



Iranian students support pro-Palestinian rallies in Western universities

Iranian university students staged mass rallies to express their solidarity with pro-Palestine academic demonstrations across the United States and Europe demanding an end to Israel's months-long genocidal war against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. The university students, professors, and personnel in Iran held gatherings on their academic campuses after noon prayers on Sunday to condemn Israeli crimes and atrocities in Gaza over the past seven

months. "Academics all over the world, especially American and Western countries, have established humanitarian movements in defense of humanity and human rights, and launched a strong wave of support for the oppressed people of Gaza," Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology said in a statement. "On this occasion, our country's dear academics, by organizing large gatherings after offering prayers in mosques and main squares

of universities, will voice their support for the professors and students protesting the crimes of Israel's child-killing regime," it added. Students and staff members of the University of Tehran held a rally on Saturday in support of growing protests on US campuses where students have erected encampments over the past days to demand action to end Israel's war on Gaza. Chanting "death to America, "death to Israel" and "death to England", the demon-

strators on Saturday condemned violent US police attacks on students. More than 20 universities in the US and several others in Europe are protesting against the US-backed Israeli onslaught, which has killed over 34,000 people since October last year. The students are calling for universities to separate themselves from any companies that are advancing the regime's war on the besieged Palestinian territory. Police have arrested hundreds of protesters across

university campuses. The United States has been providing Israel with unrestrained military, intelligence, and financial support since October 7, when the regime unleashed the war against the besieged Palestinian enclave. Washington gives Israel \$3.8bn in military assistance every year, and US President Joe Biden has continued to provide staunch support to the illegal entity amid the Gaza war. On Wednesday, Biden signed into law a mas-

University students stage rallies in a university in the northwestern city of Tabriz on April 28, 2024 to express solidarity with pro-Palestine academic demonstrations across the US and Europe.
● AHMADREZA TAHERI/ISNA

sive funding package that will provide an additional \$17bn to the occupying regime. Washington has also vetoed several United Nations Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire in the brutal military aggression.

Iran to hold run-off parliamentary elections on May 10



A total of 90 candidates are going to run for the 45 remaining seats in the Iranian Parliament in the run-off elections slated for May 10.

The spokesperson for the Election Headquarters of Iran said on Sunday that the run-off parliamentary elections will be held in 22 constituencies across the country where the candidates had failed to receive an absolute majority (more than 50%) of votes cast during the first round held on March 1, Tasnim News Agency reported.

A total of 90 candidates will be racing for the 45 vacant seats out of 290 parliamentary seats, Mohsen Eslami said.

He noted that the upcoming run-off elections will be held with electronic voting machines in 22 districts across 15 provinces, including in the capital, Tehran, where 32 candidates will run against each other.

The spokesman noted that no paper ballots will be available in the stations with electronic ballot boxes, saying the results of e-voting will be obtained instantly. The elections will kick off at 8 a.m. on May 10 and will continue for 10 hours, but the voting period could be extended at the discretion of the interior minister, Eslami said.

The spokesman added that considering the successful process of e-voting, next year's presidential election is expected to be held with electronic voting machines across the nation.

The countrywide elections for the Parliament and the Assembly of Experts were held on March 1.

Around 61 million Iranian people were eligible to vote, including 3.5 million first-time voters.

The elections were held in around 60,000 polling stations across Iran.

US internal memo hints Israel in violation of int'l law

International Desk

Some senior US officials have advised Secretary of State Antony Blinken that they do not find "credible or reliable" Israel's assurances that it is using US-supplied weapons in accordance with international humanitarian law, according to an internal State Department memo reviewed by Reuters.

Other officials upheld support for Israel's representation. Under a National Security Memorandum (NSM) issued by President Joe Biden in February, Blinken must report to Congress by May 8

whether he finds credible Israel's assurances that its use of US weapons does not violate US or international law. By March 24, at least seven State Department bureaus had sent in their contributions to an initial "options memo" to Blinken. Parts of the memo, which has not been previously reported, were classified. The submissions to the memo provide the most extensive picture to date of the divisions inside the State Department over whether Israel might be violating international humanitarian law in Gaza. A joint submission from

four bureaus - Democracy Human Rights & Labor; Population, Refugees and Migration; Global Criminal Justice and International Organization Affairs - raised "serious concern over non-compliance" with international humanitarian law during Israel's onslaught on Gaza. The assessment from the four bureaus said Israel's assurances were "neither credible nor reliable." It cited eight examples of Israeli military actions that the officials said raise "serious questions" about potential violations of international humanitarian law.

These included repeatedly striking protected sites and civilian infrastructure; "unconscionably high levels of civilian harm to military advantage"; taking little action to investigate violations or to hold to account those responsible for significant civilian harm and "killing humanitarian workers and journalists at an unprecedented rate." The assessment from the four bureaus also cited 11 instances of Israeli military actions the officials said "arbitrarily restrict humanitarian aid," including rejecting entire trucks of aid due to a single "du-



● MOSTAFA ALKHAROUF/ANADOLU AGENCY

al-use" item, "artificial" limitations on inspections as well as repeated attacks on humanitarian sites that should not be hit. Since the beginning of the Israel's war on Gaza in Oc-

tober, the United Nations and many international bodies and countries have repeatedly condemned the regime for clear violations of international law in the Palestinian territory.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Gaza 'Freedom Flotilla' blocked in Turkey

A "Freedom Flotilla" aimed at delivering aid to Gaza was blocked in Turkey Saturday after being denied use of two of its ships, which organizers blame on Israeli pressure. The coalition of NGOs and other associations said it was unable to set sail after the West African country of Guinea-Bissau withdrew its flagged vessels, according to AFP. "Sadly, Guinea-Bissau has allowed itself to become complicit in Israel's deliberate starvation, illegal siege and genocide of Palestinians in Gaza," the Freedom Flotilla Coalition said.

"The Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry (GBISR), in a blatantly political move, informed the Freedom Flotilla Coalition that it had withdrawn the Guinea Bissau flag from two of the Freedom Flotilla's ships, one of which is our cargo ship, already loaded with over 5,000 tons of life-saving aid," their statement said. The group said the Guinea-Bissau authorities made several "extraordinary" requests for information including destinations, potential additional port calls, cargo manifest, and estimated arrival dates and times.

"Normally, national flagging authorities concern themselves only with safety and related standards on vessels bearing their flag," it said, equating it to being asked about destinations when registering a car. At an Istanbul press conference, about 280 volunteers - activists, lawyers and doctors - who had hoped to join the ships shouted slogans including "Flag the flotilla", "We will sail" and "Free Palestine". Three of the flotilla's ships have been docked for a week at the port of Tuzla, south of Istanbul. They had planned

to set sail Friday. In 2010, a previous "Freedom Flotilla" set off from the southern Turkish city of Antalya, leading to a deadly episode that soured relations between Turkey and Israel after Israeli military forces attacked one of the ships, the Mavi Marmara, leaving 10 dead and 28 wounded aboard. UN agencies have warned that maritime deliveries alone cannot deliver sufficient aid to ward off the threat of famine in Gaza and have called on Israel to open up more border crossings for road convoys.