

Iran: UN report on 2022 riots built on 'baseless claims'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned a UN report on the 2022 riots in the country, saying that the report was built on "baseless claims" and "false and biased information, without a legal basis".

The report by a fact-finding mission mandated by the United Nations on Friday alleged that Iran's response to the riots that broke out following the death of the 22-year-old Iranian girl, Mahsa Amini, in September 2022 amounts to serious human rights violations.

The ministry's spokesman Nasser Kanaani in a statement on Saturday said that human rights mechanisms of the world body have turned into "a plaything" in the hands of some regimes to advance their sinister and unlawful goals.

Kanaani said the report repeats groundless allegations rooted in inaccurate and biased information and, therefore, lacks legal credibility and is fundamentally rejected.

He denounced attempts to foment Iranophobia and defame Iran, stating that the so-called fact-finding mission

was established and funded in November 2022 as a result of the "ridiculous show of human rights" by a number of Western governments, especially Germany.

The Iranian diplomat said the mission's latest report entails an organized set of falsifications and lies that have purposefully altered realities.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the report, which has been compiled and engineered by the Zionist regime, the United States, and some Western countries, as a clear example of abuse of the sublime human rights concepts and values for the purpose of pursuing short-sighted political goals. It believes that the report has no legal acceptability and effect whatsoever," he said.

Kanaani underscored that the report revealed that the so-called fact-finding mission functions in compliance with the schemes of its German, British, American and Israeli founders, and abuses the UN human rights mechanisms to serve the sinister and illegal objectives of those regimes.

Kanaani also advised the initiators of the mission to deal with human rights violations



● mfa.gov.ir

in their own countries rather than improperly meddle in Iran's affairs, arguing they should attend to the violation of rights of thousands of Palestinian women and children in Gaza, where more than 30,000 civilians have been killed in Israeli strikes over the past five months.

"The countries that violate the rights of other nations and are complicit in all of the Zionist regime's crimes and massacre of civilians, particularly women and children, cannot present themselves as advocates, or judge the human rights status in other countries. They must be held accountable for their

crimes concerning gross violations of human rights," Kanaani said.

Kanaani further pointed to the formation of a special committee on Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's order to probe the 2022 unrest, adding that its final report was recently submitted to the president.

Complexity of situation on Israel's northern front



By Mohammad Bayat
West Asia expert

EXCLUSIVE OPINION

Israel's defense minister has reportedly announced the possibility of a ground invasion of Lebanon and the escalation of the war with the Hezbollah resistance group during a meeting with the US special envoy in the region.

It seems that a duality has emerged within the Israeli regime, i.e., the interests of the regime, on the one hand, and the interests of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on the other.

Engaging in a war with Hezbollah is not in favor of the regime, and the opposition side in Israel is against such military action. But, on the other hand, Netanyahu's personal interests require the continuation of the war because he is worried about his political situation after the war.

There are signs that Netanyahu is preparing to attack Hezbollah. Firstly, the exchange of fire on the northern borders of the occupied territories has intensified in recent weeks, and Israel has targeted civilian areas in southern Lebanon. Also, Hezbollah's attacks have targeted the regime's positions deep inside the occupied territories. Secondly, Israel has attempted to assassinate and eliminate Hezbollah's top military commanders for a long time; and the third sign is the Israeli army's buildup, which shows that it is preparing to attack southern Lebanon.

It is said that Hezbollah has about 20 trained brigades. Although the Lebanese army is deprived of an air defense system, Hezbollah has managed to create a defense system for itself, which the Israeli army has tried to disable in recent weeks.

The US special envoy in the region, Amos Hochstein, visited Lebanon on Monday and held talks with the country's Parliament Speaker Nabi Berri, and then traveled to the occupied territories to meet the Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant amid ongoing cease-fire talks on Gaza in Cairo.

It seems that the US envoy is trying to prevent the escalation of another war in the region while seeking to help establish a cease-fire in Gaza. Another war is not in favor of the US and, especially, the Democrats who are at the height of an election race.

On the other hand, even though Hezbollah is ready to defend itself, considering the political and economic situation in Lebanon, the resistance group prefers to not enter a broader war with Israel. Meanwhile, Israel's political factions, including the opposition ones, do not agree with a ground attack on Lebanon.

While talks on Gaza and the cease-fire are going on, the situation in the northern front is getting more complicated, and these complications have led the US special envoy to visit the region. It seems that a war of wills is happening in the region.

On the one hand, Netanyahu is trying to escalate the war with Hezbollah; on the other hand, the international community and Israel's factions are attempting to prevent the escalation of the war. Netanyahu probably wants to use the opportunity of a possible cease-fire in Gaza to attack Lebanon. Now we should wait and see which side will win the war of wills.

Gaza war has 'ruptured any sense of shared humanity': ICRC

The war in Gaza has "ruptured any sense of a shared humanity," the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Saturday.

ICRC head Mirjana Spoljaric called for an urgent cease-fire in Gaza, saying Israel and Hamas must respect international law and protect civilians caught up in their conflict.

She said getting a steady, substantial flow of desperately needed aid into the besieged Palestinian territory – where the United Nations says more than 90 percent of the population is on the brink of famine – was "only part of the solution", AFP reported.

"Alleviating the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza starts with a clear will and measures that safeguard civilian life and human dignity, meaning both sides must conduct their military operations in a way that

spares the civilians who are caught in the middle," Spoljaric said.

"The only way to achieve this is that the parties strictly adhere to international humanitarian law, which means preserving the life, dignity and humanity of all people affected by armed conflict, regardless of which side they are on.

"It is the line between humanity and barbarity," she insisted. "Preserving civilian life and health is the rule, not the exception."

Nearly 30,000 Palestinians – mostly women and children – have been killed in Gaza since Israel began its onslaught on the Palestinian territory on October 7 in response to the Hamas' attack on the occupied territory which killed about 1,160 people.

Five months into the war, an international effort is gather-

ing pace to get humanitarian relief into the densely populated region by sea, in a bid to counter restrictions on access by land that have been blamed on Israel.

The UN says 2.2 million of Gaza's 2.4 million people are on the verge of famine and desperately short of drinking water.

"As an occupying power, Israel must provide for the basic needs of the population or facilitate the safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian relief," Spoljaric said.

The war had "ruptured any sense of a shared humanity", she said.

"The situation in the Gaza Strip degenerates by the hour. There is nowhere safe for people to go. The civilian death toll and the ongoing captivity of hostages are shocking and unacceptable," Spoljaric said.

"In the face of such deep suf-

fering", the ICRC called urgently for a cease-fire to allow "a steady, robust flow of humanitarian aid" to reach people in Gaza.

It urged Hamas to release the captives it was still holding, care for their safety and medical needs, and allow the ICRC to visit them.

It said the ICRC must be "notified" of any Palestinians detained by Israel and allowed to visit them, stressing Israel had a duty to treat them "humanely" and allow them to "communicate with family".

Spoljaric urged world leaders to make respect for international law a "political priority".



Wounded Palestinian children receive treatment at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital after Israeli bombardment in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on March 9, 2024.
● AFP

Yemen strikes US ship, warships with missiles, drones

International Desk

Yemen's Army said on Saturday it fired missiles at an "American" commercial ship and launched drones at US warships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Yemen's Armed Forces spokesman Yahya Saree said the Yemeni forces carried out two separate attacks. The first targeted the commercial vessel Propel Fortune in the Gulf of Aden, he said, calling it an "American" ship.

The second saw "37 drones" fired at "a number of American" warships, Saree said.

"The two operations successfully achieved their goals," he added.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces will continue to carry out their military operations in

the Red and Arab Sea until the aggression stops and the siege on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip is lifted," Saree underlined.

However, the US and its allies claimed they shot down 15 drones fired by Yemen into the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden on Saturday, in one of the largest attacks by the Arabian country.

The US Central Command, or CENTCOM, said the "large-scale" attack occurred before dawn in the Red Sea and adjacent Gulf of Aden.

Yemen has openly supported Palestine's struggle against Israel since the occupying regime launched a devastating war on Gaza on October 7 after the territory's Palestinian resistance movements carried out the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

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