

FM: Regional efforts ramped up to stop war on Gaza



discussions with his Saudi and Egyptian counterparts, Faisal Ben Farhan and Sameh Shoukry, respectively, addressing mutual relations and the latest developments concerning Israel's devastating conflict in Gaza. The foreign ministers of Iran and Egypt discuss possible ways to put an end to Israel's crimes against the people of Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip. They expressed hope that the OIC summit would consolidate solidarity and unity in the Muslim world to support the Palestinian people and solve regional problems. The Iranian foreign minister hailed Egypt's bids to stop Israel's genocide in Gaza and called on Cairo to help Tehran dispatch humanitarian aid to the war-stricken people in the Strip. Concomitantly with the

electricity, and water into the Palestinian territory into a trickle. At least 34,654 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and 77,908 wounded in the war that Israel began on October 7, 2023, following a retaliatory operation by the Palestinian territory's resistance movements. For his part, the Egyptian foreign minister warned against the consequences of the continuation of Israel's war in Gaza, particularly the massacre of civilians, and expressed hope that the ongoing political bids would cease the war and restore Palestinians' rights. He once again condemned Israel's airstrikes on Iran's diplomatic premises in Syria last month and outlined Egypt's stance on the need to prevent the escalation of tensions in the region. Under the slogan "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development," the OIC session opened in Banjul on Saturday. The participants plan to discuss a variety of issues about the Muslim world, including the developments in Palestine, particularly Israel's war on the Gaza Strip.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (3rd L) meets his Saudi counterpart, Faisal bin Farhan (2nd R), in Banjul, Gambia, on the sidelines of the 15th annual Islamic Summit Conference of the OIC on May 4, 2024. **IRNA**

International Desk
Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Saturday that

regional efforts to stop the war and genocide in Gaza have become more serious. The foreign minister, who is currently in Gambia's

capital Banjul to participate in the 15th annual meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), posted on his official X ac-

count about the specifics of his official visit. On the sidelines of the two-day conference that started on Saturday, he engaged in

war, the regime has been enforcing a near-total siege on the coastal territory, which has reduced the flow of foodstuffs, medicine,

Shahid Mahdavi warship sails into Southern Hemisphere



The domestically-developed Shahid Mahdavi oceangoing warship operated by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy **IRNA**

A domestically-developed oceangoing warship operated by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has crossed the line of zero degrees latitude, the Equator, and sailed into the Southern Hemisphere. The Shahid Mahdavi, which is a multipurpose vessel designed for long-range operations, registered the achievement on Friday as Iran's naval forces are expanding their presence in the international waters and high seas. The 2,100-tonne vessel, which is 240 meters in length and 27 meters in width, joined the IRGC's naval fleet in March 2023.

The oceangoing warship is equipped with a three-dimensional phased array radar, sea-to-sea and sea-to-air missiles, and sophisticated telecommunication systems for electronic warfare.

The Shahid Mahdavi is capable of carrying various types of attack helicopters, combat drones as well as fast attack craft. In February 2024, the IRGC Navy launched two ballistic missiles from inside two containers on board the warship.

Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient.

Iranian officials say the Islamic Republic will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense. Iran has made it clear that its defense capabilities are not subject to negotiation. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has repeatedly called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities.

Turkey freezes trade with Israel over 'worsening humanitarian tragedy'

International Desk
Turkey suspended all trade with Israel over its offensive in Gaza, citing the "worsening humanitarian tragedy" in the strip. The Turkish Trade Ministry said the measures would be in place until Israel allowed an "uninterrupted and sufficient flow" of aid into Gaza. Trade Minister Omer Bolat said on Friday the country will not resume trade with Israel, worth \$7 billion a year, until a permanent cease-fire and humanitarian aid are secured in Gaza, becoming the first of Israel's key commercial partners to take such a step, Reuters reported. Israel's "uncompromising attitude" and the worsening situation in Gaza's Rafah region, a refuge for displaced people that Israel

has threatened to storm – prompted Ankara to halt all exports and imports, Bolat said. Also, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday said Turkey's move to halt trade with Israel was designed to force the regime to a cease-fire in Gaza. The decision is the latest indication of deteriorating Turkey's relations with Israel, AFP reported. "We have taken some measures to force Israel to agree to a cease-fire and increase the amount of humanitarian aid to enter" Gaza, Erdogan told a group of businessmen in Istanbul. "We will oversee the consequences of this step we have taken in coordination and consultation with our business world." Turkish-Israeli trade volume amounted to \$9.5 billion, Er-

dogan told journalists after Friday prayers in Istanbul. "We closed that door." Turkish officials would coordinate with Palestinian authorities to ensure that Palestinians are not affected by the suspension of imports and exports, the trade ministry said. The ministry described the step as the "second phase" of measures against Israel, adding that the steps would remain in force until Israel "allows an uninterrupted and sufficient flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza." Already in April Turkey announced it was restricting exports to Israel, covering 54 products from iron and steel to jet fuel. "We do not run after hostility or conflict in our region," Erdogan said Friday. "We do not want to see conflict, blood or tears in our geogra-

phy, adding that, "We know now that we did the right thing." The Gaza Strip is suffering a humanitarian crisis caused by Israel's war against Hamas that has been raging since October 7, with the United Nations and aid agencies warning of impending famine. The Health Ministry in Gaza said Saturday that at least 34,654 people have been killed since October 7, when Hamas launched an unprecedented attack on Israel that resulted in the deaths of 1,170 people. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz on Thursday accused Erdogan of breaking bilateral agreements after Ankara announced the trade freeze. But Erdogan said: "We have one goal here, and that's to force the Netanyahu cabinet, which went out of control with the unconditional mili-



tary and diplomatic support of the West, to a cease-fire." **REUTERS**

Truce attempts
According to Egyptian state-linked media Al-Qahera News, a Hamas delegation arrived Saturday in Egypt for the latest round of talks on a proposed truce and prisoner release in Gaza. However, a top Israeli official on Saturday said Israel will send a delegation to Cairo for talks on a Gaza truce only if it sees a "positive movement" on a framework for a hostage deal. "The indication for positive movement over a framework would be if we send

a delegation led by Mossad chief to Cairo," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity. Mediators from Qatar, Egypt and the US have been waiting for Hamas to respond to a proposal that, according to details released by Britain, would halt fighting for 40 days and exchange Israeli captives for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. If they manage to reach a deal, it would be the first since a week-long truce in November, when Hamas released 105 captives, the 80 Israelis among them in exchange for 240 Palestinians held by Israel.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



IRGC captures key sponsors of Jaish al-Adl terror group

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force managed to capture primary sponsors of the Pakistan-based so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group in the country's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan close to the border with Pakistan. The IRGC Ground Force's Quds Base said in a statement on Saturday that the IRGC servicemen could capture the terrorists during two separate joint operations by intelligence and security forces, Press TV reported. They had hidden among ordinary students of Anwar al-Haramain seminary school

in Pashamagh village of Rask County, and were sponsoring Jaish al-Adl terror activities. Back on April 9, at least five Iranian police officers were killed in a terrorist attack by members of the so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group in the southeastern Iranian province. Late on January 16, two major strongholds of the terrorist group in Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan were precisely struck and completely wiped out by a salvo of missiles as well as a squadron of combat drones. The bases were specifically targeted and successfully de-

molished in the Koh-e-Sabz area of the province, which is known to be among the main bastions of Jaish al-Adl terrorists. Jaish al-Adl is a notorious terrorist group with headquarters in Pakistan, and has been involved in numerous terror attacks against Iran.

A terrorist attack on two police cars in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan left five officers dead on April 9, 2024.

