



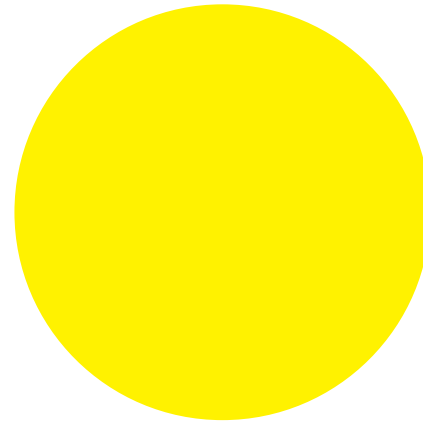
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# Iran Daily



## Iran's defense power defies sanctions



By Diako Hosseini  
Analyst of strategic affairs

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In correspondence to 32 nations worldwide, the Israeli foreign minister has advocated for sanctions against the missile program of the Islamic Republic of Iran. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, together with other G7 leaders, has pledged to reflect on additional sanctions against Iran, particularly targeting its drone and missile programs.

The threat to impose more sanctions on Iran surfaces only days after Tehran's missile and drone strike in retaliation to Israel's terrorist assault on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, all while Iran remains ensnared in the tightest of sanctions. One of Israel's misconceptions lay precisely here, assuming that harsh economic sanctions in previous years had crippled Iran, weakening its deterrent capacity and making it unable to give a response to the violation and terrorism of the Israeli regime.

Iran's extensive drone and missile strike clearly demonstrated that sanctions have barely scratched the surface of Iran's defense power, given that Iran's military industry is predominantly self-reliant and minimally reliant on external sources. Hence, a salient aspect of Iran's retaliatory attack against Israel was the enhancement of its defense capabilities amid stringent sanctions. It's evident that the threat of sanctions on Iran's missile and drone programs will scarcely hinder its maintenance and bolstering of its missile and drone capabilities.

In the throes of sanctions, the Islamic Republic managed to challenge the perception of Israel as an uncontested military power in the region. This perception was dispelled on October 7 and during the Gaza conflict, and now, with Iran's military retaliation, the illusion of Israel's supremacy in military prowess has been shattered. Though some Israeli media or authorities may downplay Iran's response to mask their vulnerabilities, Iran's swift and audacious strike from its own soil, pre-announced, was an unprecedented move showcasing Tehran's self-confidence and defense capabilities, while exposing the vulnerability of the Israeli regime.

Within the confines of legitimate defense, Tehran had the right to hit back against Israel's targeting of its military advisors in the Iranian diplomatic mission. It was within this right that the Israeli regime found itself impotent at the UN Security Council meeting, failing to muster even a single statement against Tehran. Everyone acknowledges Iran's response as a legitimate right, although some may abstain from expressing it for various reasons.

Iran's unprecedented attack also underscored resolve to safeguard its territorial integrity, national interests, and international standing against regional counterparts, revealing Iran's unwavering stance even in the direst of circumstances to protect its interests. Indeed, this operation exemplified Iran's regional power like never before.

# Illusion of Immunity Shattered



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (c) chairs a War Cabinet meeting at the Kirya in Tel Aviv on April 14, 2024. AFP

## Raisi: Action against Iran to receive stronger response



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with Deputy Chief of Lebanon's Higher Islamic Shia Council Sheikh Ali al-Khatib during a meeting in Tehran, Iran, on April 16, 2024. president.ir

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## Pro-Palestinian protesters shut down highways, bridges in US cities



AFP

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators blocked roadways in Illinois, California, New York and the Pacific Northwest on Monday, temporarily shutting down travel into some of the nation's most heavily used airports, onto the Golden Gate and Brooklyn bridges and on a busy West Coast highway.

In Chicago, protesters linked arms and blocked lanes of Interstate 190 leading into O'Hare International Airport around 7 a.m. in a demonstration they said was part of a global "economic blockade to free Palestine," according to Rifqa Falaneh, one of the organizers, AP reported.

Traffic in the San Francisco Bay Area was snarled for hours as demonstrators shut down all vehicle, pedestrian and bike traffic on the Golden Gate Bridge and chained themselves to 55-gallon drums filled with cement across Interstate 880 in Oakland. Protesters marching into Brooklyn blocked Manhattan-bound traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge. In Eugene, Oregon, protesters blocked Interstate 5, shutting down traffic on the major highway for about 45 minutes.

Protesters say they chose O'Hare in part because it is one of the largest airports. Among other things, they've called for an immediate cease-fire in the war between Israel and Hamas. Anti-war protesters have demonstrated in Chicago near daily since the beginning of Israel's onslaught on Gaza on October 7.

The Israeli offensive has killed more than 33,700 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry. Near Seattle, the Washington State Department of Transportation said a demonstration closed the main road to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Social media posts showed people holding a banner and waving Palestinian flags while standing on the highway, which reopened about three hours later.

About 20 protesters were arrested at the Golden Gate Bridge demonstration and traffic resumed shortly after noon, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Oregon State Police said 52 protesters were arrested for disorderly conduct following the Interstate 5 protest in Eugene, Oregon, about 110 miles (177 kilometers) south of Portland. Six vehicles were towed from the scene.

# Raisi: Action against Iran to receive stronger response



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) meets with Deputy Chief of Lebanon's Higher Islamic Shia Council Sheikh Ali al-Khatib (L) in Tehran, Iran, on April 16, 2024. [president.ir](http://president.ir)

Israel's attack on Iran's consulate is a sign of the regime's desperation caused by its failure in the Gaza Strip.

### International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday warned that any action against the Islamic Republic's interests will be met with a stronger response amid Israeli threats of retaliation against a recent Iran's attack on the occupied territories.

On Saturday, Iran launched its first-ever direct attack against Israel with a large number of missiles and drones in response to the regime's April 1 strike on Iran's consulate in Syria's capital, Damascus. Israel's attack claimed the lives of seven members of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), including two generals.

Raisi said that the Opera-

tion True Promise, which was carried out by the IRGC, was aimed at punishing the aggressor. He made the remarks in a phone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Raisi said that the attack on Iran's consulate was a clear violation of international law, including the Vienna Convention, and a serious threat to international peace. He also said that the destructive role of the United States and some western countries as well as the failure of the United Nations and the Security Council in dealing with the Israel's attack on Iran's consulate, prompted the Islamic Republic to exercise its right to self-defense.

The Iranian president also

held a meeting with visiting Deputy Chief of Lebanon's Higher Islamic Shia Council Sheikh Ali al-Khatib.

During the meeting, Raisi described the Israel's attack on Iran's consulate as a sign of the regime's desperation caused by its failure in the Gaza Strip.

The Iranian president also on Monday discussed the Iran's attack with Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Raisi warned that any slightest action against Iran's interests will be met with an "extensive and painful response."

Raisi further underlined the need for taking acts of deterrence, especially by Muslim countries, against Israel as it keeps committing crimes in Gaza. The indiscriminate

support of some Western countries for Israel is fueling tensions in the region, he asserted.

Sheikh Tamim, for his part, referred to Qatar's condemnation of Israel's deadly attack that violated international agreements and conventions, as well as diplomatic norms.

As the globe is witnessing the highest level of convergence in support of the Palestinian cause, the Zionist regime is escalating tensions in a bid to divert the world's public opinion from its Gaza crimes, he added.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian also discussed Iran's retaliatory attack with a number of his counterparts.

In a phone conversation

with his Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi, he said the Israeli regime is the main source of tension in the region.

Amir-Abdollahian said Iran's operation of April 13 was within the framework of the legitimate right to self-defense and international law. The top Iranian diplomat said Tehran has never been for escalation in the region, and the Islamic Republic will always remain the pillar of regional stability.

Amir-Abdollahian thanked Jakarta's position in condemning the Israeli regime's April 1 attack.

Marsudi, for her part, said Indonesia was ready to cooperate further with Iran regarding the Palestinian issue.

## Israel must stop settler attacks on Palestinians: UN



The UN human rights office called on Israeli security forces to immediately end their active participation in and support for attacks by Jewish settlers on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. The statement Tuesday follows a wave of settler attacks on Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank triggered by the death of a 14-year-old Israeli boy, AP reported.

The Palestinian Health Ministry says seven Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers since the attacks began Friday, and another 75 have

been wounded. Israeli authorities have urged people not to resort to vigilante attacks as tensions soar. But rights groups have long accused Israeli forces of routinely ignoring settler attacks or even taking part in them. Israel's opposition leader Yair Lapid on Monday said that under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "Jewish terrorist violence" against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank was "out of control." Violence in the West Bank has soared since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7.

Date: 1403/1/29 - No.: 55/03/1532

**INVITATION TO RENEWAL OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER**  
First Announcement  
**AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY**

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture-Jihad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below item of technical, through renewal of one step international tender.

	Name	PACKING	Quantity/ KG
1	Deltamethrin Tech Min 98.5 pct.	50 kg drums	1800

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Saturday dated 20/4/2024 until Wednesday dated 24/4/2024 (5 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of IRI. Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30-character identification code of 35803978226350065000000000000006.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Sunday dated 26/5/2024 until 10:00 AM to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Sunday dated 26/5/2024 at 02:00 PM with the presence of bidder's representatives at our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the value of the bid bond amount must be only submitted by the bidders in bank guarantee as follows:

The value of the bid bond: € 4860 is equivalent to Iranian Rials 1501603920.

- The bid bond value should be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on the exchange rate of Telegraphic Transfer of the basic and essential commodities on CBI's ETS website, [www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir](http://www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir), on 7/4/2024.

-The bidders are also permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial.

- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website [www.assc.ir](http://www.assc.ir), and <http://liets.mporq.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

Public relations and international affairs of agricultural support services company





# Seyyed Mohammad Bridge of Zanjaan connecting past and present



### Iranica Desk

Zanjaan is a city with a rich historical background, known for its cold mountainous climate and the presence of significant rivers like Qezel Ozan and the Zanjaan River, the latter being one of the city's primary waterways. In the past, Zanjaan River, flowing through the outskirts of the city, was prone to flooding, but today a gentle stream meanders through its course. In ancient times, these rivers carried more water, shaping the movement and transportation of people back then. Consequently, bridges were constructed by philanthropists to facilitate the ease of travel for the residents. The Seyyed Mohammad Bridge, a public utility structure, was erected during the Qajar era by Haj Seyyed Mohammad. This bridge stands as a national architectural marvel. Also known

as Qarah Tappah Bridge, the name derives from the Azari term for "black hill," a nod to its proximity to the village of Qarah Tappah. The Seyyed Mohammad Bridge was built in 1921 over the Zanjaan River, connecting Zanjaan to Hamedan during the mid-Qajar period. Haj Seyyed Mohammad Zanjani, a distinguished clergyman and prosperous merchant during the Constitutional Revolution era, was the visionary behind this remarkable structure. This bridge, which has withstood the relentless flow of the Zanjaan River for more than a century, exemplifies the skill and artistry of its creators. The arches, openings, foundations, and materials used in the construction all point to a genuine masterpiece. Bricks are notably abundant in this structure. During the construction of the bridge, three main openings

were incorporated, with the central one being larger than the others. This design was made due to the higher water pressure at this specific location compared to other areas. The bridge's foundations, painted white up to a height of two meters, along with the fully stone-paved entrances, serve to enhance the visual allure of the bridge. This bridge has played a significant role in the lives of the people in the past, earning its reputation as one of the most important bridges in Iran. Spanning 104 meters in length and 6.5 meters in width, it was meticulously constructed using bricks, cut stones, and *sarooj* (a kind of concrete used in ancient Iran). Featuring three primary openings, the central one stands taller and wider than the two side openings, effectively reducing the bridge's weight and proving valuable during floods and peri-

ods of high river levels. Its foundations exhibit a unique and aesthetically pleasing architecture, prominently showcasing the use of river stones in its design. The entrances on both sides of the bridge are elegantly paved with stones, enhancing the overall beauty of the structure. Renowned among the locals for its role in connecting the Qarah Tappah village to Zanjaan, it is affectionately referred to as the Qarah Tappah Bridge. Recently, the bridge has undergone meticulous restoration and reconstruction efforts. This bridge was built outside the city at that time. Now, with the expansion of Zanjaan, this bridge is located within the city of Zanjaan. Zanjaan boasts a total of three renowned historic bridges: The Haj Seyyed Mohammad Bridge, the Mir Bahaeddin Bridge, and the Sardar Bridge, all serving the public.

## Lorestan's Azna Snow Tunnel and natural marvels

Lorestan Province stands out as one of the premier tourist destinations in western Iran, boasting a plethora of attractions that are sure to captivate visitors. The province's distinctive and lush natural environment promises to astonish you, creating an unforgettable journey. From enchanting waterfalls to captivating caves, from the picturesque overturned tulips plain to the extraordinary lakes and gorges, Lorestan Province offers a diverse range of natural wonders for travelers to explore.

Among the province's natural gems is the renowned Azna Snow Tunnel, a popular destination that spans over 800 meters and offers breathtaking mountain vistas in the foothills of Oshtrankouh. Situated 82 kilometers from Khorramabad, Azna is home to more than 80,000 residents. This city, nestled in the eastern part of Lorestan Province, thrives as an agricultural hub due to its fertile plains, with a significant portion of its population deriving their livelihood from farming. Notably, Azna leads

the nation in wheat production and contributes to 10% of the country's bean production. Five kilometers from Azna lies the majestic Oshtrankouh Mountain range, featuring 13 peaks reaching heights of 4,250 meters. This mountain range, often referred to as the Iranian Alps, attracts numerous climbers and tourists, both domestic and international, each year. With its lofty snow-capped peaks, meandering rivers, verdant valleys, diverse flora and fauna, and charming foothill villages, Oshtrankouh offers a

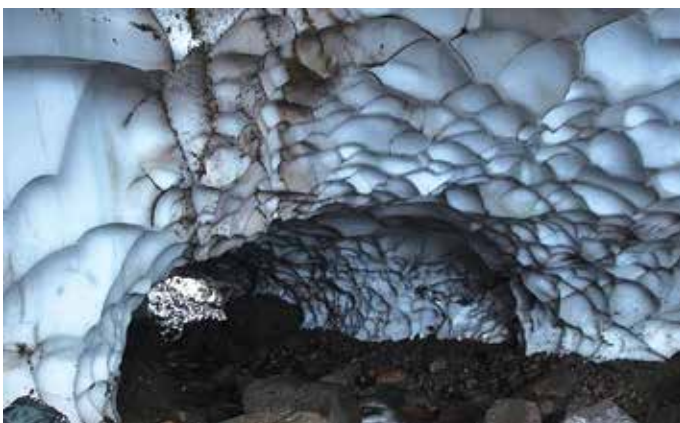
truly mesmerizing experience for nature enthusiasts. The Azna Snow Tunnel, a natural marvel with a width of 10 meters and a height ranging from 2.5 to 3 meters, is a product of accumulated snow and ice in one of the Oshtrankouh valleys near the village of Aznadar. Formed during heavy winter snowfalls and subsequent spring melts, this tunnel-like structure presents a perilous yet alluring passage for adventurous travelers. Despite the risk of collapse, many tourists venture inside to witness its

unique beauty firsthand. Aznadar, the site of the snow tunnel's formation, stands out as a picturesque tourist spot within the Oshtrankouh region. Boasting diverse vegetation, natural springs, flowing water, and wildlife such as bears and goats, Aznadar offers a rich tapestry of natural wonders for visitors to explore. The valley's awe-inspiring vertical cliffs, which often obscure the sun until midday, create a serene backdrop for travelers to immerse themselves in Iran's pristine landscapes.

The Azna Snow Tunnel, accessible only during spring, summer, and early autumn due to weather conditions, offers a chilling experience as visitors traverse its icy interior. As you journey through the tunnel, the temperature drops and cold-water drips from the ceiling, enveloping you in a surreal atmosphere. At the tunnel's summit, visitors may experience a peculiar sensation, feeling weightless yet perspiring—a testament to the tunnel's unique allure and the wonders of nature awaiting those who dare to explore its depths.



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SURF PERSIA



# Sorry, but Iran is not the aggressor here



The bodies of Palestinians killed during Israel's indiscriminate bombing of Gaza are being buried in a mass grave on January 30, 2024, in Rafah, Gaza.  
● MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS

By Belén Fernández  
Author, columnist

## OPINION

On Saturday, April 13, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel in retaliation for a deadly Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Syria, that took place on April 1. The vast majority of the projectiles were intercepted by Israel's air defence system, with assistance from the ever-helpful United States military, and damage was minimal. Having completed its retaliation, Iran has now declared that the matter can "be deemed concluded" — although Israel is not usually one to let anyone else have the last word. In the meantime, the barrage of criticism of Tehran's "aggression" has continued unabated in the West.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak condemned "in the strongest terms the Iranian regime's reckless attack against Israel", which he insisted had once again shown that Iran was "intent on sowing chaos in its own backyard". The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs lamented that "Iran's long-term aggressive behavior is preventing the Middle East region to live in peace and security". For his part, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau whined about Iran's "disregard for peace and stability in the region", and regurgitated that old, tired slogan about "Israel's right to defend itself". Germany's Ambassador to Israel Steffen

Seibert took to social media to proclaim German solidarity "with all Israelis tonight whom Iran is terrorising with this unprecedented and ruthless attack". Lastly, US President Joe Biden, who was forced to cut his beach weekend short due to the developments, announced: "Our commitment to Israel's security against threats from Iran and its proxies is iron-clad." The Iranian attack, mind you, occurred a little over six months into Israel's ongoing pulverisation of the Gaza Strip, which has killed nearly 34,000 Palestinians, including some 13,800 children. And yet, given the thousands of missing persons pre-

sumed to be buried under the rubble, even these terrifying numbers are no doubt grave underestimates. More than 76,000 people have been wounded, as the Israeli military has busied itself flattening entire neighbourhoods and blowing up schools, hospitals, and other basic infrastructure, all the while condemning the territory's inhabitants to famine and starvation. Talk about "terrorising". Indeed, genocide is nothing if not "long-term aggressive behaviour" — to borrow the Czech Foreign Ministry's words. If the whole business weren't so unprecedentedly heinous, it would be almost laughable to claim that Iran is the one "intent on sowing chaos" and disregarding "peace and stability in the region". But because Israel's outside role as a prized US partner-in-crime entitles it to a total subversion of logic, genocidaires become victims and unmitigated Israeli aggression becomes "self-defence". And never mind the April 1 Israeli attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus; that was just preemptive retaliation, right? In light of the unceasing slaughter in Gaza, though, the Western response to the intercepted Iranian missiles and drones is sickeningly cynical. Sunak's pathetic claim that "no one wants to see more bloodshed" fails to account for the reality that, as long as it's Palestinian blood, it's all totally fine. Unfortunately, the Iranian spectacle may provide the Biden administration with exactly what it needs to shift the focus away from Gaza — and specifically US complicity in genocide. After all, it would be a sad day for the arms industry if the US had to stop sending so many weapons to such an active client.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the US was responsible for a full 69 percent of arms imports by the Israeli military between 2019 and 2023, when the all-out genocide kicked off. So much for "peace and stability". But one should never underestimate the imperial utility of the good old Iranian menace in justifying whatever US policy needs justifying. Recall Tehran's inclusion on the original "axis of evil" shortlist, courtesy of former US President George W. Bush, who in his 2002 State of the Union address denounced Iran for "aggressively" pursuing weapons of mass destruction and "export[ing] terror". Armed with said "axis", the US proceeded to engage in nothing less than mass destruction and terror throughout the Middle East and beyond. Fast-forward 22 years to the present era of destruction, and the Iranian bogeyman is as handy as ever. Following this weekend's attack, perhaps everyone's favourite refrain "But do you condemn Hamas?" can be updated to: "But do you condemn Iran?" As for things genuinely worthy of condemnation, these continue to include, well, genocide in Gaza — not to mention the brazenly hypocritical Western insistence on Israel's "right to self-defence", which ultimately amounts to genocidal apologetics. And as leaders continue to trip over themselves in affirmation of solidarity with Israel after this "unprecedented attack", we'd all do well to remember that you reap what you sow — and that Iran is not the aggressor here.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan (front) smiles during a United Nations Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including Iran's recent attack against Israel, at UN headquarters in New York City on April 14, 2024.  
● CHARLY TRIBALLEAU/AFP



## Despite being shot down Iran's missiles still delivered what Tehran was hoping for



By Efsandiyar Batmanghelidj  
CEO of Bourse & Bazaar  
Foundation thinktank

### OPINION

Earlier this month, after an Israeli air strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus killed several military commanders, Iran's Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei used his sermon to mark Eid al-Fitr to equate Israel's attack on the diplomatic facility to an attack on Iranian soil, and vowed that Israel's "mistake" would be punished. At just that moment, the broadcast of the sermon cut to a face in the crowd — Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh. Hajizadeh commands the aerospace forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). His grin was knowing.

A few days later, on Sunday, 300 drones and long-range missiles were launched from Iran toward Israel. The attack marked the first time Iran had attacked Israel directly from its own territory, rather than relying on its backed groups in Iraq, Syria, or Lebanon. Though Israeli jets and air defences responded, with the support of American, British, French, and Jordanian forces, and successfully intercepted most of the drones and missiles, the spectacle of missiles flying above the Dome of the Rock — the third holiest shrine in Islam — seemed to portend a full-blown war.

Shifting dynamics in Washington are more important for the trajectory of this conflict than the dynamics in Tel Aviv or Tehran. US President Joe Biden has reportedly warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the US would not support an Israeli counterattack against Iran. American officials are briefing reporters on Biden's concerns that Netanyahu may be seeking to drag him into a wider conflict.

Israel and Iran have been engaged in a "shadow war" for years. Iran's Senior generals have been killed. Nuclear scientists have been assassinated. Israeli cyber-attacks have repeatedly hit military sites, nuclear facilities, and civilian infrastructure across Iran. Even now, Iran's military commanders, while eager to project their strength, remain wary of starting a fight with Israel they might not win. The leader has his own deep-rooted concerns.

Khamenei became Iran's leader just one year after the end of the eight-year long Iran-Iraq war, in which more than 200,000 Iranians were killed. For Khamenei and his generation of revolutionaries, the first achievement of the Islamic revolution was the "stability and security of the country", exemplified in the "sacred defence" of Iran against Saddam Hussein's invasion. The maintenance of Iran's stability and security is fundamental to Khamenei's legacy and to the advancement of the Islamic revolution, particularly at a time when many Iranians have come to feel fundamentally unsafe.

It is therefore surprising that Iran chose to attack Israeli territory from its own on Saturday night. Officials and analysts had expected a measured retaliation. Importantly, Iran had given Israel and its partners ample time to prepare for an assault. Iran also engaged in back-channel talks to make clear that it was not seeking to trigger a war. Once the attack was over, the Iranian mission to the United Nations issued a statement saying that the "matter can be deemed concluded".

But the direct nature of the attack, which made it so spectacular and frightening, may still compel a strong Israeli response, possibly triggering a new and dangerous cycle of escalation. In a warning to Israeli leaders, Hossein Salami, the commander of the IRGC, hailed the attack as establishing a "new

equation" in which Israel can no longer attack Iranian "people, property, or interests" without triggering a "reciprocal" response launched from Iran. The Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant has declared that "the campaign is not over yet". In taking the fight to Iran, Israel sees an opportunity to regain international support, so eroded by its horrendous conduct in Gaza, but it is unclear whether the United States will help Israel strike back.

President Biden's statement on the Iranian attack reiterates the US's "ironclad commitment to the security of Israel", but it also includes some remarkable language. The statement makes clear that Iran attacked "military facilities", downplaying the threat to civilian lives. It emphasises that the defence was successful and that Israel's enemies "cannot effectively threaten" its security, pre-empting arguments that Israel faces an existential threat from Iran. Biden vows to coordinate a united "diplomatic response" to Iran's aggression, ruling out an immediate military response. The statement concludes by making clear that American forces had not been attacked — a crucial signal to the American public.

During the third debate in the 2012 presidential election, both the president, Barack Obama, and his opponent, governor Mitt Romney, were asked about Iran and whether they would declare that "an attack on Israel is an attack on the United States". This was once the widely understood meaning of the US's "ironclad commitment to Israeli security". But today, the American electorate no longer understands what national security interests are at stake in the Middle East, and increasingly believes that ironclad commitments should have brass-bound conditions. Notably, most American voters now disapprove of Israeli military actions in Gaza. As Iran's leadership has doggedly pursued the dismantling of the longstanding security architecture in the Middle East, including the withdrawal of US forces, it has sought to expose the limits of American security guarantees. To this end, it has developed an acute understanding of Biden's deep reluctance to enter a new war, most recently evidenced by his response to the death of three US soldiers in an attack at the al-Tank military base in Syria in January.

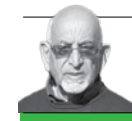
This may explain why Iran opted for a direct, if calibrated, attack on Israel. It did not directly restore Iranian deterrence, but it did expose a critical American reluctance. The effect may be the same. Biden's statement makes it clear that Israel remains capable of defending its territory and will have US support in doing so. But if Israel continues to go on the offensive, it may be forced to do so alone. This fact, more than anything else, may moderate Israel's next move.

The article first appeared on *The Guardian*.



A demonstrator kisses a bullet shell replica as others gather in celebration at Palestine Square in Tehran on April 14, 2024, after Iran launched a drone and missile attack on Israel.  
• ATA KENARE/AFP

## Iran's historic attack rooted in Palestine's freedom struggle



By Iqbal Jassat  
Executive Member of  
Media Review Network

### OPINION

The eve of April 14, 2024, and the hours that followed will be recorded in history as momentous because the Islamic Republic of Iran launched an aerial assault directly from its home soil against apartheid Israel's settler-colonial regime. Israeli citizens attested that the tense hours when Iran's drones and ballistic missiles came over the occupation state's night skies were bewildering, shocking, and alarming. Many claimed to have spent the night in bunkers and safe rooms, anxious and sleepless. Being on the receiving end of an aerial attack was a new reality that they were confronted with. It was very different to being cheerleaders for the slaughter of thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza and the anti-Palestinian pogroms in the occupied West Bank.



Motorcyclists wave flags of Iran, Palestine, and Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement in celebration of Iran's drone and missile attack on Israel, in Tehran on April 13, 2024.  
• MEHDI BOLOURIAN/IRNA

The eve of April 14, 2024, and the hours that followed will be recorded in history as momentous because the Islamic Republic of Iran launched an aerial assault directly from its home soil against apartheid Israel's settler-colonial regime. Israeli citizens attested that the tense hours when Iran's drones and ballistic missiles came over the occupation state's night skies were bewildering, shocking, and alarming. Many claimed to have spent the night in bunkers and safe rooms, anxious and sleepless.

Being on the receiving end of an aerial attack was a new reality that they were confronted with. It was very different to being cheerleaders for the slaughter of thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza and the anti-Palestinian pogroms in the occupied West Bank. A columnist in *Forward* described the sombre reality of the effects of Iran's attacks in the following words: "Sunday is the start of the Israeli work week, but schools and many government offices were closed for the day. This cosmopolitan city's typically crowded light trail was sparse and remarkably silent, with the few passengers glued to their smartphones looking for answers nobody could seem to find."

While uncertainty about the result of Iran's historic attack has preoccupied military analysts who are keen to find answers, they certainly cannot ignore the fact that Israel's deterrence capacity has been severely compromised. Former French military mission chief to the UN General Dominique Trinquand made an important point: "The significant development in this conflict is that Iran has directly hit Israel." Although advanced American defence technology intervened on behalf of Israel to intercept many of the drones and missiles, the Iranian attack "carries significant weight," he said. "One cannot underestimate the number of missiles and drones fired at Israel from Iran, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon, with strikes on the Golan Heights."

An equally important observation has been made by Didier Leroy, a researcher at the Royal Military Academy of Belgium. According to Leroy, "We have crossed a qualitative threshold that changes the dynamics and repositions Iran on the map as an active military player." From his vantage point as a former director of Israeli military intelligence, Amos Yadlin predicts that the Iranian attack may lead to a strategic change in "the war in Gaza, and even to its end".

The military decree issued by Israel's war cabinet to block information on the damage caused by Iran's attacks has gagged local and international media platforms and denied access to verify independently the claims that "minimal" damage was incurred. Such repressive conduct unfairly censors news content. This has given the apartheid regime carte blanche to disseminate propaganda couched

as "information" but far removed from truth and accuracy.

Iranian analyst Professor Seyyed Mohammed Marandi insists that Iran's main targets were two air bases, and that 20 or more missiles struck their targets. "The other drones and older generation missiles were inexpensive decoys that depleted the Israeli air defence systems of most of their very expensive missiles." Sceptics argue that Iran's attack was a failure, but they either ignore or deliberately obfuscate the new reality of deterrence injected by the Islamic Republic. From an Iranian perspective, the attack on its consulate in Damascus was a red line which demanded retaliation, otherwise it would erase any notion of deterrence, opening the door for even more brazen Israeli military action, up to and including direct attacks on Iran.

No wonder that former US Marine Corps intelligence officer Scott Ritter has described Iran's retaliatory attack as one of the "greatest victories of this century". He added that "Operation True Promise will go down in history as one of the most important military victories in the history of modern Iran, keeping in mind that war is but an extension of politics by other means. The fact that Iran has established a credible deterrence posture without disrupting major policy goals and objectives is the very definition of victory."

This point was emphasised by Palestinian academic Professor Sami Al-Arian. He insists that the theory of Israeli deterrence has been greatly undermined. "The strategic situation of the Zionist regime after October 7 is not the same as it was before. Similarly, the regional strategic situation after April 14 is not the same either."

No matter how Israel's racist, right-wing regime attempts to spin its lockdown as a "victory", the facts dispute this narrative. Moreover, Iran's prestige as the foremost supporter of Palestine's freedom struggle has been bolstered enormously. It is a position it has not shied away from nor concealed. In fact, part of the strategic calibration that went into its attack was to ensure that Gaza's plight is neither overshadowed nor forsaken.

Unsurprisingly, Palestinian Islamic resistance movement Hamas has backed Iran's attack and affirmed "the natural right" of countries and peoples in the Middle East to defend themselves in the face of Zionist aggression. "The military operation carried out by Iran against the Zionist entity is a natural right and a due response to the crime of targeting the consulate in Damascus," said the movement.

The most important lesson to be gleaned from Iran's heroic mission is that the struggle for liberation, defending sovereignty, and resisting occupation and oppression is a just and legitimate cause.

The article first appeared on *Middle East Monitor*



## Perfect Palmer hits four as Chelsea thrash woeful Everton 6-0



Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson scores their fourth goal against Everton in Stamford Bridge, London, Britain on April 15, 2024.  
● REUTERS

Chelsea midfielder Cole Palmer scored four goals, including a hat-trick in the first 30 minutes, as his side hammered Everton 6-0 on Monday evening to maintain their push for a European spot and leave the visitors still hovering above the relegation zone.

The 21-year-old Palmer underlined his England credentials with a classic left foot, header, right foot treble and then added a second-half penalty as Chelsea ran riot, Reuters reported.

Nicolas Jackson and substitute Alfie Gilchrist were also on target as Chelsea remain ninth on 47 points but with games in hand on all the teams above them.

"When we signed him (Palmer) he was a great talent," Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino said. "He is doing fantastic; he is doing really well and he has adapted himself. The impact on the team was amazing from day one."

It was a sobering night for Sean Dyche's visitors, however, as the heavy defeat leaves Everton 16th on 27 points, two places and two points above the relegation zone.

"A horrid night, miles away from where we want to be," said Dyche. "The hard yards, simple tackling, basic principles - all out the window and it was a massive reminder of where we are." Everton actually had the first good chance but Beto blasted over from point-blank range after 10 minutes and it was downhill from then on.

Palmer got things moving after 13 minutes when he nutmegged Jarrad Branthwaite, played a one-two with Jackson and instantly clipped in a shot from the edge of the box.

Five minutes later more intricate passing - albeit alongside tentative Everton defending - set up the second as Jordan Pickford parried a Jackson shot straight to Palmer, who nodded the ball into the empty net.

## Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers win two golds at Asian C'ships

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Naser Alizadeh and Amin Mirzazadeh claimed two gold medals in the 2024 Asian Wrestling Championships on Monday in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Mirzazadeh showed once again how unstoppable he is from par terre, as he rolled Minseok Kim (KOR) two times for all the points he needed in a 5-0 victory in the 130kg final, reported Mehr News Agency.

"I really practiced hard for this and tried a lot to be able to create a significant difference with the other competitors and it makes me happy," Mirzazadeh said.

It was the first time in three matches that the Iranian didn't end it with enough gut wrenches from par terre, but it still got the job done.

Mirzazadeh had beaten Kim previously in the first round of the Tokyo Olympics, where he ended up taking a disappointing fifth by losing to the legendary Riza Kayaalp (TUR) in the bronze-medal match. Mirzazadeh lost to Kayaalp again in the final of the 2022 worlds, but gained his revenge and his

first world title in the gold-medal match last September in Belgrade. That makes him a leading candidate to end the hopes of Mijain Lopez (CUB) for an unprecedented fifth Olympic gold in Paris.

"I think it was a really great start for further preparation for the Olympics," Mirzazadeh said. "From tomorrow, when the competition ends, I have to start training and trying to make my people happy with the title in the Olympics."

At 87kg, Alizadeh maintained his dominance of Nursultan Tursynov (KAZ), beating him at the Asian Championships for the fourth year in a row and in a second consecutive final.

Alizadeh was never really challenged and clinched a 5-0 victory with a 2-point throw from par terre at the edge in the second period.

Alizadeh had beaten Tursynov in the first round in both 2021 and 2022 before defeating him 8-0 in last year's final in Astana. The 33-year-old Tursynov does have an Asian gold medal, won back in 2014.



● MNA

## Paris 2024 Games Flame lit in Ancient Olympia

The sacred flame for the Paris 2024 Olympics was lit Tuesday in Olympia, Greece, the birthplace of the ancient Games, in a ceremony inspired by antiquity and marked by messages of hope amid multiple global crises.

"In ancient times, the Olympic Games brought together the Greek city states, even - and in particular - during times of war and conflict," said International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, reported AFP.

"Today, the Olympic Games are the only event that brings the entire world together in peaceful competition. Then as now, the Olympic athletes are sending this powerful message: yes, it is possible to compete fiercely against each other and at the same time live peacefully together under one roof," he said.

Owing to cloudy weather, Greek actresses in the role of ancient priestesses used a flame lit in a rehearsal Monday in the 2,600-year-old Temple of Hera, near the stadium where the Olympics were born in 776 BC.

Carrying the flame in a pot, Greek actress Mary Mina lit the torch for the first bearer, 2020 Olympic rowing champion Stefanos Ntouskos.

Retired French swimmer Laure Manaudou, who won her first gold medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics, followed as France's first torchbearer in Olympia.

Officials on Tuesday stressed that the Paris Games will set new milestones, following the legacy of the other two prior Olympics held in the French capital.

"The Olympic Flame will shine over the first Olympic Games inspired by our Olympic Agenda reforms from start to

finish," Bach said.

"These Olympic Games will be younger, more inclusive, more urban, more sustainable. These will be the very first Olympic Games with full gender parity, because the IOC allocated exactly 50 percent of the places to female and male athletes," he said.



● AFP

Paris Olympics chief organiser Tony Estanguet noted that women took part for the first time in the Paris 1900 Games, while the first Olympic Village was created for the Paris 2024 Games.

For the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic imposed toned-down events for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and 2022

Beijing Winter Games, the ceremony was back with full regalia and scores of spectators.

Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou, French sports minister Amelie Oudea-Castera and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo were present at the ceremony. American mezzo soprano Joyce DiDonato

(3,100 miles) through 41 municipalities.

The Olympic flame will be handed over to Paris 2024 organisers in a ceremony at the all-marble Panathenaic Stadium, site of the first modern Olympic Games of 1896, on April 26.

On April 27, the flame will begin its journey to France on board the 19th-century three-masted barque Belem, which was launched just weeks after the Athens 1896 Games.

A French historical monument, the Belem carried out trade journeys to Brazil, Guyana and the Caribbean for nearly two decades.

France's last surviving three-mast steel-hulled boat, it is expected to arrive in Marseille on May 8.

Ten thousand torchbearers will then carry the flame across 64 French territories.

It will travel through 400 towns and dozens of tourist attractions during its 12,000-kilometre (7,500-mile) journey through mainland France and overseas French territories in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific.

On July 26 it will form the centrepiece of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony.

The ceremony is planned to be held on the river Seine -- the first time it has not been held in the Games' main stadium.

However, French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday said it could be moved to the national stadium in the event of a security threat.

Macron said instead of teams sailing down the Seine on barges, the ceremony could be "limited to the Trocadero" building across the river from the Eiffel Tower or "even moved to the Stade de France".

## Iran, Japan monopolized AFC Futsal Asian Cup: FIFA

Iran and Japan are firmly expected to qualify for Uzbekistan 2024, while it appears wide open in the battle for Asia's other two places.

The top two in each group will reach the quarter-finals of the 2024 AFC Futsal Asian Cup. The four semi-finalists will represent Asia at this year's FIFA Futsal World Cup. Uzbekistan has already qualified for the global finals as host, so if it reaches the Futsal Asian Cup's last four,

play-offs will determine the AFC's final representative, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Iran and Japan have monopolized the AFC Futsal Asian Cup. Team Melli will be without Hossein Tayyebi, the competition's top scorer two years ago, but in Salar Aqapour, Saeid Ahmadabbasi and Moslem Oladghobad boast three outstanding players. Arthur, Rafael Henmi, Kokoro Harada and Kazuya Shimizu are out for the Samurai

Blue, who have struggled of late, FIFA.com reported.

Iran is the overwhelming forerunners to top Group D. Afghanistan will make its Futsal Asian Cup debut, but has made rapid progress under Iranian coach Majid Mortazavi. Moreover, in Mehran Gholami, it has a player capable of unlocking the most brick-like backlines. Kuwait, eyeing a first global finals since 2012, has just handed its reins to David Marin.



● TASNIM



# Why Israel is alone in pushing for war



By Zohreh  
Qanadi  
Staff writer

## PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

US President Joe Biden has cautioned Benjamin Netanyahu that the US would not take part in a retaliatory strike against Iran, which is seemingly favored by the Israeli prime minister's war cabinet following Tehran's significant drone and missile assault on the occupied territories.

Iran on Saturday launched an extensive missile and drone strike against Israel in response to its attack on the Iranian consulate building in Syria on April 1, during which seven Iranian military advisors were killed.

Iran's "punishing" operation, which was in response to Israel's repeated aggressions against the country, was carried out only after the UN Security Council failed to hold the regime accountable for its latest April 1 attack. Furthermore, it was purely to establish deterrence as Iranian top officials also stated that there is no intention to continue the operation. However, Iranian officials have warned that the country's response to any further military action by Israel "will be much greater".

As the Iran attack unfolded, Israel sent mixed messages about how it might retaliate.

The prospect of open conflict breaking out between Iran and Israel has unsettled the region, prompting appeals for restraint from international powers and Arab countries. On Monday, Europe also joined the US in urging Israel to show restraint, calling on Israeli leaders to step away from "the edge of the cliff" of escalation in the Middle East.

Biden and senior members of his



REUTERS

national security team seek to contain the risk of a wider regional war. In his conversation with Netanyahu late Saturday, Biden sought to frame Israel's successful interception of the attack as a major victory. He suggested that further Israeli response was unnecessary.

However, the main reason behind Biden's reframing effort is likely to be something grander in scope: the prospect of unfavorable global economic consequences stemming from an escalation of conflict. With the expansion of war, the global price of oil would almost certainly rise, posing intense economic challenges and potentially sparking further instability. According to market watchers, oil prices could soar to \$100 per barrel and beyond.

Iran, the third-largest oil producer in the OPEC, is home to vast resources. Any disruption in its capacity to supply global markets whether due to possible punishing sanctions or due to any attack on its oil production or export facilities would drive the price of Brent

crude oil to \$100, and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz would "lead to prices in the \$120 to \$130 range," according to Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates. As mentioned, a renewed push to reinforce sanctions against Iran would impact the global oil supply. This explains why Iranian oil exports have increased in recent years, despite earlier-imposed sanctions, with the US seemingly passively endorsing this strategy to maintain downward pressure on global oil prices.

Markets will also closely monitor for developments or the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which one-fifth of global oil production flows daily. At war, Iran certainly would seize any Israeli-linked ship in the key chokepoint, as the Yemeni military did in the Bab el-Mandab strait during the past months in support of and solidarity with oppressed Gazans who have been under a brutal Israeli attack.

When oil prices increase, so does the cost of virtually everything else. This near-universal rule

stems from the fact that oil is integral to the production and distribution of goods and services worldwide. And yet, higher oil prices are exactly what the troubled US and European economies are currently getting, but the situation could potentially deteriorate.

These factors will directly affect the US economy, initially leading to soaring gas prices and inflation in the world's largest economy. As a result, both at the party and personal levels, Biden will face an increased risk of losing the presidential election to Trump, who eagerly awaits exploiting the situation. Hence, Biden is unlikely to support Israel's war on Iran. Other major global powers, including China and Russia, as well as key Arab states such as Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and, notably, Saudi Arabia, have also called for restraint. The Saudi Foreign Ministry has expressed concerns regarding recent military escalations in the region and their potentially severe consequences. Emphasizing the importance of

preventing further exacerbation of the crisis, regional leaders have warned of dire consequences should the situation deteriorate. Britain, France, Germany, and the European Union's foreign policy chief all joined Washington and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in calling for restraint. "We're on the edge of the cliff and we have to move away from it," said Josep Borrell, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. "We have to step on the brakes and reverse gear."

Amid the global consensus against the escalation of conflict, Israel presently appears to be prioritizing a push for sanctions against Iran over military actions. While Netanyahu's war cabinet reportedly favored retaliation during a meeting on Sunday, there is division within the panel regarding the timing and scale of any potential response. Despite this, two senior Israeli ministers have indicated that retaliation is not imminent and that Israel will not act unilaterally.

## Illusion of immunity shattered



By Amir  
Mousavi  
Middle East affairs  
expert

## OPINION EXCLUSIVE

There had been taboo about Israel's military power, seemingly unbreakable, especially given its long-standing reliance on the backing of the United States and Europe. As a result of such unwavering support a coalition has been forged against independent nations, perpetuating oppression and injustice upon the beleaguered people of Palestine for decades. Iran's military retaliation against Israel's terrorist act shattered the illusion of Israel's iron immunity.

The significance of Iran's action lies in the fact that, despite decades of conflict between Israel and Arab nations, no independent country had dared to launch a serious assault against Israel. Israel's atrocities in the Gaza Strip over the past seven months have inflicted severe damage upon the regime. Whereas previously, any critique of Zionism worldwide, particularly in Europe, was met with swift condemnation under the guise of "anti-Semitism". Now, with the veil lifted on the true nature of Zionism and its genocidal actions in Gaza, many Jews around the globe have raised their voices in protest, and condemnation of the belligerent Israeli regime has reverberated throughout Europe.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has now shattered the barrier to attacking Israel, plunging the Israelis once more into deep fear. Perhaps the taste of living in constant insecurity and terror will serve as a stark reminder that this has been the plight imposed upon the Palestinian people for decades.

While the Israeli regime had previously issued threats against the Islamic Republic, Iran's missile and drone strike against this regime clarified Tehran's deterrent power to both Israel and its allies. Hence, it can be inferred that Iran has accomplished its primary objective of punishing Israel and showcasing its deterrent capability. Presently, it appears the Israelis are not contemplating a direct attack on Iran, as US diplomatic efforts have been concentrated on dissuading Israel from retaliating against Iran's strike.

Since October 7, Israel's allies, spearheaded by the US, have provided full military and political support to Israel, including deploying warships and aircraft to the region as a warning to Iran against engaging in war with Israel. Although Iran had stated from the outset its lack of intent to initiate conflict, Israel's transgression of crossing the red line by targeting the Iranian consulate in Syria compelled Tehran to deliver a decisive response to Netanyahu. Following Iran's strike, Israeli sources have attempted to downplay the impact of the blows inflicted upon them, perhaps as a means to rationalize their reluctance to retaliate against Iran's attack. They are well aware that the April 14 assault merely showcased a fraction of Iran's defense capabilities, utilized not to wage war against Israel but to administer punishment.

## Iran a significant maritime might throughout history



By Rear  
Admiral  
Hamzeh Ali  
Kaviani  
Deputy Navy  
Commander for  
Coordination

## PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

Iran is among the ancient countries to have had a navy and has used it to achieve its goals throughout history. The rich and ancient background of the Iranian Navy can be categorized in three separate periods: Ancient, early modern, and post-Islamic Revolution (1979) eras.

In ancient times, due to its strategic and historical significance, the Persian Gulf was recognized as one of the world's earliest enclosed seas, and the security of the sea was occasionally a concern of the Iranian kings. The Achaemenid navy was the first real naval force in history. The initial efforts to build warships and establish a modern fleet took place during the Safavid era (1501-1747) to expel the Portuguese from the island of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. Due to British intervention, these efforts did not

succeed, and the first modern Iranian navy was established by Nader Shah Afshar (1688-1747). He successfully founded the Iranian navy by purchasing several ships from England and the Netherlands.

During the Qajar dynasty, Nasereddin Shah (1848-1896) purchased a 650-ton ship equipped with four cannons from Germany, and named it "Persepolis." The arrival of the Persepolis steamship in the Persian Gulf in 1885 marked the beginning of the modernization of the navy.

In the years following, during the Pahlavi era (1925-1979), with the increase in oil revenues and Iran's membership in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) naval force agreement, rapid development occurred. Iranian students were dispatched to various parts of the world. Additionally, during this period, infantry and naval commando units, as well as training centers, were established in the northern coastal areas of the country, and a ship repair center was created in Bandar Abbas in the South of Iran. However, due to American dominance over Iran during the Pahlavi era, the

navy operated within security arrangements after World War II under American auspices, aiming to prevent the Soviet Union from penetrating southern Iran. In practice, naval officers and commanders lacked decision-making power.

After the Islamic Revolution in Iran on February 11, 1979, a transformation occurred in the navy. The sending of students abroad was halted, and the Imam Khomeini Naval University was founded in 1980 to train students in necessary fields.

During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the Iranian navy, alongside the army, was not caught off guard by the Iraqi invasion. Instead, it engaged in operations such as Operation Morvarid, which destroyed the Al-Bakr and Al-Amiya oil platforms and the complete naval blockade of the ports of Basra, Faw, and Umm Qasr. Throughout the eight years of the war, the navy escorted over ten thousand merchant and oil tankers to Iranian ports with minimal damage, earning a notable reputation in naval warfare.

Following the end of the war and the establishment of the

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy alongside the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN), Iran's naval strategy underwent changes to effectively utilize naval power.

IRIN, named a strategic force by the Iranian Leader, focuses on a proactive presence in oceans and seas, maritime diplomacy, and combating maritime piracy. In recent years, the IRIN has demonstrated its permanent and effective presence in maritime areas, especially in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, by deploying more than 97 important missions of these naval groups includes combating piracy, escorting domestic and foreign ships, protecting the national interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran, participating in political ceremonies, conducting maneuvers and exercises for sustainable security, and maintaining maritime security, promoting a message of peace and friendship.

Despite maximum pressure from threats, Iran's ability to design, build, and deploy various types of missile boats, wave-class destroyers, naval bases, and submarines, as well as its presence in remote wa-

ters, showcases its resilience and strength.

Iran's presence at sea requires new technologies in various dimensions, which IRIN has successfully achieved in recent years, including indigenous developments in artillery, missiles, and communication systems, demonstrating a full-fledged and powerful naval force. With the guidance of the Leader of Islamic Revelation Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khomeini, IRIN's efforts are focused on maximizing power.

Ultimately, Iran is a maritime country, with 95% of its imports and 85% of exports being conducted via the sea. Geopolitically and economically, the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys unique geographical advantages. With a maritime area of 190,000 square kilometers, 5,800 kilometers of coastline, 2,800 kilometers of beachfront, and over one-third of the 8,700-kilometer borders being maritime, security and commerce are of utmost importance. Ensuring maritime security for sea trade necessitates a fully capable and robust naval force, which IRIN is working towards achieving under wise leadership measures.





## Visa waiver to bring 3.5b tourists to Iran: *Minister*

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced that with the cancellation of visa requirements for nationals of 33 countries, approximately 3.5 billion people globally will have the opportunity to travel to Iran without visas. Speaking at a meeting held at the National Museum of Iran, Ezzatollah Zarghami

stated that the government has shown special attention to the tourism sector, with the recent move to abolish visas for citizens of numerous countries seen as a significant step in boosting tourism, ISNA wrote. Zarghami noted that while the proposal was to eliminate visa requirements for citizens of 60 countries, the government ultimately agreed to waive visas for

nationals of 33 countries, facilitating travel for a substantial percentage of the world's population. He expressed regret over some foreign media outlets' fearmongering tactics aimed at impeding the growth and development of tourism. Zarghami emphasized the importance of tourism as a means to counteract Iranophobia. Furthermore, the minis-

ter highlighted significant progress in the handicraft sector, including the provision of insurance for 10,000 artists. He also mentioned plans to establish handicraft markets at the entrances of all cities nationwide, along with initiatives to promote the sale of handicrafts in cultural centers affiliated with the ministry and national and international platforms.

## Iran's animation wins at Cleveland festival, eligible for Oscar



Iranian animation 'Anita, Lost in the News', directed by Behzad Nalbandi, won the Best Animated Short Jury Award at the 48th Cleveland International Film Festival, an Academy Award-qualifying event, held from April 3 to April 13 in the United States. The 17-minute film competed in the inter-

national documentary section along with 'Nyanga,' 'Medhin Twolde Serrano'. The synopsis of the film reads, "A little girl with big dreams, accompanied by her family, are illegal immigrants who have to cross the English Channel on a sail boat in search of better life." Nalbandi's previous film

'Torn Papers,' which garnered awards at various international and Iranian film festivals. 'Anita, Lost in the News' has previously been screened at several festivals including festivals in Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival in Czech and Tokyo Anime Award Festival in Japan.

## 'Salman the Persian' series begins ancient Iran season

### Arts & Culture Desk

Production of the 'Salman the Persian' series, directed by Davoud Mir-Baqeri, has resumed with filming Ancient Iran season, at Ghazali Cinema Town. It is expected that approximately one and a half years is needed for its completion, ISNA wrote. In this season, the childhood of the character Salman the Persian will be

portrayed, with actors who are not widely known. Titled as one of the most star-studded seasons of this historical series, this season features over 60 actors in various roles. Filming for the Ancient Iran season will continue through spring and summer, with plans to include scenes shot in Semnan. The series revolves around Salman the Persian, the Iranian companion of

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is composed of three seasons, namely Byzantium, Ancient Iran and Hijaz.



## First documentary of Avini released after 44 years

### Arts & Culture Desk

In a ceremony marking the 31st anniversary of the martyrdom of Seyyed Morteza Avini, titled 'Morteza's Legacy,' Avini's first film, 'Barzan Village,' was unveiled after 44 years on Monday. The event, held at Vahdat Hall, was attended by several cultural and artistic figures, ILNA wrote. Alireza Afshar, one of the attendees of the ceremony, stated: "Art can be divided into three categories: state art, free art, and committed art. Avini emphasized committed art. Colonial govern-

ments seek to use art for their own purposes, but Avini was a flag-bearer of committed art and introduced the culture of sacrifice through his writings, speeches, and images." Afshar added: "Avini was an artist, but his pen was mightier. We should ensure that documentaries have an impact on society. His ability to depict realities made scenes more compelling, and we need to create films with messages. Those who can work in this way can produce valuable works exposing the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza, suitable

for international dissemination." Barari commented: "Avini's first work was not a great or captivating film, and that's okay. It's good to see such works from a different perspective and understand how someone like Avini progressed step by step, and even how he wrote narration. So, we should discuss how Morteza progressed to create such magnificent works." Barari further stated: "Martyr Avini made 70 films under the title 'Chronicles of Victory.' In my opinion, Avini is Iran's first narrative writer. The rhythm of narra-



tive differs between the beginning and end of the film, and we see the same Morteza at the end of the film as we knew him. We should see the film from the perspective of how Avini evolved."

He added, "I have not seen anyone think as much as Avini did, always generating ideas. The seeds he planted have not yet sprouted, and his works need to be dissected to understand

his methods and structure. I hope a research initiative will begin because Morteza showed that his concerns were valid, and his films have not been forgotten after all these years." Iranian director Behrouz Afkhami said, "Morteza was more of a poet than anything else, and his artistic personality leaned more towards poetry than filmmaking. I believe if he were to create a story, he would incorporate both poetic language and imagery. He continued the documentary form in the post-war years and always used his own voice,

which had an incomparable quality." He recalled that "Morteza Avini was inclined towards discovery, observation, and understanding the essence of every subject, and therefore, he did not follow conventional forms or theories. He believed in approaching things without prejudice. Hence, when we look at the Iran-Iraq war from any theoretical or ideological perspective, we cannot reach the conclusions Avini did, and this perspective is the reason for the durability of his works."