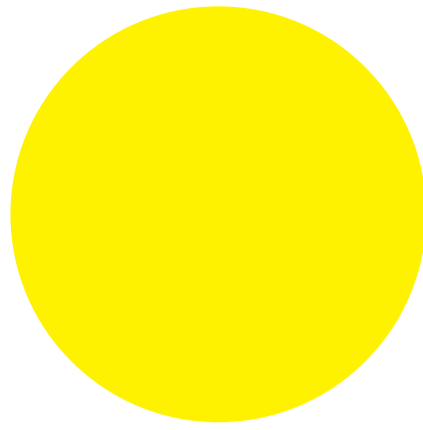




Leader: Iranian nation can turn sanctions into opportunities

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Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (L) and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe (C) inaugurate the Uma Oya Multipurpose Development Project in Uma Oya, about 180km east of Colombo, Sri Lanka, on April 24, 2024. AP



Media downplays a big legal story at its peril

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SPECIAL ISSUE



AFC Futsal Asian Cup last eight: Iran runs riot against Kyrgyzstan, seals World Cup spot

Iran hammered Kyrgyzstan 6-1 on Wednesday to head into the AFC Futsal Asian Cup last four in Bangkok, Thailand - securing a place in September's Futsal World Cup in Uzbekistan.

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Refocusing global attention on Gaza

By Mehdi Zakarian
International relations analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Field operations and diplomatic efforts go hand in hand. Field operations are crucial in defense and diplomacy to safeguard national interests through talks and political talks. In the Gaza conflict, various nations have employed diverse forms of field operations and diplomatic maneuvers.

For instance, the United States, as a staunch backer of Israel, has leveraged its field and diplomatic capa-

bilities in support of Israel. Militarily, it has declared its commitment to safeguarding Israel's security and has continued supplying arms to the regime, recently approving a \$26 billion aid package. Diplomatically, it has worked tirelessly to prevent Israel from facing political vulnerabilities, vetoing cease-fire resolutions in the UN Security Council and opposing Palestine's full UN membership bid. Washington did so because Tel Aviv was not ready to accept it. Israel has yet to decide on the governance of the Gaza Strip, so by vetoing such resolutions, the US has essentially empowered Israel to combat Hamas. While some nations do not have strategic ties with Israel, they do not impede its actions. Countries like China and Russia fall into this category, pri-

oritizing cease-fire and stability due to their trade partnerships. However, they refrain from taking significant action against Israel. There are countries in the region that claim to support the Palestinian cause but fail to act accordingly. Nations such as Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, and others. Iran, akin to the US, has utilized both field operations and diplomacy in the Gaza conflict, although in opposition to American actions. Provoked by Israel's terrorist acts against Iran in Syria, the Islamic Republic was compelled to respond militarily. It appears that Israel aimed to divert attention from genocide in Gaza by dragging Iran into the conflict. In this scenario, Iran should employ diplomatic channels to refocus

global attention on Gaza and Israel's atrocities, intensifying pressure on the regime to agree to a cease-fire. The tragic events in Gaza should not be normalized. With no immediate end to the war in sight, Israel's objective is to take out Hamas and wear down the people of Gaza, a task nearly impossible as Hamas is deeply intertwined with the Palestinian people. Hence, nations supporting Palestine or those aiming to de-escalate tensions must employ diplomacy effectively to press Israel into accepting a halt to hostilities. While Arab nations in the region may not be actively supporting Palestine on the ground, they can enhance their diplomatic efforts to halt the bloodshed in Gaza.

Iranian-built hydro dam opened in Sri Lanka

Raisi: Iran involved in water, power projects in over 20 countries

Compiled from dispatches

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi on Wednesday inaugurated a \$514 million hydropower project in the southeastern region of Sri Lanka which was partly funded by Tehran.

This was the first visit by an Iranian president to Sri Lanka since an April 2008 visit by its then-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Raisi was received by Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena on his arrival at the southern province's Mattala International Airport earlier in the day.

The Iranian president also met Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe in the project inauguration site.

During the inauguration, Raisi said Tehran was happy to assist the Uma Oya Multipurpose Development Project (UOMDP) to forge closer ties between the people of Iran and Sri Lanka. Iranian engineers worked on the project to see its success.

Raisi said his country has proven the West doesn't have a monopoly on technology adding that Iran is currently working on major water and electricity projects in more than 20 countries around the world.

Wickremesinghe in his address said he looks forward to Sri Lanka and Iran making joint progress as members of the Global South. He said Sri Lanka is grateful to Iran for the technical support provided to UOMDP, the second-largest irrigation project in the island after the Mahaweli River diversion project in the 1980s.

According to a press release issued by the Sri Lankan government, the UOMDP project costing \$514 million was kicked off with \$50 million provided by



president.ir

Iran. The Sri Lankan government and Farab Energy and Water Projects (Farab Company) of Iran agreed in April 2008 to implement the project. The total contract sum amounted to \$514 million and the Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) funded \$50 million until 2013. The project was also held up because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, due to illegal sanctions imposed on Iran later that year, Tehran was unable to continue providing funds for the project. Subsequently, Sri Lanka decided to proceed with the project using government funds while continuing with the same contractor, Farab Company, the release said.

The project would add 290 GWh to the national grid, while supplying water to 4,500 hectares of new agricultural land and 1,500 hectares of existing farmland and would meet the drinking water needs of thousands of families in Badulla, Monaragala and Hambantota districts.

The process of construction, monitoring, and consulting of the project was completely done by the Iranian company, according to spokesman of Iran's Government, Ali Bahadori-Jahromi.

During his one-day trip to Sri Lanka, Raisi also held talks with the officials of the South Asian country, attended several inauguration ceremonies and signing five memorandums of understanding.

The latest visit comes as the two countries have agreed to boost relations and expand their cooperation in various fields, including economy, tourism, science and technology.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry has already said his country is ready to implement economic projects undertaken by Iranian experts in the country in light of the Islamic Republic's industrial and economic capabilities.

The Uma Oya Multipurpose Development Project involves significant engineering challenges, particularly due to the 700-meter difference in height between Bandarawela and Wellawaya. Adjusting the tunnel route at such a height is a complex task. Additionally, the construction of

a deep pressure shaft to channel water onto turbines is an unprecedented feat. Such innovative engineering solutions are rarely seen globally, making the completion of this project a remarkable achievement.

The Uma Oya Downstream Development Project, facilitated directly by the Irrigation Department, is poised to alleviate the longstanding water scarcity issues in the Kirindi Oya Basin. Under the guidance of the government, officials have been directed to execute an integrated agricultural development initiative leveraging modern technology to optimize water utilization. Additionally, the Uma Oya Multipurpose Development Project has effectively addressed the challenge of sup-

plying water for both domestic and industrial purposes in the Bandarawela and Wellawaya regions.

The historical ties between Sri Lanka and Iran date back centuries, predating the formal establishment of diplomatic relations. Initially, interactions between the two nations were primarily centered around the Strait of Hormuz during the Persian era. Formal diplomatic relations were officially established in 1962. Iran established its mission in Colombo in 1975, while Sri Lanka reciprocated by establishing its mission in Tehran in January 1990. Over the years, both countries have maintained close cooperation across various sectors and have consistently supported each other in multilateral forums. High-level visits between the two nations have been a regular occurrence, further solidifying their bilateral relationship.

Sri Lanka and Iran have collaborated closely within the United Nations and its affiliated agencies, offering mutual support on matters of shared concern. Both nations are active members of various international and regional organizations, including the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Sri Lanka has granted approval for Mahan Air flights between the two nations, anticipating increased tourism from Iran to Sri Lanka and bolstered cooperation in aviation. In 2022, Iran ranked 27th among countries with the highest international tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka, experiencing notable growth compared to 2021. By June 2023, Sri Lanka had welcomed 5,973 Iranian tourists.

North Korean economic delegation visits Iran



A high-level North Korean economic delegation embarked on a public visit to Iran this week.

North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency reported on Wednesday that Minister of Economic Relations Yun Jung Ho departed from Pyongyang on Tuesday with an economic delegation. The last known trip by North Korean officials to Iran was in August 2019. At the time, Vice President of the Supreme People's Assembly Pak Chol-min met with Iranian Parliament speaker Ali Larijani in Tehran, where he stressed the importance of promoting bilateral ties in various sectors.

China's oil buyers to weather tighter US sanctions on Iran

China's private oil refiners could seek to buy more cargoes whose origin has been obscured as they prepare for fresh US sanctions on Iranian exports, ensuring crude continues to flow to the world's top importer, Bloomberg wrote.

The Senate voted to send a foreign aid package that includes sanctions on Iran's oil sector to President Joe Biden, who has said he will sign the legislation into law. The bill, which was approved on Tuesday night by a vote of 79-18, would broaden sanctions to include foreign ports, vessels and refineries that knowingly process or ship Iranian crude in violation of existing US sanctions. It also would expand so-called secondary sanctions to cover all transactions between Chinese financial institutions and sanctioned Iranian banks used to purchase petroleum and oil-derived products. The

legislation also included assistance for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

The measure would require an annual determination as to whether Chinese financial institutions have engaged in conduct that violates sanctionable conduct, according to a report by the House Financial Services Committee, which said 80% of Iran's roughly 1.5 million barrel per day of exports go to China to be refined by small independent refineries known as "teapots." Analysts said Biden is likely to take advantage of waiver authority built into the sanctions and could opt to avoid stringent enforcement of the sanctions, which could contribute to a rise in oil and gasoline prices.

"Our take is that President Biden will use any flexibility afforded him to ensure no material disruption in Iranian crude oil takes place before the election," said

Bob McNally, president of consultant Rapidan Energy Group and a former White House official "There is no higher priority for the White House than preventing an oil price spike this year."

A person familiar with the matter said the administration is analyzing the legislation, but no impact on oil markets is expected before the fall. Kevin Book, managing director for ClearView Energy Partners LLC, a Washington consulting firm, said in an interview that the sanctions could add as much as \$8.40 a barrel to global prices. Oil trade involving independent refineries is hard to stop because the companies don't have a nexus to the US financial system, said Ben Cahill, a senior fellow, with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "Sanctions leverage is

limited," Cahill said in an email. "The key question is how tough the White House will be on sanctions enforcement in an election year."

So-called teapot refiners — private outfits clustered in Shandong province and the leading beneficiaries of US sanctions on Iranian exports — are already bracing for the increased scrutiny. According to refinery executives and traders supplying them, that will likely include buying oil that has been manipulated en route, usually via ship-to-ship transfers around Malaysia and Singapore, or near Fujairah in the Gulf of Oman.

Some may temporarily back away as a precaution, but pressure on profits is already high with margins barely at breakeven levels, traders say. Buyers may instead seek better terms as the hurdles accumulate for Iranian exporters, even sidestepping middlemen

in order to lower prices. Teapot refiners have become all but reliant on less expensive crude from sanctioned regimes in recent years, emerging in particular as the most important buyers of Iranian oil.

That's been possible thanks to sidestepping measures including the use of yuan transactions, a domestic clearing and settlement system — known as CIPS — and local financial institutions isolated from large commercial players, such as Bank of Kunlun. Still, US officials can trace at least some physical shipments of Iranian oil with the help of ship-tracking and satellite data, and identify the entities aiding in these flows. The bigger question is whether Washington is willing to enforce the sanctions and live with the consequences, including higher gasoline and diesel prices in an election year.

Tajikistan keen to invest at Chabahar port: PMO

The deputy transport minister of Tajikistan said her country is interested in investing at Iran's Chabahar Port in logistics affairs.

In a meeting with Iran's Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development Ali Akbar Safaei, Shayesta Moradzadeh emphasized the interest of her country in making investments at the port in logistics affairs, Tasnim News Agency reported.

She also hailed the good level of the bilateral trade and economic relations between Tehran and Dushanbe.

Moradzadeh pointed to the common historical and cultural backgrounds between Iran and Tajikistan and added that the trade and economic relations between the two countries have been on the growth trajectory, especially over the past two years.

Behbahan, a hidden gem of Khuzestan Province

Iranica Desk

Behbahan is a picturesque city in Khuzestan Province, situated 205 kilometers southeast of Ahvaz and boasting a history dating back 10,000 years. It is noteworthy that the oldest narcissus garden in Iran is

located in Behbahan. Legend has it that the golden hue and rich fragrance of the narcissus flower are so abundant that they reach the nostrils of every passerby. Known as the city of firsts, Behbahan is home to several pioneering landmarks, including the first oil well in

Iran, the country's inaugural water treatment facility, the first golf club in Iran, the first official football field in the nation, the first squash club in the country, and the first gypsum factory. With its diverse array of tourist attractions, Behbahan is a must-visit destination.



Arjan Bowl

One of the most significant discoveries in this historical area, which is considered a top tourist attraction in Khuzestan, is the Arjan Bowl. The bowl shape resembles that of a blue water lily and carries many mythical messages. It is believed that the origin of this ancient artifact dates back to the 8th century BCE.

ilna.ir

Imamzadeh Abazar

The shrine of Imamzadeh Abazar is situated 40 kilometers south of Behbahan. The paintings, lattice works, and gypsum decorations of this building are reminiscent of the works of Shirazi masters during the Zand and early Qajar periods.



gardeshgari724.com

Golab Castle

Golab Castle is a historical edifice in Khuzestan Province, located in the village of Cham-e Boostan in Behbahan, near the southern coast of the Zohreh River. This castle dates back to the Sassanid period and has also been used during the Islamic era.



safarzon.com



Chahmari Lake Dam

Chahmari Lake Dam, standing at a height of 10 meters can store more than 700,000 cubic meters of water. It was built to prevent floods, erosion, sedimentation, and to store water for agricultural purposes. The area around this dam offers views of various plant species.

borna.news



Bekan Bath

The historical Bekan Bath, situated in the ancient city of Arjan and dating back to the Sassanid era, is located next to the Marun River. The architectural design of this bath consists of four ivans, although its layout is obscured today by debris from collapsed ceilings and rocks along the valley's edges, making it difficult to discern.

hamgardi.com

Bekan Bridge

The Bekan Bridge, a relic from the Sassanid era, spans the Marun River in Behbahan. This bridge stands as one of the earliest registered monuments in Behbahan, yet unfortunately, it is currently facing the threat of destruction.



hamgardi.com

Behbahan Museum

Behbahan Museum commenced its operations in November 2003 with the collection of artifacts for the ethnography section. Within

five months of its inauguration, a diverse array of items including decorative objects, agricultural tools, traditional attire, and utensils were amassed in the museum through contributions from

the people of Behbahan and the surrounding villages. The Behbahan Museum was officially inaugurated in 2005, featuring two distinct sections: archaeology and ethnography.



kojaro.com



Bat Cave

The Bat Cave (Khofash Cave) is situated in Tang-e Takab of Behbahan. Local residents and inhabitants have numerous stories and legends associated with this cave. A historical inscription can be found on the right side of the cave's entrance. The depth of the Bat Cave is estimated to be around 20 meters.

lastsecond.ir

Importance of Hormuz and Kish in ancient maritime trade of Iran



Of the whole coast of Persia (Iran), only the littoral of the Persian Gulf has had any importance in history, although adequate bays and anchorages are also found further east. The Strait of Hormuz, separating the Persian Gulf from the ocean, received this name from the famous harbor that, down to the fourteenth century, lay on the mainland, somewhat to the east of the modern port of Bandar 'Abbas. One day's journey was reckoned between Hormuz and the village of Suru, where fishermen lived and through which passed the road from Fars to Hormuz. In the tenth century, Hormuz was the port of the province of Kerman, although it did not have a large population. Subsequently, maritime trade with India centered principally on two points, Hormuz and Kish, the latter on an island of the same

name in the Persian Gulf. Because of commercial rivalry, there were always hostilities between the rulers of Kish and Hormuz; each tried to harm his rival and stop his ships, to the great detriment of trade. At the close of the twelfth century, when the Ghuzz led by Malik Dinar took possession of Kerman, the ruler of Kish begged him to cede Hormuz to him, promising to pay every year the sum of 100,000 dinars and to send fifty Arabian horses. The commercial importance of Hormuz and Kish continued under the Mongols. According to Marco Polo, the main articles of export from Hormuz, Kish, and other points to India, in exchange for Indian goods, were horses. Marco Polo also informs us that the ruler of Hormuz acknowledged himself a vassal of Kerman, but that he was often remiss in paying

the tribute and waged war against his suzerain. He also ruled over the Arab coast and harbor of Qalhat to the southeast of Masqat, whither he withdrew whenever the ruler of Kerman sent an army against him; he would then seize the ships sailing into the Persian Gulf. The ruler of Kerman suffered such a loss of revenue that he was forced to conclude a peace. The rulers of Hormuz were clearly of Arab origin, for the name of the dynasty's founder was Mahmud Qalhati. The Aryans of Central Asia could not quite overcome their fear of the sea, while the natives of the Arab littoral, Oman, were always daring sea rovers. Only the mightiest rulers of Persia, such as the Buyyids in the pre-Mongol period (especially 'Adu'd al-Dawla) and the Seljuks were able to extend their authority over Oman.

Watching the watchdogs

Media downplays
a big legal story at its peril

By Rami G. Khouri
Senior Fellow at Arab
Center Washington

PERSPECTIVE

In a fast-expanding global battleground, enablers and opponents of Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza are facing off in an unusual landscape: courtrooms. Over the past six months, lawyers, activists, organisations, and states who believe that international law and conventions that prohibit genocide actually mean something and must be implemented have submitted an unprecedented number of lawsuits and motions to national and international courts.

This new frontier in the century-old battle between Palestinian Arabism and Zionism is significant because it promises a more level playing field where traditional military-political strengths and weaknesses are neutralised or even reversed.

And yet, mainstream Western media is mostly staying away from covering this important story in depth.

Perhaps it is because the United States and many other Western governments are charged as complicit main backers of the crime of genocide in these cases. Or perhaps it is because an ally of the West is accused of such heinous crimes.

In February, Nicaragua urged the governments of the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, and Canada to immediately halt the supply of arms, ammunition, technology, and/or components to Israel. It gave them written notice that it would adopt all appropriate legal measures, including recourse at the ICJ, "to guarantee respect for these fundamental international texts and customary international law".

In early April, Nicaragua did take Germany to the ICJ, accusing it of "facilitating the commission of genocide" in Gaza. It formally requested the court to order the German government to stop sup-

plying weapons to Israel.

In early March, Australian lawyers referred Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to the ICC for possible complicity in genocide. The submission points to Australian government actions, such as the freezing of \$6m in United Nations aid funding for the Palestinians, the export of arms to Israel, and the provision of military aid and other actions as grounds for the referral.

velopments, which collectively represent a dramatic new phase in what has become a global battle between pro-Israel states and anti-colonial and anti-apartheid activists in the Global South.

In November, the respected Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed a lawsuit in a California court on behalf of Palestinian families in Gaza and the United States, accusing President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Antony

Blind, and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin of failure to prevent and complicity in the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. They sought a court decision to order the US government to end military and diplomatic support to Israel while the genocide continues.

The court found that Israeli actions "plausibly constitute genocide" and implored Biden to examine the unwavering US support for it but decided it was unable to rule on the matter because foreign policy is an executive branch prerogative.

In March, CCR filed an appeal supported by more than 100 attorneys, experts, and human rights organisations, arguing that stopping genocide is legally mandatory, not optional, in US and international law. The appeals court is set

man rights organisation Al-Haq and the UK-based Global Legal Action Network asked the UK's High Court to prohibit the granting of licenses for weapons exports to Israel because it commits atrocities in Gaza. The court dismissed the case, but Al-Haq vowed to seek another court hearing on the issue.

In February, in a similar case brought by Oxfam Novib, Pax Nederland, and The Rights Forum, a Dutch court of appeals ordered

of laws against genocide and war crimes, including the terms of the German Arms Control Act.

Meanwhile, Palestine Speaks and Jewish Voice for Just Peace in the Middle East filed a lawsuit against former German parliamentarian Volker Beck, the head of the German-Israeli Society, for suspected incitement of hate and denial of war crimes in Israel's war on Gaza. What this moment reveals, Shamas told me, is how national and international legal systems operate in parallel, not in a hierarchy. The genocide charge is so significant that it opens up new legal and other avenues of action to stop it, such as public demonstrations, petitions, lobbying in Washington, and activism. "The intersection of politics, law, and activism is on full display," she said.

"We may be only seeing the beginning of litigation against governments, individuals, or corporations. Weapons manufacturers, energy companies, and others could be charged, and many individuals associated with the genocide accusations should be worried," Shamas said.

Legal cases are one of the most powerful means of bringing facts to the attention of the world, exposing criminal behaviour, and seeking redress for gross injustices. This arena should be a natural ally to the media, which ideally should disseminate facts and credible analysis.

As the legal challenges to Israel's genocide keep growing around the world and implicate Western governments, officials, and companies as accomplices, it is no surprise that the mainstream Western media continues to ignore or downplay them. But a time will come when Western complicity in the Israeli genocide of the Palestinians will become impossible to cover up. Media organisations would do well now to at least report honestly on the surge of global litigation against Israel's genocide. Otherwise, they run the risk of being swept up in the tide of the many political and corporate accomplices now being named in courts around the world.

The full article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



Judges are seated at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Netherlands, on April 8, 2024, before a public hearing on Nicaragua's claim that Germany is aiding an Israeli genocide in Gaza.

● MOUNEB TAIM/ANADOLU AGENCY

A few weeks later, Law for Palestine, supported by the Independent Commission for Human Rights - Palestine (ICHR) and 15 Arab and international groups sent a communication to the ICC demanding the court investigate accusations of Israeli war crimes and genocide.

In most cases, only local news outlets covered these novel de-

velopments, which collectively represent a dramatic new phase in what has become a global battle between pro-Israel states and anti-colonial and anti-apartheid activists in the Global South.

In November, the respected Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed a lawsuit in a California court on behalf of Palestinian families in Gaza and the United States, accusing President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Antony

Blind, and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin of failure to prevent and complicity in the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. They sought a court decision to order the US government to end military and diplomatic support to Israel while the genocide continues.

The court found that Israeli actions "plausibly constitute geno-

to hold an initial hearing in June. CCR Senior Staff Attorney Diala Shamas, who works on the organisation's anti-genocide cases and was in The Hague for the ICJ sessions, told me in an interview last week that different parties are exploring using a variety of legal avenues to halt the genocide as quickly as possible.

In December, the Palestinian hu-

man rights organisation Al-Haq and the UK-based Global Legal Action Network asked the UK's High Court to prohibit the granting of licenses for weapons exports to Israel because it commits atrocities in Gaza. The court dismissed the case, but Al-Haq vowed to seek another court hearing on the issue.

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ICJ made the right call on Israel's actions in Gaza



By Alper Ali Riza
King's counsel, retired
part-time judge

OPINION

Last week this column [on Cyprus Mail] reported on an open letter to the UK prime minister signed by 1,200 prominent lawyers and retired judges on April 3, 2024, expressing concern that the government's current policy of unconditional support of Israel's operations in Gaza was in breach of the UK's obligations under the 1948 Genocide Convention to prevent genocide.

What lay behind the letter (the law-

yers' letter) was a strong belief by its signatories that the ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on January 26, 2024, that Israel's operations in Gaza raised a plausible risk of genocide had legal consequences for all state parties. Thus, the UK government now has an overriding obligation to eliminate the risk of genocide and specific obligations in its weapons trade with Israel to avoid being complicit in genocide.

What the ICJ actually said was that there was "real and imminent risk that irreparable prejudice will be caused to the rights found by the court to be plausible". That finding by the ICJ has been subject to huge controversy amongst some of the top legal minds in the UK.

On April 5, 2024, the UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) published a counter-letter signed by 1,300 retired judges and prominent

lawyers including a former head of the civil division of the Court of Appeal, Lord Dyson, and the well-known barrister Lord Pannick, arguing that the assertion in the lawyers' letter that there was a plausible risk of genocide was based on a mistaken reading of the ICJ ruling.

The argument of UKLFI is that the ICJ did not find Israel's operations in Gaza raised a plausible risk of genocide — thereby

engaging the UK's obligations — but rather that the right of Palestinians in Gaza not to be subjected to violations of the Genocide Convention was plausible.

The argument is obtuse, but what it appears to be is that the ICJ was concerned with provisional measures to preserve the rights of both the Palestinians and the Israelis pending a determination of the merits of South



Because an ally of the West is accused of such heinous crimes, in most cases, only local news outlets covered these novel developments.



A bulldozer unloads the bodies of Palestinians killed by Israel and turned over by the Israeli military during a mass funeral in Rafah, Gaza, on December 26, 2023.
● FATIMA SHBAIR/AP

Africa's genocide case against Israel. As such, it could not rule there was a plausible risk that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza because that encroached on the merits of the case that was reserved for the full-blown trial. The UKLFI also criticises the lawyers' mistaken belief that the ICJ's provisional measures were binding on the UK, which could not be the case as it was not a party to the proceedings. The lawyers' letter, however, identifies the Genocide Convention, not the provisional measures, as the source of the UK's obligations to prevent genocide. It is true that the UK's obligations derive from the finding by the ICJ of a plausible risk of genocide, but that is not the same as being bound by the courts' provisional measures.

UKLFI also criticises the lawyers' letter for ignoring the legal basis of Israel's operation in Gaza including its inherent right of self-defence, although the UKLFI must know that self-defence cannot justify genocide. Finally, the casualty figures relied on in the lawyers' letter are questioned as they are provided by Hamas. One can argue about the figures both ways — as an overestimate and an underestimate. The fact, however, is that the death and destruction have been in plain sight for many months and that when the case comes to be tried on the merits, the primary issue is going to be whether Israel intended to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza as a people or whether there were other reasons for the extent of the death and destruction Israel caused in Gaza.

In the UK at this stage, the question is whether the plausibility ruling by the ICJ was to do with Israel's conduct of operations in Gaza or the plight of the Palestinians or whether, as I believe, they are two sides of the same coin. After the letter from the UKLFI was published, there was a rebuttal by the team of lawyers of the original letter to the prime minister, which is too elaborate to reproduce but which criticises

UKLFI's analysis as playing with words while the Palestinian people are being subjected to intolerable suffering and destruction by Israel.

In effect, the rebuttal says it is an obvious truism that the risk to the right of possible victims of genocide is plausible and that the court did not need a 17-page judgement to say so. Also, the plausible risk of genocide is consistent with the arguments presented to the court and its criticism of statements made by Israeli politicians for inciting genocide. Finally, there have been later rulings and provisional measures in March 2024 to prevent starvation and prolonged and widespread deprivation of the basic necessities of life, all consistent with the plausible risk of genocide interpretation of the ICJ's ruling of January 26, 2024.

The ICJ's role in determining what provisional measures to require pending trial was to make a provisional judgement about the situation in the context of Israel's operations in Gaza said to have been conducted in self-defence. So far, as the Palestinians in Gaza were concerned, the ICJ sought to arrest their destruction as a people in Gaza by the provisional measures it required of Israel in the conduct of its military operations.

As for the Israelis, the court preserved their right to defend themselves and obtain the release of their citizens held captive in Gaza negatively, by not ordering a cease-fire.

The ICJ could not, however, ignore that the nature and scale of the destruction of Gaza by Israel was prima facie evidence that there was a risk that some elements in the Israeli cabinet harboured an intention to destroy the Palestinians of Gaza by deliberately inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction.

The article first appeared on Cyprus Mail.

ICC can no longer ignore genocide in Gaza

By Anisha Patel,
Hassan Ben Imran

Members of Governing
Council of Law for Palestine

OPINION

Over the past few months, the International Criminal Court (ICC) under the leadership of Prosecutor Karim Khan has come under heavy criticism for not taking any concrete steps to prosecute the crime of genocide in Gaza.

In November, six of its state parties led by South Africa referred the situation in Palestine to the court and urged it to act. The same month, three Palestinian rights groups submitted a communication to the ICC, asking it to investigate the crimes of apartheid and genocide in Palestine.

In December, Khan visited Israel and made a short trip to Ramallah, where he briefly met with victims of Israeli crimes. He then issued a general statement about investigating "allegations of crimes" that did not in any way refer to the mounting evidence of genocide being perpetrated in Gaza.

In January, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared that Israel is "plausibly" committing genocide in Gaza. That also did not spur the ICC into action. The court has not even attempted to justify why it has failed to investigate genocide or issue any arrest warrants.

Last month, our organisation, Law for Palestine, made the first in a series of submissions to the ICC, characterising the crime of genocide committed by Israeli leaders against the Palestinian people. The 200-page document, drafted by 30 lawyers and legal researchers from across the world and reviewed by more than 15 experts, makes a compelling case for the genocidal intent as well as for the prosecutorial policy that the court has followed in other cases. If the ICC fails to act once again, it risks undermining its own authority as an institution of international justice and the international regime as a whole.

Intent is hard to prove, but not in Gaza

The ICC is obliged to take immediate action on Gaza given the wealth of evidence supporting the accusations of genocide against Israel. Our submission highlights this reality.

In our filing, we focused specifically on the intent to commit genocide since it is considered the most difficult aspect to prove in a case of genocide.

We point to the numerous statements, including by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Issac Herzog, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and members of the Knesset, as well as members of the public, where the intention to commit genocide is laid bare. We also refer to the database we have put together of more than 500 instances of Israeli incitement to genocide as additional proof.

While the statements form a substantial part of the intent component of the crime of genocide, the submission goes beyond and highlights the various actions and official policies that additionally prove intent. These include a pattern of targeting of medical facilities, deliberate destruction of agricultural land and water systems, and the obstruction of aid in order to cause starvation.

We have also highlighted parallels between the well-documented Israeli policies of ethnic cleansing and similar atrocities in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, where international criminal tribunals have ruled on the crime of genocide.

We argue that Israeli attempts to "de-civilianise" Palestinian civilians in Gaza through the systematically and inaccurately employed human shields claim are part of a genocidal technique. We also outline Israel's destruction of Palestinian culture, heritage, and education systems, ecocidal policies and practices, and domicidal policies and practices in Gaza, which also reflect genocidal intent.

Finally, we contend that Israel's practice of apartheid creates an environment conducive to committing the crime of genocide, just like in the cases

of Nazi Germany and Rwanda, and that the Israeli laws enacted to protect its leaders from prosecution also point to the intent to commit genocide.

When considered collectively, this evidence constitutes "reasonable grounds" to believe that Israeli leaders have a general genocidal intent. This should be more than enough for the ICC to proceed with necessary legal action.

ICC cannot ignore its own genocide rulings

Beyond the availability of extensive and comprehensive evidence, the ICC should be compelled to act also because of previous precedents it has set. Since its inception, the ICC has identified the existence of a reasonable basis for investigating cases of genocide, including ones with far lesser devastation to civilian lives and infrastructure than currently observed in Gaza.

For instance, in the case of the genocide in Darfur, in a July 2010 decision, the court correctly identified that the threshold to issue an arrest warrant against Sudan's then-President Omar al-Bashir for the crime of genocide was that "there are reasonable grounds to believe" that the intent exists.

This decision was a revision of the court's initial decision of March 2009 where the threshold of inferring the intent was "the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn". In its revised decision, the court stated that this threshold is only applicable later in the trial stage, not at the stage of issuing arrest warrants.

Furthermore, it is important to note that one of Khan's predecessors, former ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo, clearly stated that even the "siege of Gaza itself... is a form of genocide". Proceeding from all this evidence and recognition, the case for the ICC announcing an investigation into genocide and issuing arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is indisputable, especially given its own standards of "reasonable grounds" as seen in the Bashir case.

The full article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Karim Khan (front) visits a Gaza border town hit by Hamas during the October 7 attack, on December 3, 2023.
● X



Because an ally of the West is accused of such heinous crimes, in most cases, only local news outlets covered these novel developments. If the ICC fails to act once again, it risks undermining its own authority as an institution of international justice and the international legal regime as a whole.

Golmohammadi nearing Tractor deal as Motahari takes interim role



● [khabarvarzeshi.com](#)

Sports Desk

Former Persepolis manager Yahya Golmohammadi is in advanced talks to take over at Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor, according to several sources in the Iranian media.

Golmohammadi, 53, has been without a job since stepping down from the Tehran Reds role in January.

The ex-Iranian international enjoyed a glorious four years with Persepolis, lifting the top-flight trophy on three occasions – including last year's domestic double-winning campaign – while his team reached the AFC Champions League final in 2020, only to miss out on a maiden silverware in the continent's elite clubs' competition after a 2-1 defeat against Ulsan Hyundai.

Should the deal go through in the coming days, it will be a second spell for Golmohammadi, who began his footballing career with the Tabriz-based club in late 80s, on Tractor bench – following a 22-game stint in the 2017/18 season.

Meanwhile, Tractor named Hamid Motahari – a former number two to Golmohammadi in Persepolis and a member of the national team's coaching staff over the past 12 months – as the interim coach on Wednesday.

Motahari takes over from Mohammad Nosrati, who had also been appointed as a caretaker coach following Paco Jemez's departure but had his short spell come to an end after only a game in charge – a 1-0 away defeat against struggling Nassaji Mazandaran last Friday.

Having joined Tractor midway through last season, Spanish tactician Jemez parted ways with the club in the aftermath of a 4-1 home defeat against Zob Ahan on April 12 – a third successive game without a win for Tractor. Tractor is fourth in the Iranian league table with 40 points – 13 adrift of Esteghlal on top – with six games to spare, registering 12 wins and eight defeats in 24 matches.

Tractor will play Zob Ahan at home in the Iranian Hazfi Cup last 16 on Friday, before welcoming Esteghlal for a highly-anticipated league fixture next Wednesday.

AFC Futsal Asian Cup last eight:

Iran runs riot against Kyrgyzstan, seals World Cup spot

Sports Desk

Iran hammered Kyrgyzstan 6-1 on Wednesday to head into the AFC Futsal Asian Cup last four in Bangkok, Thailand – securing a place in September's Futsal World Cup in Uzbekistan. Heading into the quarterfinal on the back of a top-spot finish in Group D, Vahid Shamsaei's men took the lead through Behrouz Azimi with eight minutes into contest at the Bangkok Arena, only to be stunned by Donierbek Amanbaev's equalizer for the Central Asian side, which beat defending champion Japan 3-2 in their group opener, a minute later.

Salar Aqapour restored the advantage for Iran with a sublime freekick in the 10th minute as the Asian powerhouse took a 2-1 lead into halftime. The second half was all about the Iranians' dominance, with Saeid Ahmad-Abbasi bagging his seventh goal in the competition with a composed finish in the 24th minute.

Mahdi Karimi extended Iran's lead two minutes later and then tapped in his second of the afternoon with less than four minutes left on the clock. Iranian skipper Ali-Asghar Hassanzadeh, a four-time champion in the competition, rounded off a dominant performance with a well-taken spot-kick, as Iran continued its bid for a record-extending 13th Asian crown.



Iran's Saeid Ahmad-Abbasi (9) celebrates his goal during a 6-1 victory over Kyrgyzstan in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup last eight in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 24, 2024. ● AFC

Four Iranians to battle for two Olympic GR slots in Budapest

Sports Desk

Two Greco-Roman slots for the Paris Olympics will be up for grabs when four Iranian wrestlers take part at the Polyák Imre & Varga János Memorial tournament – part of the United World Wrestling's annual Ranking Series event – in Budapest in June, the Iranian governing body of the sport announced.

Iran became the first country to secure a full six-man squad for the Games after Amin Kavianinejad and Alireza Mohammadi reached the last four of the 77kg and 87kg weight classes respectively at the Asian qualification tournament in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, earlier in the week.

The two are all but guaranteed a spot in Paris – joining reigning world superheavyweight champion Amin Mirzazadeh and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi – a winner of four successive

major medals in the 97kg contests, including the 2021 world gold, since the Tokyo Olympics.

Mohammadreza Geraei will be looking to bag a second Olympic 67kg gold in a row in Paris but first he will have to see off domestic competition from young prodigy Saeid Esmaeili. Former world junior and cadet champion Esmaeili stole the show at the Asian Championships last week, rounding off an emphatic run with a victory over Kyrgyzstan's Razzak Beishekeev in the final showpiece.

Geraei claimed the Olympic and world golds in the space of two months in 2021, but failed to continue his domination over the next two years, as he fell to Mate Nemeš in the 2022 world final before laboring to a joint-bronze alongside the Serbian in last September's UWW Worlds – suffering a technical fall against even-

tual silver medalist Hasrat Jafarov of Azerbaijan in the quarterfinals.

Meanwhile, Mahdi Mohsennejad and Amir-Reza Dehbozorgi will bid for the Iranian 60kg spot when event gets underway in the Hungarian capital.

Mohsennejad, an ex-world under-23 silver winner, failed to finish on the podium in last year's World Championships but his win against Armenian Gevorg Gharibyan in the fifth-place bout was enough to seal the Olympic quota for the country.

Two-time world age-group champion Dehbozorgi was part of the Iranian team in the recently-finished Asian Championships and bounced back from a technical fall against Kyrgyz sensation Zholaman Sharshenbekov, who edged out Mohsennejad in the world event, to leave Bishkek with a consolation bronze.



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Saeid Esmaeili will be looking to build on the Asian gold-winning campaign to secure a 67kg spot at the Paris Olympics. ● IAWF

Doncic helps Mavericks level play-off with Clippers

BBC – Luka Doncic scored 32 points to help the Dallas Mavericks level their first-round NBA play-off series against the Los Angeles Clippers. After a 109-97 defeat on Sunday, when they trailed by as many as 29 points, the Mavericks rallied to claim a 96-93 victory in game two. Doncic had nine assists, while Kyrie Irving added 23 points. The series moves to Dallas for the third game of the best-of-seven series on Friday. James Harden and Paul

George each scored 22 points for the Clippers, while star player Kawhi Leonard returned from injury to score 15 points in 35 minutes. The Clippers led 73-67 early in the fourth quarter, before the Mavericks scored 14 straight points. Doncic added a three-pointer to open the advantage to 90-81 with 86 seconds remaining and Dallas were able to hold on from there. Elsewhere on Tuesday, the Minnesota Timberwolves took a 2-0 lead in their play-off against the Phoenix Suns.

Jaden McDaniels scored a career-best 25 points, while Mike Conley and Rudy Gobert finished with 18 points each as Minnesota won 105-93. "Twenty-five points in a play-off game, there's nothing more I could ask for," McDaniels said. The Indiana Pacers ended a 10-game post-season losing streak with a 125-108 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks. Pascal Siakam recorded 37 points, 11 rebounds and six assists to help the Pacers level their Eastern Conference play-off at 1-1.



● Kiyoshi MIO/USA TODAY SPORTS

Leader: Iranian nation can turn sanctions into opportunities



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses a group of Iranian workers on the occasion of Labor Week in Tehran, Iran, on April 24, 2023. [khamenei.ir](#)

National Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the Islamic Republic's remarkable achievements in arms production attest to the fact that a "lively nation" can turn sanctions into opportunities. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks on Wednesday as he received a group of workers from across the country on the occasion of Labor Week. The Leader admitted that the sanctions have damaged the country's economy and have created many problems. However, he said that these sanctions have also led to the flourishing of talents and the emergence of capacities inside the country. Ayatollah Khamenei said talking about economic issues without considering the unprecedented sanc-

tions imposed by the US and Europeans on the country is impossible. The West deceitfully claims issues such as nuclear weapons, human rights issues, and support for terrorism as the reasons for imposing sanctions against Iran, he said. The Leader noted that the anti-Iran sanctions aimed to put the Islamic Republic in a "tight spot" to force it to toe the line of imperialism and colonialism. Ayatollah Khamenei added, "A lively nation creates opportunities for itself out of the enemy's hostilities, a clear example of which is in the [Islamic Republic's] arms sector. In other sectors, great progress has been achieved as well despite pressures." "The Iranian nation must showcase its strength through work, action and national unity," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

US DSA party affirms Iran's right to self-defense against Israel



The International Committee of the Democratic Socialists of America issued a statement affirming Iran's right to self-defense and emphasizing its opposition to any military or diplomatic support for the Israeli occupation. In a statement on Tuesday, the International Committee of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA IC) affirmed Iran's inherent right to self-defense. This position comes in light of the recent Israeli attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1. It reiterated its steadfast opposition to providing any military or diplomatic support to Israel's campaign of aggression as "Israel" is committing a large-scale genocide against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The DSA IC strongly opposed any US involvement in supporting Israeli attacks on Iran and denounced the punitive measures, such as sanctions and travel bans, issued by the Biden administration or Congress in response to Iran's retaliatory attack on 'Israel'. The statement shed light on the extensive history of US imperialism, citing the CIA-orchestrated overthrow of Iran's prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953. It emphasized that the US and 'Israel' had damaged Iran in various ways people, including causing casualties in the Iran-Iraq war, carrying out regular assassinations of leaders, scientists and top commanders during diplomatic missions, and imposing sanctions that deprive Iranians of vital medical supplies. The party's statement emphasized that the Biden administration's unwavering support for the Zionist project has granted "Israel" unchecked freedom of action, leading to serious violations of international humanitarian law and military provocations against regional allies of Palestine.

EP members criticize EU as accomplice of Israel's genocide



Some members of the European Parliament (EP) on Tuesday criticized the European Union for being an "accomplice" in Israel's actions violating international law and for perpetuating them. The members of parliament criticized the EU's stance on Israel's actions during a session titled "EP's reaction to the killing of humanitarian aid workers, journalists, and civilians by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip" held at the EP, Anadolu Agency reported. The EP Left Group member, Manu Pineda, condemned Israel's failure to implement interim measures ordered by the International Court of Jus-

tice (ICJ), highlighting the deaths of journalists and humanitarian aid workers in Israeli attacks. Pineda's characterization of Israel as a "tumor" in the Middle East. Another Left Group member, Clare Daly, accused the EU of complicity and silence regarding Israel's actions in Gaza. Daly criticized the EU for cutting support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) without substantiating Israel's prosecution against the agency. She accused the EU of "waving the flag of the oppressor from day one" and condemned some EU countries for their actions.

European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell attends a session at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France on April 24, 2024. [FREDERICK FLORIN/AFP](#)

Mick Wallace, also a member of the Left Group, criticized the EU's provision of arms to what he described as a "genocidal apartheid regime". He accused the EU of providing diplomatic cover for Israel's actions while failing to impose sanctions or take decisive action. He concluded by questioning whether the EU considers the loss of children's lives in Gaza as a price acceptable to protect its interests.

Israel pummels Gaza after US approves military aid

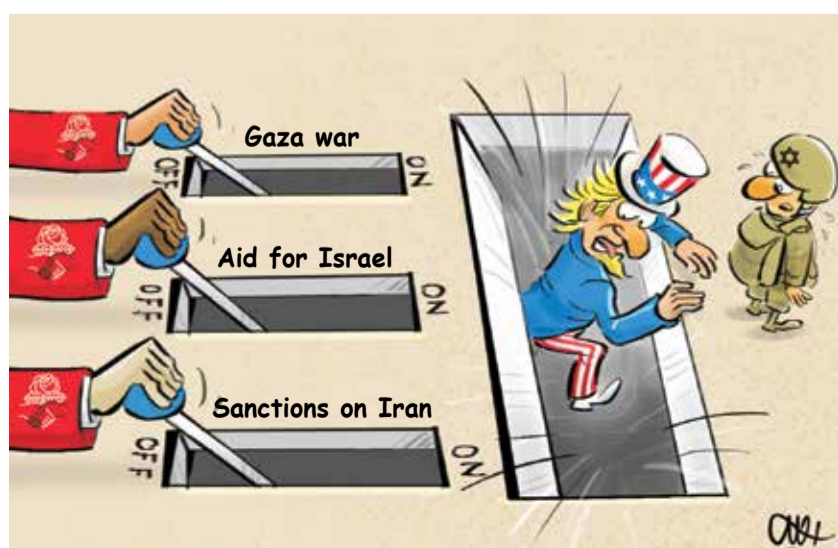


Israel pounded Gaza with air strikes and artillery fire in its onslaught on Gaza on Wednesday after the US Congress approved \$13 billion in military aid. Fears are also rising that Israel will soon launch an assault on the city Rafah in the Gaza Strip, which it claims is the "last" major Hamas stronghold, but aid groups warn any invasion would create an "apocalyptic situation", AFP reported. Early Wednesday, hospital and security sources in Gaza reported Israeli air strikes in Rafah, as well as the central Nuseirat refugee camp. There were also reports of heavy bombardment of several areas of northern Gaza during the night, while the Israeli military said its aircraft "struck over 50 tar-

gets" over the previous 24 hours. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, however, has insisted the assault on Rafah will go ahead. Citing Egyptian officials briefed on the Israeli plans, the Wall Street Journal said Israel was planning to move civilians from Rafah to nearby Khan Yunis over a period of two to three weeks. Satellite images shared by Maxar Technologies showed new blocks of tents that had been set up in recent weeks in southern Gaza. Ismail al-Thawabta, head of the Hamas government media office said an invasion would be a "crime" and that central Gaza and Khan Yunis "cannot accommodate the numbers of displaced people in Rafah".

Smoke rises from the Gaza Strip after an Israeli air strike on April 24, 2024. [JACK GUEZ/AFP](#)

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran rejects US claims of 'malicious cyber activity'

Iran condemned as "unfounded" Wednesday US allegations of "malicious cyber activity" on behalf of its military that triggered a new set of sanctions against Iranian companies and individuals. Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said Iran "categorically dismissed the US government claim that some Iranian individuals and companies have been involved in cyberattacks", AFP reported. He accused Washington of seeking to "deflect the wave of international criticism towards their policies

of unlimited support for the Zionist regime (Israeli) war crimes and genocide in the Gaza Strip". The US Treasury Department announced the sanctions against four individuals and two companies on Tuesday, adding that the four individuals had also been indicted "for their roles in cyber activity targeting US entities". "These actors targeted more than a dozen US companies and government entities through cyber operations, including spear phishing and malware attacks," on behalf of

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, it alleged. The United States, Britain and the European Union have all imposed new sanctions against Iran in recent days following its unprecedented April 13-

14 attack on Israel in retaliation for a deadly air strike on its consulate in Damascus.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani [ISNA](#)



Iranian animation wins Italian festival award

The Iranian animated film 'In the Shadow of the Cypress', directed by Hossein Molyayemi, was awarded the Giuseppe Maestri prize for best animation at the 25th edition of the International Festival Corti da Sogni - Antonio Ricci in Italy. The film, a joint production by Shirin Sohani and Hossein Molyayemi, both known for their prominent presence in international festivals, is among the latest productions of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, IRNA reported. The 25th edition of the Corti da Sogni Interna-

tional Short Film Festival concluded as over a thousand short films vied for participation, with 64 films from 19 countries making it to the final stage. Italy led with the highest number of representatives with 18 short films, followed by France with 9, Spain with 7, Iran with 6, and Germany with 4. The festival awarded various prizes including the "Sogni Due" award for the best non-European short film, the "Sogni" award for the best non-Italian European short film, the "Giuseppe Mastrini" award for the best short animation film, the best

Italian short film award, the student section award, the young critics award, the "Ivano Marascotti" award for the best actress in a short film, and the "Green Planet" award for the best environmental film. 'In the Shadow of the Cypress' is the story of a priest suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after an accident. He lives with his daughter in a secluded house by the sea, facing the challenges of a difficult life. The 25th Corti da Sogni International Short Film Festival took place from April 16 to 20, 2024, in the city of Ravenna, Italy.



Iran, Malaysia to collaborate on Qur'an printing



Arts & Culture Desk
 Iran's Astan Quds Razavi and Qur'an Publishing Center (Rasto Foundation) in Malaysia will collaborate to print a joint Qur'an.

In a meeting held in Kuala Lumpur on April 23, Habib Reza Arzani, Iran's cultural attaché in Malaysia, stated that a delegation from Astan Quds Razavi, following a visit by intellectuals and cultural activists

from the Rasto Foundation to Iran and meetings with some officials of Astan Quds Razavi, has traveled to Malaysia. The meeting also aims to share experiences in Qur'anic matters,

Islamic art teachings, restoration of manuscripts, as well as joint book printing regarding Palestine. Furthermore, Jalal Hosseini, the head of the Libraries, Museums, and Documentation Center of Astan Quds Razavi, considered serving the holy shrine of Razavi unparalleled. He emphasized that the presence of Imam Reza's shrine in Iran is the greatest spiritual, intellectual, cultural, and religious asset, adding, "The spiritual and cultural capacity present in the Razavi shrine has caused pilgrims visiting the shrine to start their personal transformation from this point." During the visit to the Rasto Foundation and meeting with Professor Abdul Latif, the head of the Rasto Foundation, a special Qur'an for the people of Palestine, only printed in support of the oppressed people of Gaza, was presented to this delegation.

Art exhibition in Tehran to support Gaza children



The third 'The Second Month' exhibition is set to take place at the Laleh Art Gallery, with the revenues from artwork sales designated to support children in Gaza, announced the gallery. The exhibition, curated by Mohammad Ali Saeidi under the supervision of the Tehran Municipality's Visual Arts and Museums Department, will feature selected works from 30 contemporary artists and open on April 27 and will run through May 15, IRNA wrote. Artworks by prominent artists such as Morteza Momayez, Ardeshtir Mohassess, Bahman Mohassess, Irandokht Mohassess, Behdad Najafi, Nasser Oveysi, Reza Baangiz, Ardeshtir Boroujeni, Bahman Boroujeni, Sadegh Barirani, Taha Behbahani, Sadegh Tabrizi, Bahnam Jalali Jafari, Hadi Jamali, Mehdi Hosseini, Ebrahim Haghighi, and Mostafa Khazaei will be on display. The second 'The Second Month' exhibition was held in early 2023.

Iran's 'Alaa' to be staged in Tunisia

Iran's 'Alaa', a monodrama written and directed by Mohammad Kazemtabar, will be staged at the sixth Carthage International Monodrama Festival in Tunisia. Previously showcased at the 14th Daegu International Musical Festival in

South Korea, and the 41st Fajr International Theater Festival, in Tehran, 'Alaa' will now be featured in the coming days at the sixth edition of the Tunisian festival, IRNA wrote. The talented cast includes Marjan Aqanouri, Ali Borji, and Mohammadreza

Azadfar, who bring the production to life with their outstanding performances. This theatrical production introduces a unique blend of romance and aerial yoga movements, making it a standout performance in the festival.



Rainfall causes over \$283k loss to historical sites in Sistan and Baluchestan

Social Desk
 Recent rainfall has caused extensive damage to historical sites in Sistan and Baluchestan province, with losses exceeding \$283,000. According to Mohammad Hadi Tehrani Moghadam, the Director General of Tourism Department in the province, heavy rainfall over the past week has resulted in significant damage to up to 90% of historical buildings and artifacts

in the region. Concerns arose with unprecedented rainfall in southern Sistan and Baluchestan, raising fears of destruction to many historical structures and sites. Authorities have been unable to assess the extent of damage due to communication blockages caused by the floods. Among the worst affected is the historic mosque of Abdul Qadir in Nikshahr, which has suffered approximately 90% damage

due to collapsing walls and water infiltration. In addition, Firouzabad Castle, Kalah Gung Fortress, as well as historic sites in Zahedan, Saravan, and Suran, have experienced significant destruction ranging from 45% to 50% due to wall collapses and moisture infiltration. Structures within forts such as Anoushiravan in Chabahar, the preliminary school of Zahedan, Tis Castle in Chabahar, and Bampur

Citadel have also suffered damage of up to 40% due to erosion of mud bricks, water infiltration, and wall collapses. In total, approximately 60 historical sites and buildings across Sistan and Baluchestan province have been affected by the recent rainfall, with damage ranging from 15% to 90%. Further rainfall in the coming days may exacerbate the situation, according to weather forecasts.