

Raisi: Muslim cultural figures should counter distortion of Gaza realities



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (l) meets a group of prominent authors and cultural figures from the Islamic world in Tehran, Iran, on May 15, 2024. [president.ir](#)

International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi underlined the importance of the Muslim world's cultural figures in countering the enemies' plot to distort realities in the Gaza Strip.

He made the remarks in a meeting with a group of prominent writers and cultural figures from the Islamic world, who have participated in the 35th Tehran's International Book Fair.

Raisi said that enemy, using its media empire, is seeking to mislead the world's public opinion in the issue of Gaza by distorting real-

ities in the Palestinian territory.

He said that today the issue of Palestine has become the first and common issue of all Muslim and freedom-seeking nations of the world, calling the unprecedented unity a basis for the final victory of the Palestinian nation.

Despite the enemy's efforts to induce despair among the Islamic Ummah, the resistance of the freedom-seeking nations in the face of the historical oppression against the people of Gaza promises the victory of the Palestinian nation and the destruction of the criminal Israeli regime.

Iranian MPs back switch to Friday-Saturday weekend

Iran's parliament approved changes to the working week for all government employees on Wednesday that would establish a 40-hour working week with a Friday-Saturday weekend. The legislation, which still requires a green light from constitutional watchdog the Guardian Council, would replace the existing 44-hour working week with a half-day Thursday and Friday – the Muslim day of prayer and rest – the only full day off.

The change had been hotly debated, and 136 lawmakers voted in favor with 66 against and three abstentions, the official IRNA news agency said.

Economists had warned that the alternative of a Thursday-Friday weekend risked deepening Iran's isolation by limiting most international transactions to three days per week.

But some opponents accused supporters of a Friday-Saturday weekend of taking their lead from the Judeo-Christian traditions of the Western world.

However, lawmaker Mohsen Pirhadi told Parliament Wednesday that leading cleric Ayatollah Javadi Amoli had raised no objection to Saturday as a weekend day.

Biden's administration turning a blind eye to Israel's crimes



By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

Despite Washington's pro-Israel policies, countries in South America have protested against Israel's brutal attacks on Gaza. Bolivia and Belize had severed diplomatic relations with Israel due to its aggressive actions, and now Colombian President Gustavo Petro has announced that his country is also cutting diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv in response to attacks on Rafah. He has also called on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to issue arrest warrants for the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Petro stated that Netanyahu will not stop the genocide, so the need to issue their warrants for arrest has become even more urgent.

Colombia, an important country in South America, has announced its inclusion in the case of genocide filed against Israel by South Africa in the ICJ. The court ruled in January that genocide and Israeli attacks in Gaza pose a serious threat, but it did not order Israel to cease hostilities, which gave Israel further oppor-

tunity for more genocide of Palestinians.

The actions taken by South Africa and South American states against Israel will be remembered as a golden chapter in world history. However, when we analyze the reactions of Muslim countries over the genocide in Gaza, the heart sheds tears of blood. If Muslim countries only stop selling oil to Israel, it can increase pressure on the Israeli rulers. The United Arab Emirates and Azerbaijan are the Muslim countries that meet 40 to 60 percent of Israel's oil needs, while Saudi Arabia and Turkey are also involved in providing crude to Israel. Imagine if these Muslim countries stop supplying Israel with oil, then the bullets fired from its tanks and aircraft would not take the lives of Palestinian mothers, sisters, and children. Eighty percent of Gaza's 2.3 million population has become homeless due to Israeli aggression. Many neighborhoods and areas have been reduced to rubble while more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed. Despite this, Israel has started attacks on Rafah and ordered the evacuation of temporary settlements for more than one million Palestinians.

Israeli ground forces are forcibly evacuating Palestinians.

After approving the attacks on Rafah by Israel's war cabinet, the US has temporarily stopped the supply of bombs that destroy concrete bunkers. It includes bombs weighing between 1,800 and 2,000 pounds and between 1,700 and 500 pounds. Washington's punitive action against Israel is extremely inadequate because billions of dollars' worth of American weapons are in the firm pipeline for Israel, including tanks, bullets and F-35 components. Moreover, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has halted the process of reaching a conclusion in Congress on a critical report on Israel's use of US weapons against civilians in Gaza.

The report stated that Israel has violated the terms of the use of weapons. If Blinken does not stop this action, not only will Israel have to face US legal actions, but the Biden administration will also have to take tougher punitive measures against Israel. Here again, the Biden administration has tried to turn a blind eye to Israel's crimes in the eyes of the world.

EU urges Israel to end Rafah military operation 'immediately'

The European Union on Wednesday urged Israel to end its military operation in Gaza's Rafah "immediately", warning that failure to do so would undermine ties with the bloc.

"Should Israel continue its military operation in Rafah, it would inevitably put a heavy strain on the EU's relationship with Israel," said the statement issued in the EU's name by its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

"The European Union urges Israel to end its military operation in Rafah immediately," the statement said, warning it was "further disrupting the distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza and is leading to more internal displacement, exposure to famine



AFP

and human suffering."

The bloc – the main aid donor for the Palestinian territories and Israel's biggest trading partner – said more than a million people in and around Rafah had been ordered by Israel to flee the area to other zones the UN says cannot be considered safe. Israel has launched a brutal war on Gaza since Oc-

tober 7. Israel's relentless bombardment from the air and a ground offensive inside Gaza has killed more than 35,000 – mostly women and children. Israel's main allies, the United States and the EU, as well as the United Nations, have all warned Israel against a major operation in Rafah given that it would add to the civilian toll.

Slovakia's PM wounded in assassination attempt

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico suffered life-threatening injuries when he was shot and wounded in an attempted assassination on Wednesday, the government office said.

Fico, 59, was rushed to hospital in the central city of Handlova after holding a government meeting there, and was being transported by helicopter to the city of Banska Bystrica for urgent treatment, it said.

A Reuters witness heard several shots fired after the meeting in Handlova northeast of the capital Bratislava. Police detained a man and security officials pushed someone into a car and drove off, the witness said. "An assassination (attempt) on Prime Minister Robert Fico was carried out today at the government's off-site meeting in Handlova," the government office said in a statement.

"At the moment he is being transported by helicopter to Banska Bystrica, because it would take too long to Bratislava in view

of the necessity of an acute intervention."

Emergency Services said they had received information about a man being shot in Handlova shortly after 2:30 p.m. (1230 GMT) and sent an emergency helicopter to a 59-year-old patient. Broadcaster TA3 reported four shots were fired, and that the leftist prime minister had been hit in the abdomen.

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, led condemnation of the attack, which

also shocked the European Union and NATO member state's allies in central Europe.

"Such acts of violence have no place in our society and undermine democracy, our most precious common good. My thoughts are with PM Fico, his family", von der Leyen said.

The Slovak government was meeting in Handlova, 190 km (118 miles) northeast of Bratislava, as part of a tour of the country's regions after coming to power late last year.



The image taken from video footage obtained shows security personnel carrying Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico (c) towards a vehicle after he was shot in Handlova on May 15, 2024. [RTVS/AFP](#)

Iran strongly condemns Australian sanctions

Iran strongly condemned Australia's sanctions against several Iranian senior officials, entities and companies allegedly over the country's peaceful missile and drone programs.

Australia's sanctions against Iran came on Tuesday a month after Tehran launched missile and drone attacks on the Israeli regime to punish it for an airstrike that killed Iranian generals in a diplomatic mission in Syria, Press TV reported.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani slammed the silence of Australia and its allies in the face of Israel's violations of international law and its recent attack on the Iranian embassy premises in Syria.

Kanaani said this silence proves the double-standard approach adopted by Australia and its allies to developments in Middle East.

He said that Australia and its partners remained silent "regarding the aggressive action and violation of international law and human rights by the Zionist regime in attacking the diplomatic headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The spokesman said such an approach only encourages Israelis to further violate the rules of international law and commit more war crimes.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

