



President launches several projects in Khuzestan



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Women's Plight in Gaza

8,900 Gaza women killed



Gaza women not included in Western women's rights



A Palestinian mother mourns her 8-year-old twins, Ahmad and Jihan Nasser, killed by Israeli airstrikes, in Deir al-Balah, the central Gaza Strip.

● AFP

New Parliament brings fresh hope for Iran: Leader

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said every new Parliament is a valuable and useful asset, which will bring fresh hope for Iran.

The Leader made the remarks in a meeting with the chairman and members of the Assembly of Experts in Tehran on Thursday, days after Iran held parliamentary elections.

The election was twinned with a vote for the Assembly of Experts, an 88-member body in charge of overseeing the activities of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution with a position of authority to either appoint or dismiss the Leader.

A total of 61.17 million people, comprising 30.94 million men and 30.22 million women, were eligible to vote in the two elections, with the Interior Ministry saying more than 25 million cast their ballots at the polls.

Ayatollah Khamenei said a new Parliament is like fresh blood in Iran's political and social structure.

The Leader urged the newly-elected Iranian lawmakers to be cautious not to embitter the nation and the political atmosphere of the country. Addressing members of the Assembly of Experts, the Leader said the body should never overlook the fixed principles of the Islamic Republic in its decisions. Ayatollah Khamenei stated that the recent tragic events in the Gaza Strip were a clear example of the arrogant front's oppression and aggression against the owners of a land, the destruction of their assets, and brutal killings of women and children.

A nation is being oppressed in its own homeland, the Leader lamented, adding that women, children and family members are being killed in cold blood and the nation's infrastructure is destroyed.

However, some countries are only watching such criminal acts unfold and instead of ending their support for the perpetrators, they would rather help them, Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

President launches several projects in Khuzestan

National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated several projects in the southwestern province of Khuzestan during a visit to the province on Friday.

In the city of Shushtar, "New Smart Subsurface Irrigation" was put into operation with the presence of the president in the Karoun Agricultural and Industrial Complex. The project has been carried out in the country for the first time.

President Raisi also inaugurated the first phase of the cultivation and industry complex of Pak Chub Industrial Group in the province's city of Shush.

The first phase of the project was implemented in two years with a budget of 200 million euros and has an annual production capacity of 400,000 cubic meters.

During this ceremony, Raisi visited different parts of the factory and



was informed about the details of its activities. He also inaugurated the Zamzam 3 Factory which produces sponge iron. During the official

opening ceremony of multiple projects, President Raisi commended the workers, technicians, and engineers for their dedication. Despite the

obstacles posed by Iran's enemies, Raisi emphasized that the country's growth was achieved through the determination of its people.

The president highlighted that Iran's success in implementing a resistance economy was a direct result of the efforts made by its people.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (C) visits a factory in the southwestern city of Shush in Khuzestan Province on March 8, 2024. president.ir

8,900 Gaza women killed

Global call for Israel's removal from UN women's rights body

On International Women's Day, the government media office in Gaza called for the removal of Israel from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW), citing the killing of over 8,900 Palestinian women by Israeli aggression since October. The media office, in a statement issued on Friday, criticized the international community's silence in the face of Israel's actions.

According to the statement, Israel's genocidal war on Gaza has resulted in the deaths of 8,900 Palestinian women, leaving more than 23,000 injured and 2,100 missing. The war has also displaced over half a million Palestinian women, subjecting them to extreme difficulties and depriving them of



basic necessities, Press TV reported. The media office highlighted the challenging conditions faced by 60,000 pregnant women, lacking essential health care and medical requirements, with many

losing their children due to bombings. The statement also addressed the plight of female Palestinian detainees facing physical and psychological torture. The media office hailed the "steadfastness" of Palestin-

ian women, stressing that they are "in dire need to defend their rights and life requirements rather than being killed, shot at, detained, and forced into displacement and migration, as the occupation army has been doing for over

five continuous months." It held the US, the international community, and relevant organizations fully responsible for the situation, calling for an end to the Israeli occupation and immediate action to stop the ongoing crimes against Palestinian women.

In a related development, Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations echoed the call for Israel's removal from the UNCSW, citing the regime's relentless strikes on the Gaza Strip that resulted in the killing of about 9,000 Palestinian women. The mission, in a post on the social media platform X, demanded the cessation of the occupying Zionist regime from occupying UN seats, using the hashtag "#RemoveIsraelfrom

mUNCSW." The call for Israel's ouster from the UNCSW coincides with International Women's Day, celebrated globally under the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" on March 8.

The Health Ministry in Gaza, in a statement, condemned the international community's silence, emphasizing the need for an immediate halt to Israeli aggression and genocide. The ministry urged the UN and international women's organizations to mobilize efforts to end the Israeli aggression on Gaza, where at least 30,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been confirmed killed, and 72,043 others injured during the genocidal war that began in October 2023.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Two artists return Goethe award over German 'complicity' in Gaza war

An Egyptian visual artist Mohamad Alba returned the German Goethe award he received in 2022, citing Berlin's "complicity" in the Israeli genocidal war on Gaza and hoping his move would "awaken" people's conscience. "It doesn't make sense that the German government speaks about equality and justice and at the same time ignores the plight and rights of Palestinians and helps arm Israel," he told Middle East Eye. He hoped that by returning the medal "everyone's con-

science is awakened." Alba has called on other artists to take action through various means against the "apparent injustice" in the Gaza Strip, where more than 30,800 people, mostly women and children, have been killed by Israeli strikes since October, Press TV wrote. In a separate act of protest, South African author Zukiswa Wanner, the first woman to receive the Goethe medal, rejected the award earlier in the week. She highlighted Germany's role as one of the largest

arms exporters to Israel and criticized the government for not condemning genocide, stating, "I thus find myself unable to stay silent or keep an official decoration from a government that is this callous to human suffering." Wanner shared her experiences in the occupied Palestinian territories, emphasizing that one did not need to be from a country with a history of apartheid to witness the daily injustices faced by Palestinians. She explained that her decision was influenced by

her visit to different cities, including Al-Quds, and resulted in writing an essay, "Vignettes of a People in an Apartheid State." The news also reported Germany's consideration of delivering tank ammunition to Israel in January amid the genocidal war against Gaza. The Israeli request for around 10,000 rounds of 120-millimeter precision ammunition was made in November, with the Israeli ambassador to Germany expressing gratitude for the unrelenting support shown by the German government.

Historical significance of Shavvaz village in Yazd Province



Shavvaz village
fardanews.com



Shavvaz Cemetery
negarmag.com

Iranica Desk

Shavvaz village is situated in the south-east of Yazd Province, surrounded by a tranquil and pristine natural landscape. Behind the village lies a mountain, while in front of it stretches a vast plain.

History

Shavvaz village is an ancient settlement with a long history. The antiquity and historical significance of this village can be

explored through its ancient cemetery and the presence of a large, sturdy castle. These elements clearly attest to the ancient origins of this area. Furthermore, there are numerous archaeological discoveries that bear striking similarities to the stone artifacts found in the Ernan Mountain region, which date back to 7,000 to 12,000 years ago. Despite this,

detailed archaeological research has not yet fully examined these findings.

Shavvaz Castle

Situated in a strategic location within the village, a towering castle has significantly enhanced the defensive capabilities of the area. Shavvaz Castle, one of the key mountain fortresses in Yazd Province, boasts an impressive structure that is tall, sturdy, and visually striking.

Constructed on a solid rock foundation, approximately 100 meters high, from hard sedimentary rocks, Shavvaz Castle is shielded by natural cliffs and steep slopes. This historical site has served as a human settlement in the past, with an estimated area of around 5,000 square meters.

The castle's outer walls are

crafted from stone, while the interior features brickwork. The rooms' floors and ceilings predominantly consist of bricks. The entrance gate of the castle is also made of bricks. Additionally, on the eastern side of the castle, a prominent brick staircase was utilized for water drainage. The stone utilized in the castle is sedimentary, forming the foundation as well. Following renovations by the provincial Cultural Heritage Organization, the main entrance door has been relocated inside, now replaced by a wooden door.

Inside, one room boasts a ceiling adorned with cedar wood beams. Towers were strategically built for surveillance and defense, some sections using ironstone and bricks.

Noteworthy is the construction approach, the towers initially constructed with bricks were later fortified with a stone facade to enhance resilience against invasions. Construction materials encompass stone, bricks, and clay. Clay-based mud, occasionally fortified with crushed straw, binds the structure. Walls and partitions predominantly consist of bricks, identifiable by three distinct types in structure and shape.

The Shavvaz Castle is influenced by Sassanid culture and represents the architecture of that era. A notable feature of this castle is the presence of arches dating back to the pre-Islamic period.

Inside the castle, a stone inscription from the 12th century CE has been discovered on one of the walls, a unique find not previously documented. Research on Islamic inscriptions in the province has not revealed any inscriptions from the 12th century CE in buildings like castles, mosques, or schools, where inscriptions are common. Inscriptions from the 12th century CE typically relate to tombstones and mihrabs, examples of which are found in the Shavvaz Cemetery. The stone inscription found within the castle is a rare and important discovery for understanding the castle's history.

Shavvaz Cemetery

In Shavvaz Cemetery, two large and wide stone slabs are placed above and below the graves, rising about half a meter above the ground without any inscriptions. The overall appearance of the cemetery, the arrangement and color of the stones, as well as their weathering, indicate the ancient origins of the cemetery. A part of the cemetery, which predates the graves with historical stones from the 6th to 8th centuries AH (12th to 14th centuries CE), contains graves with inscribed stones in an irregular Naskh script and natural black color. Moreover, several marble grave-stones from the 10th and 11th centuries AH (16th and 17th centuries CE) have also been discovered.

Shavvaz Castle
wikibin.ir



Nasseri Castle of Iranshahr shining brightly in urban surroundings

Iranica Desk

From the Martian Mountains to Shahr-e Sookhteh (Burnt City), the remarkable places of Sistan and Baluchestan Province never fail to amaze tourists. Whether you are a nature enthusiast or a history lover, there is an attraction tailored for every taste in this expansive province. One such example is the Nasseri Castle in Iranshahr.

Commissioned by Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar and designed by the master architect Hossein Memarbashi Kermani, the Nasseri Castle stands as a testament to time. Despite the passage of many years, the sturdy walls of the castle remain steadfast in

the heart of the city.

Regarded as one of the most outstanding sites in Iranshahr, Nasseri Castle is centrally located within the city. While its interior spaces may not resemble their past glory, with many parts having succumbed to destruction, the Nasseri Castle continues to radiate like a precious gem amidst the urban landscape. This invaluable historical landmark has been officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List.

Given historical texts, a person named Nasir al-Dawlah Farmanfarra (the ruler of Kerman and Baluchestan during the Qajar period) suggests to Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar to build a large military fortress in Fahraj (the

old name of Iranshahr).

Nasser al-Din Shah accepts it, and thus the construction of the fortress begins in 1885 by a skilled and renowned architect from Kerman named Hossein Memarbashi Kermani. After seven years, the construction of the fortress is completed. At that time, this fortress became famous by the name of Nasseri or Nasseri-ye. Due to the weakness of the Qajar government towards the end of their rule and the beginning of the Pahlavi era, Nasseri Castle was seized by Mohammad Khan Bazkazai (one of the powerful rulers of Baluchestan) and became known as the Bazkazai Cas-

tle. With the rise of Reza Khan Pahlavi and the establishment of a central government, the military forces under the command of Amanullah Jahanbani, occupied this castle.

The Nasseri Castle served as a school for a period, but during the early days of the revolution it was gradually transformed into an abandoned and semi-ruined fortress.

Regrettably, approximately 98% of the interior architectural structures were demolished by a bulldozer in 1982, leaving only the main gate and its walls standing. Constructed with bricks, mud, and clay, Nasseri Castle

features a total of nine watch-towers along with walls measuring 4.5 meters in diameter, and seven meters in height. Spanning over 36,000 square meters, this building housed more than 150 rooms accord-

ing to historical texts. While the interior architecture of the castle has been lost, remnants of its beauty can still be seen in the decorative brickwork adorning the entrance gate and the brickwork towers.



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Checking Israel's claim to have killed 10,000 Hamas fighters

Merlyn Thomas,
Jake Horton &
Benedict Garman
BBC Verify
journalists

INVESTIGATION

Israel faces growing concern about the number of civilian deaths after at least 30,000 Palestinians were reported killed in Gaza — as well as pressure to show it is eliminating Hamas as it vowed after October 7. BBC Verify examines Israel's claims about how many of those killed were combatants. The Israeli military says it has killed more than 10,000 fighters in its air strikes and ground operations in response to the Hamas attack which killed about 1,200 people. But there are concerns about whether it is able to separate fighters from ordinary civilians. President Joe Biden said in December that Israel had the support of the world as well as the US, but "they're starting to lose that support by the indiscriminate bombing that takes place".

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have consistently defended their tactics, stressing that they are trying to be precise in their targeting of Hamas fighters and infrastructure, while seeking to minimise civilian deaths.

Hamas does not provide any figures for its military fatalities. The Reuters news agency reported that an official had admitted 6,000 fighters had been killed, but Hamas denied this figure to the BBC. The toll of at least 30,035 killed, from Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry, has previously been described as trustworthy by the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional emergency director Richard Brennan. The WHO says the ministry has "good capacity in data collection" and its previous reporting has been credible and "well developed".

But its overall tally of those killed does not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

The Gaza authorities' last demographic breakdown from February 29 indicated more than 70% of those killed had been women and children.

So, with the figures suggesting less than 30% of those killed were men — some of whom are likely to be over fighting age — experts have raised questions about how Israel arrived at its claim of killing 10,000

fighters.

BBC Verify has repeatedly asked the IDF for the details of its methodology for counting Hamas fighter deaths, but they have not responded.

The BBC tried to piece together a fuller picture through claims and videos published by Israel.

The IDF has issued press statements and social media posts since October, making claims about the outcome of its operations in Gaza. References to the numbers of fighters killed in these announcements are more sporadic and approximate than the Hamas-run health ministry's regular updates on fatalities.

One IDF estimate before the war suggested Hamas had about 30,000 fighters in Gaza.

In December, it described an assessment that it was killing two civilians for every Hamas fighter as "tremendously positive", given the challenges it faced on the battlefield.

On December 29, IDF spokesman Major Doron Spielman told Sky News Australia that 8,000 Hamas fighters had been killed, saying the figure was based on intelligence, interrogations, and examination of satellite photographs.

In mid-January, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed Israel had "destroyed" two-thirds of Hamas fighting

regiments in Gaza.

On February 19, the Times of Israel reported the IDF as saying 12,000 fighters had been killed. We put that figure to the IDF who, in two separate responses to us, said the figure is "approximately 10,000" and "more than 10,000".

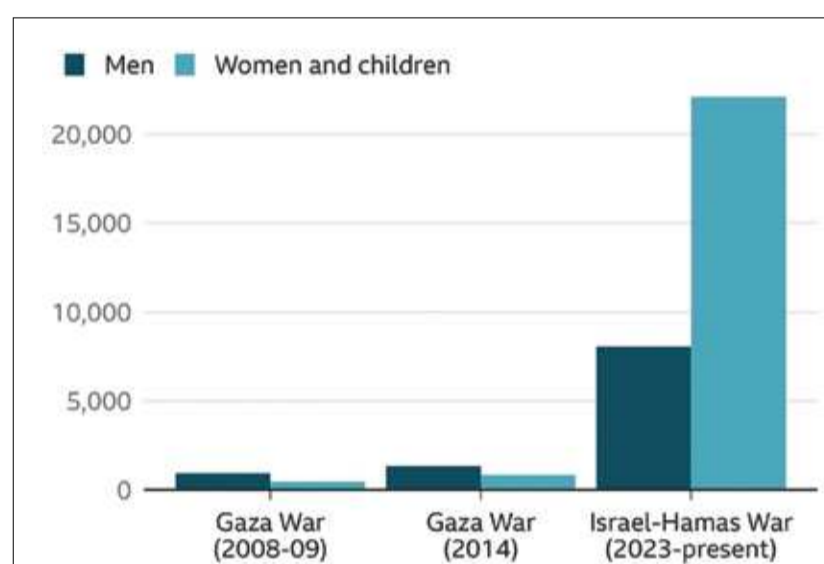
The Israeli embassy in the UK told us they think the total number of Hamas fighters killed is "between 10,000 and 12,000". But they said it was hard to distinguish between civilians and combatants as many of them are not wearing military uniform and Hamas also has fighters who are aged 16 and 17.

Other factors cited by experts as obstacles to counting combatant casualties include Hamas operating in tunnels.

BBC Verify reviewed all 280 videos posted to the IDF YouTube channel from October 7 up to February 27 and found that very few contained visual evidence of fighters being killed.

Of these, just one — posted on December 14 — purports to show dead bodies of fighters. A handful of other videos appear to show fighters being shot at.

We also attempted to count the number of individual claims of Hamas fighters killed on the IDF's official Telegram channel. We found 160 posts claiming to have killed a specific number of fighters, for a



The chart compares the fatality figures of men with those of women and children in Gaza in its three wars as of February 29, 2024. BBC

total of 714 fatalities. But there were also 247 references that used terms such as "several", "dozens", or "hundreds" killed, making a meaningful overall tally impossible. Since the beginning of the IDF incursion into Gaza, the military has accused

Hamas of using the civilian population as human shields, but some experts are concerned that the IDF might be counting some non-combatants as fighters merely because they are part of the Hamas-run territory's administration. Andreas Krieg, a senior lecturer in securi-

Where is Hamas getting its weapons?

Increasingly, from Israel



Israeli soldiers standing in what they say is a rocket factory in January 2024 during an escorted tour by the military for international journalists in the central Gaza Strip. AVISHAG SHAAR-YASHUV/THE NEW YORK TIMES

By Maria Abi-Habib &
Sheera Frenkel
NYT reporters

INVESTIGATION

smuggling routes to explain how Hamas stayed so heavily armed despite an Israeli military blockade of the Gaza Strip.

But recent intelligence has shown the extent to which Hamas has been able to build many of its rockets and anti-tank weaponry out of the thousands of munitions that failed to detonate when Israel lobbed them into Gaza, according to weapons experts and Israeli and Western intelligence officials. Hamas is also arming its fighters with weapons stolen from Israeli military bases.

Intelligence gathered during months of fighting revealed that, just as Israeli authorities misjudged Hamas' intentions before October 7, they also underestimated its ability to obtain arms.

What is clear now is that the very weapons that Israeli forces have used to enforce a blockade of Gaza over the past 17 years are now being used against them. Israeli and American military explosives have enabled Hamas to shower Israel with rockets and, for the first time, penetrate Israeli towns from Gaza. "Unexploded ordnance is a main source of explosives for Hamas,"

said Michael Cardash, the former deputy head of the Israeli National Police Bomb Disposal Division and an Israeli police consultant. "They are cutting open bombs from Israel, artillery bombs from Israel, and a lot of them are being used, of course, and repurposed for their explosives and rockets."

Weapons experts say that roughly 10% of munitions typically fail to

detonate, but in Israel's case, the figure could be higher. Israel's arsenal includes Vietnam-era missiles, long discontinued by the United States and other military powers. The failure rate on some of those missiles could be as high as 15%, said one Israeli intelligence officer who, like others interviewed for this article, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters.

By either count, years of sporadic bombing and the recent bombardment of Gaza have littered the area with thousands of tons of unexploded ordnance just waiting to be reused. One 750-pound bomb that fails to detonate can become hundreds of missiles or rockets.

Hamas did not respond to messages seeking comment. The Israeli military said in a statement that it was committed to dismantling Hamas but did not answer specific questions about the group's weapons.

Israeli officials knew before the October attacks that Hamas could salvage some Israeli-made weapons, but the scope has startled weapons experts



◀ Hamas fighters celebrate after liberating Palestinian inmates in a prisoner exchange with Israel in an unknown location in the Gaza Strip amid a temporary truce on November 29, 2023.
● AL-QASSAM BRIGADES/REUTERS

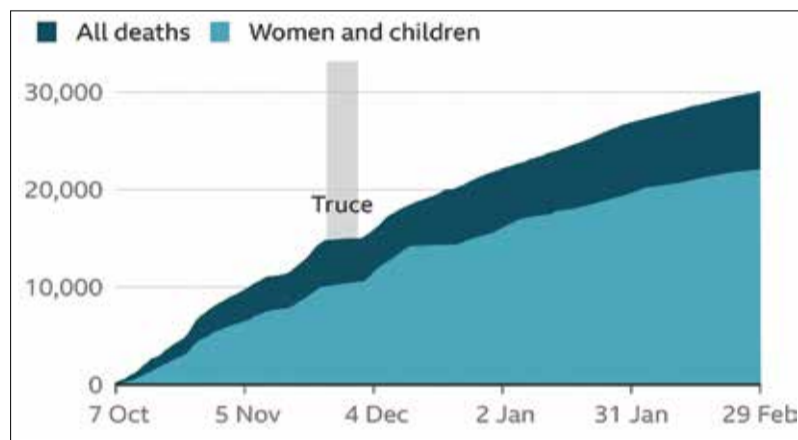
ty studies at Kings College London, said: "Israel takes a very broad approach to ' Hamas membership', which includes any affiliation with the organisation, including civil servants or administrators."

The fatality data for the current conflict from the Gaza health ministry shows a sharp increase in the proportion of women and children among the dead compared with previous wars.

This "indicates a much higher civilian death rate," according to Rachel Taylor, the executive director of the Every Casualty Counts organisation, a UK-based organisation that aims to record victims of violent conflicts.

Nearly half of Gaza's population is under 18 and about 44% of the fatalities of war are also children, according to the Gaza authorities' February 29 demographic data. Ms. Taylor said the fact that the deaths closely track the demographics of the general population "indicates indiscriminate killing". "In contrast, in 2014, there was a fairly high percentage of 'fighting age' men among the dead, but this is much less evident today," she said.

The pace of killing appears, on the face of it, to have slowed down, from about 330 deaths a day in the first month of the



⬆ The chart shows the proportion of women and children's deaths in Gaza compared to all deaths registered throughout the Israel-Hamas war up until February 29, 2024.
● BBC

conflict to approximately 110 deaths a day over the past month. But some experts told the BBC that the real scale of those killed by the Israeli offensive is likely to be significantly higher as many hospitals, where deaths are usually recorded, are no longer operating. These figures also only include deaths from military attacks, according to the health ministry's spokesman, and not starvation or disease, which are in-

creasingly concerning international aid organisations. B'tselem, a Jerusalem-based human rights organisation, said the current war is far deadlier than previous conflicts between Israel and Gaza. Spokesperson Dror Sadot said, "These are numbers that we never saw in previous wars and strikes in Gaza or the other territories."

The article first appeared on BBC.

and diplomats alike.

Israeli authorities also knew that their armories were vulnerable to theft. A military report from early last year noted that thousands of bullets and hundreds of guns and grenades had been stolen from poorly guarded bases.

From there, the report said, some made their way to the West Bank, and others to Gaza by way of Sinai, but the report focused on military security. The consequences were treated almost as an afterthought: "We are fueling our enemies with our own weapons," read one line of the report, which was viewed by The New York Times.

The consequences became apparent on October 7. Hours after Hamas breached the border, four Israeli soldiers discovered the body of a Hamas gunman who was killed outside the Re'im military base. Hebrew writing was visible on a grenade on his belt, said one of the soldiers, who recognized it as a bulletproof Israeli grenade, a recent model. Other Hamas fighters overran the base, and Israeli

military officials say some weapons were looted and returned to Gaza.

A few miles away, members of an Israeli forensic team collected one of the 5,000 rockets fired by Hamas that day. Examining the rocket, they discovered that its military-grade explosives had most likely come from an unexploded Israeli missile fired into Gaza during a previous war, according to an Israeli intelligence officer. One Western military official said that most of the explosives that Hamas is using in its war with Israel appear to have been manufactured using unexploded Israeli-launched munitions. One example, the official said, was an explosive booby trap that killed 10 Israeli soldiers in December.

Hamas cannot manufacture everything. Some things are easier to buy from the black market and smuggle into Gaza. Sinai, the largely uninhabited desert region between Israel, Egypt, and the Gaza Strip, remains a hub for arms smuggling. Weapons from conflicts in Libya, Eritrea, and Afghanistan have been discovered in

Sinai, according to Israeli intelligence assessments.

According to two Israeli intelligence officials, at least a dozen small tunnels were still running between Gaza and Egypt before October 7. A spokesperson for the Egyptian government said its military had done its part to shut down tunnels on its side of the border. "Many of the weapons currently inside the Gaza Strip are the result of smuggling from within Israel," the spokesperson said in an email. Israel estimates that it has conducted at least 22,000 strikes on Gaza since October 7. Each often involves multiple rounds, meaning tens of thousands of munitions have likely been dropped or fired — and thousands failed to detonate.

"Artillery, hand grenades, other munitions — tens of thousands of unexploded ordnance — will be left after this war," said Charles Birch, the head of the UN Mine Action Service in Gaza. These "are like a free gift to Hamas".

The article first appeared on The New York Times.

Anesthetics, crutches, dates

Inside Israel's ghost list of items arbitrarily denied entry into Gaza

By Qiblawi, Goodwin, Elbagir, Faraj, and Khadder
CNN Reporters

INVESTIGATION

Humanitarian workers and government officials working to deliver urgently needed aid for Gaza say a clear pattern has emerged of Israeli obstruction, as disease and near-famine grip parts of the besieged enclave. The Israeli agency that controls access to Gaza for the multi-billion-dollar aid effort has imposed arbitrary and contradictory criteria, according to more than two dozen humanitarian and government officials interviewed by CNN.

CNN has also reviewed documents compiled by major participants in the humanitarian operation that list the items most frequently rejected by the Israelis. These include anesthetics and anesthesia machines, oxygen cylinders, ventilators, and water filtration systems.

Other items that have ended up in bureaucratic limbo include dates, sleeping bags, medicines to treat cancer, water purification tablets, and maternity kits.

For months, queues of trucks bound for the enclave have been backed up along the highway leading from the Egyptian town of Arish, a major logistical hub for aid, to the Rafah crossing with Gaza. In a satellite image from February 21, a queue of trucks can be seen stretching out for 4 miles from the crossing.

Most of CNN's sources requested anonymity for fear, they said, of reprisals and further Israeli restrictions on an already choked aid pipeline.

Several sources say a substantial portion of the donations they handled were either rejected or held up by a long wait for clearance by Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, or COGAT, which manages the flow of aid into the strip. "It's perfectly engineered chaos," said one CNN source who oversees donations from four different relief organizations at one of the transit routes. Over 15,000 tons of their relief supplies await Israeli approval to enter Gaza, the source said. More than half consists of food items.

"It's deliberately opaque, deliberately ambiguous," said another senior humanitarian official. "You can receive clearance from COGAT and arrive to find police or finance and customs officials who will send the truck back." Israel has long barred certain items from entering Gaza. In 2007, it imposed a blockade on the strip after Hamas took over. A year later, COGAT released a list of banned "dual use" items, making slight modifications to the document in the years that followed.

These are goods that, it said, could be repurposed for military use and would be barred from entering Gaza, such as concrete, agricultural fertilizer, certain chemicals, and other miscellaneous items like binoculars, underwater cameras, and water skis. In a January 13 press conference, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu boasted about permitting "minimal humanitarian aid" to enter

Gaza. "We provide minimal humanitarian aid," Netanyahu said. "If we want to achieve our war goals, we give the minimal aid."

The international community has repeatedly criticized Israel for issuing insufficient permits, and security clearances, for aid trucks to Gaza. There have also been instances where the Israeli military struck food deliveries. Looting by desperate civilians and criminal gangs in some of the hardest hit areas in the north of Gaza has intensified that crisis, bringing UN food deliveries there to a grinding halt.

Exacerbating the situation is an apparent ghost list impeding the delivery of a wide range of items.

Janti Soeripto, Save the Children US president and chief executive, who visited the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing with a UN convoy in January, told CNN she saw several items that Israeli inspectors had turned back.

She said toys were rejected because they were in a wooden box rather than a cardboard box, sleeping bags were denied because they had zippers, and sanitary pads were turned back because a nail clipper was included in the hygiene kit.

In January, US Senators Chris Van Hollen and Jeff Merkley saw maternity kits and water filtration systems among the items Israel turned back from its inspection point in Nitzana.

"In no rational world could (these) be deemed dual use or any kind of military threat," Van Hollen told CNN weeks after his trip to Egypt's side of the Rafah crossing.

"We learned that when a truck with just one of those items is turned down, the entire truck gets turned around and has to go back to the beginning of the process, which can take weeks," Van Hollen said.

In one instance on February 14, COGAT rejected a truck-load of sleeping bags "because they were the color green, and green means military and according to the 2008 list, military is dual use," the same humanitarian official told CNN.

"No one can argue that sleeping bags are going to win a war," the official said. "We did push back on that and warned them that it would look pretty silly if this got out."

Four sources described another incident when Israel rejected a shipment of dates — a rich source of nutrients desperately needed by a hungry population. Two of the sources said it was because the seeds were picked up as a suspicious object in the x-ray inspection imaging.

Other trucks carrying dates have been allowed into Gaza, according to UN data. But humanitarian workers have said they are worried about a repeat, and several have resorted to pitting dates prior to inspection.

CNN has obtained documents from three major participants in the humanitarian operation that list what they called the "most frequently rejected items". Among them are essential medical supplies: anesthesia machines and anesthetics, crutches, generators, ventilators, x-ray machines, and oxygen cylinders.

The full article first appeared on CNN.



⬆ Thousands of aid trucks are waiting on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing to enter Gaza.
● ALI MOUSTAFA/GETTY IMAGES

Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre wrestling tournament: Saravi, Dadmarz grab golds as Iran claims seven medals



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (L) and Pouya Dadmarz win the gold medals of their respective weight classes in the Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre tournament in Antalya, Turkey. **UWW**

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers Mohammad-Hadi Saravi and Pouya Dadmarz bagged a couple of golds at the Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre wrestling tournament as the country collected seven medals at the Greco-Roman contests in Antalya, Turkey. An all-Iranian final on Thursday saw three-time world medalist Saravi

come out on top against reigning Asian champion Mahdi Bali by a 5-1 scoreline to walk away with the ultimate prize of the 97kg weight class. A gold medalist at the 2021 Wrestling Worlds, Saravi will be looking to improve on his Olympic bronze three years ago when taking part in the Paris Games in the summer. Meanwhile, Dadmarz – A

bronze medalist in last September's World Championships – defeated opponents from Japan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan before a 5-2 victory over Giorgi Tokhadze of Georgia in the final showdown. Mohammad-Hadi Sha'bani was the other Iranian in the 55kg competitions but finished his campaign empty-handed after a second-round loss to Russian

Vitalii Kabloev. In the 130kg event, world champion Amin Mirzazadeh came out victorious against Russian wrestlers either side of a 10-0 win against the host's Burak Cakirca but pulled out of the final encounter against Matti Elias Kuosmanen with a knee problem as the Finnish wrestler was handed the gold, while young Iranian Fardin He-

dayati – beaten by Kuosmanen in the semifinals – went on to win a consolation bronze. The outcome in Antalya secured the Paris ticket for Mirzazadeh with Hedayati representing the country in April's Asian Championship in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Elsewhere, one of the 82kg semifinals featured two fellow-Iranians in Rasoul

Garmsiri and Abbas Mahdizadeh, with the former claiming a thrilling 8-5 triumph to head into the final, though he eventually settled for a silver following a 5-3 defeat against Belarusian Stanislau Shafarenka. Mahdizadeh, meanwhile, left Antalya with a consolation bronze, thanks to a walkover victory over Yunus Emre Basar.

Iranian saber team on the verge of Olympic berth

Sports Desk

Iranian fencing is inches away from beating Japan to the Asian slot at the saber team contests in the Paris Olympics. Comprising Ali Pakdaman, Mohammad Rahbari, Farzad Baher, and Mohammad Fotouhi, the Iranian four-man team is currently seventh in the FIE Men's Team Ranking with 217.00 points – 13 clear of eighth-place Japan. A decent run in the upcoming one-day Fencing World Cup event in Budapest on

March 24 will all but guarantee the Olympic berth for Iran, while Japan will have to finish on the podium to overtake Iran in the global governing body of the sport's ranking. A team silver in last June's Asian Championships as well as the World Cup third-place finish in Madrid made massive contributions to Iran's tally in the FIE Ranking with 52 and 40 points respectively. Iran had to settle for the ninth spot in the World Championships in Milan last year but the result

was still enough to earn 50 ranking points for the country. As it stands, South Korea, Hungary, USA, and France will be part of the event in Paris as the top four teams in the ranking, with Italy (fifth), Egypt (ninth), Canada (11th) likely to secure the continental slots. Iranian captain Pakdaman, meanwhile, is on course for an Olympic quota in the individual saber competitions after standing fifth in the latest world rankings. The 33-year-old Iranian collected 155,000 points to

move up by two spots, with Georgian Sandro Bazadze, Aron Szilagyi of Hungary – a silver medalist in the Tokyo Olympics – Egyptian Ziad Elsisy, and South Korea's Oh Sang-uk standing first to fourth respectively. The reigning Asian champion grabbed a first individual medal in five years for the country at the Fencing World Cup in mid-February, when he beat Bazadze to reach the final showdown in Tbilisi, only to settle for the silver after a 15-7 defeat against Szilagyi.



MASOUD SHAHRESTANI/TASNIM

Zahedi seals loan move to J1 League club Avispa

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Shahab Zahedi joined Japanese club Avispa Fukuoka on a loan deal – valid until June 30 – from Ukrainian side Zorya Lugansk, the J1 League team announced on Thursday. The 28-year-old forward, capped once for the national team, is to be introduced to the Avispa supporters at the Best Denki Stadium ahead of today's

encounter with Shonan Bellmare in the Japanese top flight. Avispa is eighth in the Japanese table with four points after two rounds of matches in the new season. Zahedi, who will be the first Iranian to play in the J1 League, spent the first half of the 2023/24 campaign on loan with the Persian Gulf Pro League champion Persepolis. The Iranian bagged seven goals and two assists

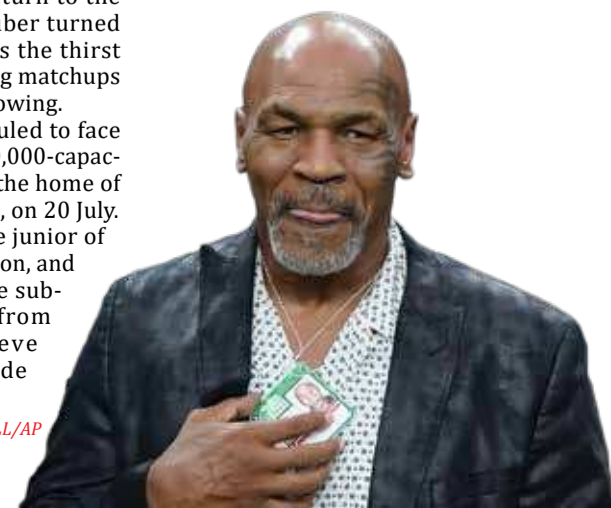
in 22 outings across all competitions but barely won the fans' heart and decided to part ways with the club in the winter transfer window after former Persepolis striker Issa Alekasir re-joined the Tehran Reds from Sepahan.



Boxing legend Tyson to return to ring against YouTuber Paul

THE GUARDIAN – Former heavyweight world champion Mike Tyson will return to the ring against YouTuber turned fighter Jake Paul as the thirst for crossover boxing matchups shows no sign of slowing. The two are scheduled to face each other at the 80,000-capacity AT&T Stadium, the home of the Dallas Cowboys, on 20 July. Paul is 30 years the junior of the 57-year-old Tyson, and the fight will be the subject of criticism from those who believe such fights degrade boxing's standing.

MARK J TERRILL/AP



Iran emphasizes 'peacefully' resolving Arash gas field dispute



Economy Desk

Iran restated its position on the disputed Arash gas field in the Persian Gulf with an Iranian vice president stressing on the 'integrated and joint' extraction with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from the field, warning Tehran will start drilling in the field if Kuwait does so. Emphasizing that the ownership dispute with Kuwait should be "peacefully resolved," the Iranian Vice President for Legal Affairs Mohammad Dehqan told ISNA that a part of the gas and oil field belongs to Iran. He said his country believes in 'integrated and joint' extraction with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from the disputed gas field, warning Tehran will start drilling in the field if Kuwait does so. Following Kuwait's repeated claim over the Arash gas field on Wednesday, Dehqan referred to not having a maritime border with Kuwait, adding that Iran discovered that field and has drilled rigs there many years ago without taking advantage of it so we won't create tensions with our neighbors," Dehqan clarified. "However, we have not utilized it so far to pre-

vent any challenges with Kuwait and neighboring countries," he said. Iran argues that nearly 40 percent of the gas field is located in the territorial waters of Iran, but Kuwait had presented a different border demarcation that puts the entire field within the neutral zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and denies Iran has any right over the field. Dehqan hit out at Kuwait for not proposing "any constructive idea so far" and for making agreements with Saudi Arabia on the issue. Iran began talks with Kuwait in 2000 to develop the gas field in the Persian Gulf, but no agreements were reached. The Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson on Wednesday also dismissed Kuwait's "interfering" opinions about Iran's three islands in the Persian Gulf, and about the Arash oil and gas field, reminding the Arab state that one-sided claims would not entitle it to any rights. In a statement on Wednesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani brushed aside the communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Kuwaiti emir's visit to the United Arab Emirates

regarding the three Iranian islands of the Lesser Tunb, the Greater Tunb and Abu Musa as well as Kuwait's claim to the Arash gas field. Kanaani rejected the interfering clauses of the Kuwaiti emir's statement, saying Iran has stressed time and again that the three islands - the Lesser Tunb, the Greater Tunb and Abu Musa - are integral and eternal parts of Iranian territory. The Islamic Republic of Iran never regards its territorial integrity as negotiable, the spokesman underlined. As for the repetition of Kuwait's claim on the Arash field in that statement, Kanaani noted, "We have said many times that making unilateral claims in such statements does not create any rights for the claimant." He pointed to previous talks between Iran and Kuwait, saying technical and legal negotiations are the best and most appropriate way to deal with the issue. Based on its historical rights and records of bilateral negotiations with Kuwait, Iran is ready to continue talks with the Kuwaiti government over a framework that would entail respect for mutual interests, he added.

Iran indigenizes 80% of oil equipment: Deputy Minister

Iran's deputy oil minister said the country has succeeded in manufacturing 80 percent of oil parts and equipment domestically despite being under sanctions. The Iranian Oil Ministry has focused on taking advantage of the expertise and technical know-how of knowledge-based companies, Jalil Salari said, emphasizing that more than 80 percent of the oil equipment is manufactured in the country, Tasnim News Agency reported. Speaking in a meeting

held in Abadan on reviewing the plans for oil byproducts, he said that the Oil Ministry has taken effective steps in the past two years for the domestic production of oil parts and equipment. One of these measures is related to the launch of extraterritorial refining plans overseas and the export of technical and engineering services, he stated. So far, three to four kinds of technical knowledge have fully been localized in refining companies in the field of producing cat-

alysts, compressor manufacturing and streamlining the quality of fuel oil, said the chief executive of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC). He put the oil production capacity at Abadan Oil Refinery (AOR) at 500,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd), Mehr News Agency reported. With the increase in the capacity and quality of oil byproducts, the country's gasoline production capacity has reached 129 million liters per day, Salari highlighted.

Pakistan: No grounds for US objection to gas pipeline project with Iran

International Desk

Pakistan has dismissed the United States' objection to its decision to start work on a joint pipeline project between the country and Iran, with its Foreign Ministry spokesperson saying it had decided to initiate work on an 80-kilometer-long segment of the pipeline. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at a weekly briefing on Thursday that there is "no room for any objections" from a third party like the United States since the project was being constructed within Pakistani territory. "The cabinet of Pakistan decided a few days ago to start work on 80 kilometers of a Pakistan-Iran pipeline, and this is the beginning of construction of the pipeline, and it is in conformity with our commitment to the Iran-Pakistan pipeline." "Since this pipeline is being constructed inside



Pakistani territory, we do not believe there is room for any objections by any third party at this stage," she added. She made the remarks when she was asked if Islamabad had contacted Washington on the decision to begin constructing the pipeline. Last week, the IP gas pipeline project had reportedly been delayed as the US had expressed concerns about the project and refused to

waive the sanctions imposed on Iran. According to local sources, Pakistan has approached the US for a waiver to resume the project, but the US refused to give any concession. Also, late last month, Muhammad Ali, Pakistan's caretaker energy minister, said work on 80 kilometers (49 miles) of the pipeline would be carried out. Washington has opposed the project, saying it could

violate the sanctions that it has imposed on Tehran. The project, launched in 2013, required Pakistan to finish the construction of the pipeline on its territory by the end of 2014. But the work stalled, upsetting Tehran, which has said it has already invested \$2 billion in the pipeline on its side of the border. Pakistan is likely to face an \$18-billion fine if it terminates the gas pipeline agreement.

First Announcement

N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-38-9940004

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
1	SLICKLINE, SPOOLED ON IRON REEL H2S, CO2 AND CHLORIDE ION TRIM TYPE: SUPA-75 OR SANICRO-26 STAINLESS STEEL UNS N08926 (ALLOY 25-6 MO) REF. "SANDVIK (ZAPP-GROUP)", "BRIDON" SIZE 0.082 INCH X 15000 FEET	47 RL

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 39,655/60 EURO or 16,927,189,996 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

NOTE: Based on enactment notified by Nisoc's Tender committee, foreign companies must submit a Bid Bond Guarantee amounting to aforementioned (paragraph 2) Euro amount. Otherwise, their quotations will not be considered.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4016
Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

PUBLIC RELATIONS

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First Announcement

N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0140009

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
1	TUBING 2-7/8 IN", API GRADE L-80 SEAMLESS "EU" THREAD, RANGE 2, 6.5 PPF	10,000LE

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 117,227/81 EURO or 50,245,361,792 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

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GAZA WOMEN not included in WESTERN WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Regarding the Western women's rights, Imam Khomeini once stated, "With regard to the issue of women, the world is to blame. When I say 'the world,' I am referring to the Western world and Western culture. They have truly done harm. They have committed crimes" (Jan. 4, 2023). The following infographic reviews some of the crimes committed against Palestinian women in Gaza by the Zionist regime and its Western allies, the US and some European countries. The data of this infographic covers the timespan between early October 2023 to March 2024.

Massacre of women in Gaza



70% of victims of Zionist regime's inhumane attacks are women and children



Over 8,200 women have been martyred



Every hour, 2 mothers are martyred due to Zionist regime's attacks

Acute deprivation of vital hygiene & nutrition for Gazan women



Deprived of menstrual hygiene products



Deprived of adequate water for bathing



Over 68,000 breastfeeding mothers at high risk of anemia & malnutrition



300% increase in infant mortality rate due to maternal physical weakness and severe stress of mothers



Zionist regime targeted 30 hospitals, 50 healthcare centers

Women in Gaza lose family members daily



13,000 children and 7,000 men martyred in Gaza



Zionists kill over 210 individuals on avg.

Women in Gaza lose family providers



At least 3,000 women widowed becoming heads of households

Women's displacement in Gaza



One million women and girls displaced

Pregnant women in Gaza



50,000 pregnant women in Gaza living under ruthless Israeli attacks



More than 180 births take place in Gaza every day, under worst medical condition

Disease spread among women in Gaza refugee camps



75,000 cases of lice and scabies have been reported so far (particularly affecting women's hair)