official added that there are "big gaps that still need to be filled" in the cease-fire negotiations.

Mediators have been hoping to get a deal in place before the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in about two weeks.

Biden has firmly supported Israel despite the soaring death toll in its offensive in Gaza following the Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7.

Israel's military operations have killed at least 29,878 people in Gaza, most-



ly women and children, according to the Gaza health ministry.



Palestinians inspect the damage at the Al-Maghazi refugee camp in the Gaza Strip after an overnight Israeli strike on December 25, 2023.

● MAHMUD HAMS/AFP

Israel 'systematically' blocking aid access

The United Nations said on Tuesday Israeli forces are "systematically" blocking access to people in Gaza, complicating the task of delivering aid in what has become a lawless war zone. It has become nearly impossible to evacuate the sick or wounded and deliver aid in northern Gaza and increasingly difficult in the south, said Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency OCHA.

All planned aid convoys into the north have been denied by Israeli authori-

ties in recent weeks. Even convoys cleared in advance with Israeli authorities have been blocked or come under fire.

Laerke pointed to an incident on Sunday, when a convoy to evacuate 24 patients from the besieged Al Amal hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis -- jointly organized by the WHO and Palestinian Red Crescent (PRCS) -- was blocked for seven hours and paramedics detained.

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