

More than 280 bodies retrieved from mass graves

OIC seeks probe into 'war crime' over Khan Younis mass graves



responsibilities in this regard". Health workers in Gaza have uncovered at least 283 bodies of people from a mass grave at the Nasser Hospital, Gaza's civil defense agency said. "Civil defense crews retrieved 73 more bodies from a mass grave, bringing the total figure to 283 bodies since Saturday," the agency said in a statement. Civil defense crews are still searching for more bodies. A mass grave was found in the hospital's courtyard on Saturday after the Israeli

Palestinian health workers stand next to unearthed bodies buried by Israeli forces in Nasser hospital compound in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on April 21, 2024.
● AFP

army withdrew from the city on April 7 following a 4-month ground offensive. "We believe that there are hundreds of bodies still missing after being executed by the Israeli occupation and buried in mass graves," the agency said. According to security sources, the majority of the victims who had been buried in mass graves were women and children. Associated Press reported the burial area in the Nasser hospital was built when Israeli forces were besieging the facility last month. At the time, people were not able to bury the dead in a cemetery and dug graves in the hospital yard, the civil defense group said. It said some of the bodies were of people killed during the hospital siege. Others were killed when Israeli forces raided the hospital, also last month. After the military withdrew from Khan Younis earlier this month, residents have been returning to the site in search of the bodies of their loved ones with the aim of burying them in permanent graves elsewhere.

Sanctions won't dampen Iran's defense capacity

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

OPINION

The West, spearheaded by the United States, has an insatiable appetite for sanctioning Iran. Regardless of whether the numerous sanctions they have slapped on Iran over the years have borne fruit in terms of achieving their desired outcome, namely a shift in Tehran's conduct, they persist in beating the drum for mounting pressure on the Islamic Republic. Over the weekend, the US House of Representatives passed new sanctions targeting Iran as part of the foreign aid package to Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan. If the bill is greenlit by the Senate and signed into law by President Joe Biden, Iran will face fresh sanctions. During a meeting yesterday, EU foreign ministers deliberated on the prospect of imposing further sanctions on Iran in response to Tehran's recent military strike on Israel. In a previous instance following an online meeting of the Group of 7 leaders to assess Iran's retaliatory attack against Israel, the foreign ministers of the group voiced their readiness to collectively impose more sanctions on Iran. Despite already imposing the harshest sanctions on Iran, Western nations are gearing up to apply even more pressure, hoping that these measures will prompt a shift in the Islamic Republic's policies. US sanctions imposed by former president Donald Trump as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, as highlighted in a report by Alena Douhan, the UN special rapporteur, have resulted in human rights violations and significant harm, particularly affecting patients suffering from certain diseases. However, these sanctions have not succeeded in influencing Iran's policies. This was evident in Iran's recent military action in retaliation against Israel, showcasing that not only has the deterrence capability of the Islamic Republic remained intact but has also been bolstered. Addressing possible European sanctions, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said, "If they proceed with such actions, they are rewarding an aggressive regime and engaging in illegal actions against a state that is solely operating within the bounds of international law to establish deterrence against an aggressive regime that flouts international regulations." He added, "Should the European Union take such a step, it will be deemed illegal and a shameful blot on the EU's history. Any country endorsing these sanctions will be remembered for supporting and adhering to sanctions lacking legal and legitimate grounds from an international perspective."

International Desk
The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned "the horrific massacres" committed by Israel following the uncov-

ering of mass graves in the courtyard of Nasser Medical Complex in the city of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. The organization said in a statement that "hundreds

of displaced, wounded, sick people and medical teams have been subjected to torture and abuse before being executed and buried collectively". It called for a probe into "a

war crime, a crime against humanity, and organized state terrorism", stressing the need for the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice "to assume their

Potential EU sanctions against Iran 'reward to aggressor'

International Desk
Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said a plan announced recently by the European Union to impose more sanctions on Iran over its retaliatory strikes against Israel would be "rewarding the aggressor". "Should they take [such] measure, it would go down in Europe's history as a shameful action," Kanaani said. The official expressed surprise that Brussels could go ahead with sanctioning Tehran over its legitimate retaliation

against Israel, but had so far stopped short of levying any punitive measures against Tel Aviv over the latter's unspeakable atrocities in the Gaza Strip. Kanaani, meanwhile, reminded the EU that its previous sanctions against the Islamic Republic had failed to hinder the country's progress. "The policy of sanctions is a failed policy," Kanaani said, advising the bloc to "learn from the past." European Union leaders decided on Wednesday to step up sanctions against Iran after Tehran's attack



on Israel on April 13. Iran launched extensive missile and drone strikes on Israel in response to the regime's April 1 attack against the Iranian consulate in Syria's capital, Damascus. The Israel's airstrike

killed two senior Iranian military personnel who were on an advisory mission to Syria as well as five of their accompanying officers. "Iran provided a decisive and legitimate response to an illegal action by the [Israeli] regime against [our] diplomatic premises that took place in violation of the international laws," Kanaani said. "But if another mistake takes place, Iran's response will be stronger," he added. The spokesman described the Israeli regime as a "threat to all regional countries," adding that the regime's war on the Gaza Strip showed that "the usurping regime is no partner to peaceful plans, and thinks of nothing other than genocide and forced displacement of Palestinians."

Erdogan visits Iraq after 12 years

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Baghdad on Monday for his first state visit to Iraq since 2011. During his meetings with top Iraqi officials, Erdogan discussed water, oil, regional security, and Iraq's Road of Development. "Iraq and Turkey have signed a strategic security pact, as well as another agreement on water sharing between Iraq and Turkey," Iraq's Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani said in a joint press conference with Erdogan in Baghdad. "We will not let anyone launch attacks on the neighboring countries from our territories, and we will not let anyone breach our sovereignty." Sudani also said that a quadrilateral memorandum of understanding between Iraq, Turkey, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates has been signed to establish the necessary frameworks for implementing the Strategic Development Road project. Erdogan stressed that they had signed a strategy security pact against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Gulen Movement with Iraq, emphasizing that Iraq had formally recognized the PKK as a "terrorist" organization. He also said they have established permanent committees to address water issues, Iraq's water scarcity, environmental issues, and the development of the trade, tourism, and education sectors.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iranians make first umrah pilgrimage after nine-year hiatus

International Desk
Iranians travelled on Monday to Saudi Arabia for umrah pilgrimage after a nine-year hiatus following a last year diplomatic rapprochement between the two countries. The first group of pilgrims departed Iran for Saudi Arabia through the Shahid Hashemi Nejad Airport in northeastern city of Mashhad. They are the first Iranians to make the pilgrimage since Tehran and Riyadh agreed in a China-brokered

deal last year to restore ties and reopen their respective embassies after more than seven years. Saudi Arabia and Iran severed ties in 2016 after Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran were stormed during protests over Riyadh's execution of Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr. The Saudi Ambassador to Tehran, Abdullah bin Saud al-Anazi, was present at the Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport, along with several Iranian officials to send off another group of pilgrims. A total of 5,720 Iranian um-

rah pilgrims are expected to head to Saudi Arabia this year for the umrah pilgrimage. Umrah differs from Hajj in that the latter is a lengthier visit which is done once a year and performed once in a lifetime by able-bodied Muslims who can afford it.

