

# Millions bid farewell to Raisi



## National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other martyrs were laid to rest, concluding days of funeral attended by several million of mourners after they were died in a helicopter crash on Sunday. At least three million mourners marched in Raisi's home town Mashhad Thursday to bid farewell to the president, the mega city's mayor said, following processions in the cities of Tabriz, Qom, Tehran and Birjand. Later at dusk, the president's body was lowered into a tomb at the Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine, where Shia's eighth

Imam is buried. The 63-year-old president lost his life on Sunday alongside his foreign minister and six others after their helicopter went down in the country's mountainous northwest while heading to inaugurate an upgraded oil refinery unit in Tabriz. The governor of East Azarbaijan Province Malek Rahmati and Friday Prayers leader of Tabriz city Mohammad Ali Al-e Hashem, as well as crew members and a bodyguard also lost their lives in the crash. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, expressing his deep sorrow over the "martyrdom-like passing", announced five days of national

mourning on Monday. The cortege carrying the coffins of the "martyrs" attracted huge numbers of mourners who thronged main thoroughfares and adjoining streets for several kilometers, wherever it went. In Tehran, Ayatollah Khamenei and representatives of the regional resistance groups prayed over the coffins Wednesday, before millions of people followed a procession down Tehran's main boulevard. The Leader also met the president's family in his residence, viewing the former president "as a symbol of the Islamic Revolution slogans". He described the people's admiration for Raisi as a message to

the world in support of the Islamic Republic. The Iranian foreign minister was buried south of Tehran. Tens of thousands of mourners gathered in the town of Shahr-Rey in Tehran Province on Thursday for a funeral ceremony, which ended in Amir-Abdollahian's burial in the shrine of Shah Abdolazim. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh attended the prayers and recounted President Raisi telling him that the Oct. 7 operation by Palestinian fighters against Israel was an "earthquake in the heart of the Zionist entity". Statesmen from West Asia and beyond from some 60 countries attended a later memorial service, includ-

ing Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Tunisian President Kais Saied. Tajikistan's President Imomali Rahmon, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Fahan and Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, and the UAE's minister of foreign affairs, were other foreign representatives who traveled to Tehran, meeting Iranian leaders to express their condolences. Also, the resistance officials including Deputy Secretary-General of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah Sheikh Naim Qassem, Deputy Secretary-General of the Islamic Jihad resistance movement, Mohammad al-Hindi, and the senior representative of Yemen's National Salvation Government, Mohammed Abdul-Salam were in Tehran to pay tribute to the late president and his entourage. Earlier tens of thousands of people lined the streets of Birjand, capital of the eastern province of South Khorasan, to bid farewell to the late president as his coffin move through the main street. President of the UN General Assembly Dennis Francis paid tribute to Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian by visiting the Islamic Republic's mission in New York on Thursday to sign a memorial book in honor of the deceased Iranian officials. Representatives of 50 countries in the United Nations have also signed the book opened in memory of them.

## Leader, world officials review region amid president's loss

On the sidelines of a millions-strong funeral procession of Martyr President Ebrahim Raisi and his associates in the capital Tehran following the recent tragic chopper incident, a number of high-ranking officials and distinguished politicians were received by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, among whom were the neighboring countries' authorities and high-profile figures of the Axis of Resistance. Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani offered his country's condolences to the Iranian leadership, government and nation over the tragic loss. "What we saw in Mr. Raisi, the martyred president of Iran, was nothing

but honesty, sincerity, purity, work and ... serving the people," Sudani said. In the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei appreciated Sudani for his visit to Tehran and his expression of sympathy, saying, "We have lost an outstanding figure. President Raisi was a great brother and an efficient, competent, sincere and serious official." The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also received Ismail Haniyeh, the political bureau chief of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Haniyeh offered his condolences over the martyrdom of President Raisi and his companions on behalf of the Palestinian nation and resistance.

The Leader extolled demonstrations across dozens of university campuses in the US and Europe in support of Palestinians in their months-long resistance against Israel's barbaric aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip as a divine victory for Palestine, describing them as a precursor to the eradication of the Zionist regime. Ayatollah Khamenei underscored that Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine would remain consistent. The Leader also told the Armenian prime minister that the issues related to the borders of Armenia were important for the late Iranian chief executive. "We were shocked to hear the news of the death of the President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran and his entourage in an air crash," Pashinyan said. "We are sure that under your leadership, there will be no interruption in Iran's affairs."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also received Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Tunisian President Kais Saied. Ayatollah Khamenei termed the Islamic Republic's relationship with the Lebanese people as "brotherly," and praised the struggle that has been put up by the Lebanese resistance against the Israeli regime amid the dire situation in Gaza. Addressing the regional situation, Berri, for his part, said Lebanon could not stay silent vis-à-vis the slaughter of Palestinians in the besieged enclave. In a meeting with the visiting Tunisian president, the Leader underlined that the presence of a virtuous and academic figure like Saied at the helm of Tunisia presents an opportunity for the country to enhance its international standing after years of despotic rule and isolation from the Islamic world. Saied pointed to the ongoing crisis in Gaza, saying the Islamic world must abandon its current passive stance and actively seek to vindicate the rights of the Palestinian people across all Palestinian territories and push for the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital. Ayatollah Khamenei expressed his sincere gratitude for the sympathy of the government and brotherly people of Pakistan and said Tehran attaches top priority to its relations with Islamabad and believes in the possibility of uplifting bilateral ties under the new Pakistani government. Sharif, for his part, hailed Raisi's recent trip to Pakistan as beneficial and a foundation for further expansion of relations and a roadmap to the future.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Norway, Ireland, Spain to recognize Palestinian state

*Borrel: Stop 'meddling' ICC judge*

### International Desk

Norway, Ireland, and Spain announced on Wednesday that they will recognize a Palestinian state, while the European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell also stated that Israel needs to accept criticism from those who do not believe it is performing well.

Meanwhile, International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Karim Khan announced on Monday that he had filed for arrest warrants against Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as three Hamas leaders.

In this regard, Borrell said some European countries were trying to intimidate ICC judges over the case against Israeli leaders, and must stop "meddling" and respect the court.

"The prosecutor has done nothing more than make an accusation and the court will decide," Borrell told Spanish broadcaster TVE. "In the meantime, I ask everyone, starting with the Israel and some European governments, not to intimidate the judges."

"Don't threaten them, don't try to influence their decision, sometimes with threats and very harsh disqualifications," he added.

Israel denies committing war crimes in Gaza, says the ICC has no jurisdiction there and has called on countries to repudiate what it considers a politically motivated rogue court. Hamas has also rejected the accusations against its leaders.

Israel also announced it was recalling its envoys to Ireland and Norway for "urgent consultations" immediately after they announced they will recognize the Palestinian state. Ireland's leader said on Wednesday his nation would recognize Palestine as a state but did not specify timing, while leaders of Norway and Spain said their nations would do so as of May 28.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store made the announcement in Oslo, Spain Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez in Madrid and Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris in Dublin.

Norway – which has played a key role in Middle East diplomacy over the years, hosting Israeli-Palestinian peace talks at the beginning of the 1990s which led to the Oslo Accords – said recognition was needed to support moderate voices amid the Gaza war.

Spain's Sanchez said in parliament in Madrid: "Next Tuesday, May 28, Spain's cabinet will approve the recognition of the Palestinian state," he said, adding that his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu was putting the two-state solution in "danger" with his policy of "pain and destruction" in the Gaza Strip.

And Ireland's Harris hailed a "historic and important day for Ireland and for Palestine."

### Call for 'common position'

The EU foreign policy chief has also urged the 27-member bloc to seek a "common EU position" on recognizing the Palestinian state.

"Within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, I will relentlessly work with all Member States to promote a common EU position based on a 2-state solution," Borrell said in a post on X on Wednesday.

For decades, the formal recognition of a Palestinian state has been seen as the endgame of a peace process between Palestinians and their Israeli neighbors.

The US and most Western European nations have said they are willing to one day recognize Palestinian statehood, but not before agreement is reached on thorny issues like final borders and the status of Al-Quds (Jerusalem).

But after Hamas' October 7 attacks and Israel's war in Gaza, diplomats are reconsidering once-contentious ideas.

In 2014, Sweden, which has a large Palestinian community, became the first EU member in western Europe to recognize Palestinian statehood.

It had earlier been recognized by six other European countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania.

Hamas' October 7 attack resulted in the deaths of more than 1,170 people, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Hamas also took 252 captives, 124 of whom remain in Gaza including 37 the army says are dead.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 35,647 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza.