



Iran calls on BRICS to play role in stopping Israeli crimes

Iran called on the BRICS group of emerging economies to play a role in putting an immediate stop to Israeli crimes against the

Palestinians. The call by Iran's deputy foreign minister Ali Baqeri Kani in Moscow on Thursday came as his counter-

parts and special representatives of BRICS nations met to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East and North Africa region.

"The manner and quality of role-playing of individual countries and international organizations in relation to the Israeli regime's crisis mongering and the position they adopt in this regard is effective and will be recorded in history," he said. "Therefore, the members of the BRICS organization should show their political and practical will to completely stop attacks on people and civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip," he said. Baqeri Kani called on the BRICS nations to help with the quick sending of humanitarian aid, especially food, medical equipment and medicine to the Gaza Strip and the complete withdrawal of the occupying forces and the reconstruction of the besieged territory. "At the moment, our focus should be on achieving a complete and permanent halt to the attacks of the Zionist regime in order to reduce the humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip, expand the sending of international humanitarian aid to Gaza, and provide firm support to the activities of humanitarian organizations, especially UNRWA," he said.

Iran's delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Baqeri Kani (3rd L) attends a BRICS meeting to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East and North Africa region, in Moscow, Russia, on April 25, 2024. **IRNA**

"Only taking a position and making a statement is not enough, and effective and decisive operational measures must be put on the agenda for the Zionist regime to comply with the wishes of the international community." The senior Iranian diplomat thanked South Africa for taking Israel to the International Court of Justice for genocide in the Gaza Strip. He asked BRICS members to strongly support the case and provide necessary legal solutions to deal with the crimes. Meanwhile, Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations denounced Israel's destabilizing activities in the Middle East, urging the UN Security Council to hold the Israeli regime accountable for its atrocities in Gaza and elsewhere. "Israel's ongoing destabilized and irresponsible actions and atrocities against the nations in the region are a real threat to regional and international peace and security," Amir Saeid Iravani said as he addressed a UN Security Council session in New York on Thursday. He noted that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeks to expand and escalate the conflict in the region to stay in power, emphasizing that the members of the Security Council must not allow the body to be held hostage to the ambitions of such a "belligerent regime."

Iran DM discusses cooperation with China, Russia



IRAN'S DEFENSE MINISTRY
International Desk

Iran's Defense Minister held talks with his Russian and Chinese counterparts on the sidelines of a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Kazakhstan. According to the Russian state news agency RIA, the goal of the meeting between Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and his Iranian counterpart Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani was to strengthen the commitment of both nations and bolster military and technical collaboration. Shoigu reportedly conveyed Moscow's readiness to deepen ties with Tehran in the realm of military and technical cooperation. Shoigu emphasized the importance of fostering closer strategic alignment between the two nations. The Iranian official also held a separate meeting with Chinese counterpart Dong Jun. During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to enhance military cooperation, also conferring on regional issues.

Hamas officials say group ready to disarm if Palestinian state established

A top Hamas political official said the resistance group is willing to agree to a truce of five years or more with Israel and that it would lay down its weapons and convert into a political party if an independent Palestinian state is established along pre-1967 borders. The comments by Khalil al-Hayya in an interview Wednesday came amid a stalemate in months of talks for a cease-fire in Gaza. But it's unlikely Israel would consider such a scenario. Israel's current leadership is adamantly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state on lands Israel occupied in the 1967 Mideast war. Al-Hayya, a high-ranking

Hamas official who has represented the Palestinian group in negotiations for a cease-fire and hostage exchange, struck a sometimes defiant and other times conciliatory tone. Speaking to the AP in Istanbul, Al-Hayya said Hamas wants to join the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by the rival Fatah faction, to form a unified government for Gaza and the West Bank. He said Hamas would accept "a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the international resolutions," along Israel's pre-1967 borders. If that happens, he said, the

group's military wing would dissolve. "All the experiences of people who fought against occupiers, when they became independent and obtained their rights and their state, what have these forces done? They have turned into political parties and their defending fighting forces have turned into the national army," he said. Basem Naim, an Istanbul-based member of Hamas' political bureau, also told CNN on Thursday that the group would agree to disarm if an independent Palestinian state was established. "If an independent state with its capital in Jerusalem [Al-Quds], while preserving the

right of return for refugees, (is created) Al-Qassam could be integrated into (a future) national army," he said, referring to the group's armed wing. Mustafa Barghouti, President of the Palestinian National Initiative, said he wasn't aware of Hamas offering to lay down its arms before, but said it would be a significant move if true. Hamas is currently fighting Israeli army which has launched a devastating war on the Gaza Strip since October 7 when the resistance group attacked the occupied territories and killed nearly 1,200 Israelis. Israel's ensuing bombardment and ground offensive have killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, most of



CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

them women and children, according to local health authorities, and displaced some 80% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million. Nearly seven months into the war in Gaza, cease-fire negotiations have also stalled. Israel is now preparing for an offensive in the southern city of Rafah, where more than 1 million Palestinians have fled to. Al-Hayya said such an offensive would not succeed in destroying Hamas. He said

contacts between the political leadership outside and military leadership inside Gaza are "uninterrupted" by the war and "contacts, decisions and directions are made in consultation" between the two groups. Israeli forces "have not destroyed more than 20% of (Hamas') capabilities, neither human nor in the field," he asserted. "If they can't finish (Hamas) off, what is the solution? The solution is to go to consensus."

Ashtiani hailed China's stance on the ongoing developments in the region and its condemnation of Israel's airstrike against Iran's diplomatic premise in the Syrian capital of Damascus earlier this month. It is necessary for Iran and China to boost cooperation and convergence to solve security issues in the region and across the world, the Iranian defense chief said. On April 1, the Israeli regime carried out terrorist airstrikes on the consular section of Iran's embassy in the Syrian capital, which killed two generals of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as well as five of their accompanying officers. In retaliation, the IRGC targeted the occupied territories on April 13 with a barrage of drones and missiles. The retaliatory strikes, dubbed Operation True Promise, inflicted damage on Israeli military bases across the occupied Palestinian territories. The Chinese defense minister, for his part, slammed Israel's attack on Iran's diplomatic premises in Syria, which he said violated international law. China supports Iran's legitimate right to respond to Israel, Dong added. In recent years, geopolitical shifts and the emergence of new security threats have prompted Moscow, Tehran and Beijing to reassess their strategic priorities and explore avenues for collaboration.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Pro-Palestinian US campus protests grow as police crack down

Pro-Palestinian protests spread to more college campuses in the United States on Thursday as authorities appeared to be running out of patience and police began to push back forcefully. Riot officers used chemical irritants and tasers at one university as administrators at some of the country's most prestigious institutions battled to prevent occupations taking hold, AFP reported. Staging sit-ins and mounting boisterous demonstrations, the activists are call-

ing for a cease-fire in Gaza, as well as for colleges to sever ties with the Israeli regime and with companies they say profit from the conflict. "For 201 days, the world has watched in silence as Israel has murdered over 30,000 Palestinians," organizers of a protest at the University of California, Los Angeles said in an online message. "Today, UCLA joins students across the country in demanding that our universities divest from the companies which profit off of the occupation, apartheid and

genocide in Palestine." More than 200 protesters were arrested Wednesday and early Thursday at universities in Los Angeles, Boston and Austin, Texas, where around 2,000 people gathered again on Thursday. The spreading protests began at Columbia University in New York. Meanwhile, students in Paris protested again on Friday after police broke up a pro-Palestinian solidarity demonstration Wednesday night at Sciences Po, one of France's most prestigious universities.