

IAEA resolution 'counterproductive'



Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi attends the IAEA's board of governors meeting at the agency's headquarters in Vienna, Austria on June 3, 2024. **JOE KLAMAR/AFP**

International Desk

The International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors passed a resolution criticizing Iran's lack of cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, three diplomats told AFP on Wednesday.

The motion brought by Britain, France and Germany – but voted against by China and Russia – is the latest of its kind in 18 months. Hours earlier, Iran's acting foreign minister said certain member states' exploitation of the UN

agency for their political goals will definitely harm its identity. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Ali Baqeri Kani said the IAEA is a technical agency and all countries, including the member

states of the IAEA board of governors, are expected to act based on the agency's technical approach. "The non-constructive approach of some member countries in exploiting the agency's capacity in pursuit of their polit-

ical goals will definitely harm the identity of the agency, as well as the role-playing of the organization," he stated. Baqeri Kani further said Iran has always advised different countries to allow the agency to continue its technical role and not turn it into a place for settling political scores. A group of Iran's allies had earlier warned against adoption of the anti-Tehran resolution. They said such a miscalculation would have counterproductive repercussions. Adoption of a resolution against a country which has recently recovered from the tragic passing of

its president and foreign minister is out of diplomatic etiquette. Political brinkmanship in light of international efforts to handle Iran's nuclear case is not constructive, they said in a statement. The group went on to call upon the board of governors to work towards putting Iran's nuclear issue back on the rails, and encourage further dialogue and constructive cooperation between the IAEA and the Islamic Republic. Iran and world powers reached a landmark nuclear agreement in 2015, under which Tehran curbed parts of its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of sanctions imposed on the Iranian economy. Tehran started to suspend some of its obligations under the agreement in 2019, a year after the US government, under Donald Trump, abandoned the deal and reinstated sanctions on Iran.

US House passes bill to sanction ICC over Israel

International Desk

The Republican-led US House of Representatives passed legislation that would impose sanctions on the International Criminal Court over its prosecutor's decision to seek arrest warrants for Israeli officials related to the war in Gaza. The vote was 247 to 155, with 42 Democrats joining Republicans in backing the measure. There were no Republican "nay" votes, although two voted "present." The measure is not expected to become law, but reflects continuing support for Israel in Congress amid international criticism over the regime's campaign in the Gaza Strip. The White House last month criticized the ICC's decision to seek the warrants. The bill is not expected to be brought up for a vote in the Senate, which is narrowly controlled by Biden's fellow Democrats. The legislation would impose sanctions on people involved in ICC prosecutions of Americans or citizens of US allies that are not ICC members, including Israel. It also would block such ICC officials' entry to the United States, revoke any US visas and restrict them from US property transactions.

ICC prosecutor Karim Khan said last month – after more than seven months of war in Gaza – that he had reasonable grounds to believe that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Netanyahu's defense chief and three Hamas leaders "bear criminal responsibility" for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. Israel launched an air and ground offensive in Gaza last October, vowing to destroy Hamas after the resistance fighters launched the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people and taking more than 250 people captives. The Israeli military campaign has killed more than 36,000 people in densely populated Gaza, according to its health authorities, who say thousands more bodies are buried under rubble. Last week, an investigation by the Guardian, the Israeli-Palestinian publication +972 Magazine and the Hebrew-language outlet Local Call revealed a covert Israeli campaign to derail the ICC's inquiry into war crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territories. The investigation detailed how, for close to a decade, Israel deployed its intelligence agencies to surveil and pressure senior ICC staff in an effort to thwart the court's work, going so far as to deploy the head of the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence agency, to allegedly threaten the court's former chief prosecutor. Created by a UN treaty in 2002, the ICC investigates and brings to justice those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, intervening when national authorities cannot or will not prosecute. The US – like Israel – is not a member of the ICC and does not recognize its jurisdiction, but has backed its previous prosecutions and arrest warrants not related to Israel and the Palestinians. In 2020 under the Trump administration, the US imposed sanctions on top ICC officials, including Khan's predecessor, after the court began investigating alleged war crimes committed by the US and others in the Afghan conflict.

IRGC chief: Israel will pay price for killing of adviser

The chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said the Israeli regime has to pay the price and await response for the killing of one of the force's military advisors in a recent act of aggression against Syria's northwestern city of Aleppo. Major General Hossein Salami made the warning on Wednesday after Israel's airstrikes on Aleppo claimed the lives of at least 17 people and injured 15 others in the wee hours of Monday, Press TV reported. Among those killed was Saeed Abyar, an IRGC military advisor in Syria. Salami said, "The child-killing Zionist criminals should know that they will pay for the innocent blood that was shed in this crime; they should wait for the response." The Israeli regime has



carried out hundreds of attacks against Syria since 2011, when the Arab nation found itself in the grip of rampant foreign-backed militancy and terrorism. The Iranian military advisors, who are present in Syria at the official invitation of the Syrian government, have played an important role in helping the Syrians fight terrorism and establish peace, stability, and lasting security in the Arab country. Tel Aviv has significant-

ly ramped up its strikes since last October, when it began a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, in what has been described by observers as a reckless bid threatening to further fuel tensions throughout the region. Israel has been the principal supporter of terrorist groups that oppose the democratically-elected government of President Bashar al-Assad since the foreign-backed militancy erupted in Syria.

Slovenia becomes latest EU country to recognize Palestinian state

Slovenia recognized a Palestinian state on Tuesday after its parliament voted overwhelmingly in favor of the move, following in the recent steps of three other European countries.

Slovenia's government endorsed a motion last week to recognize a Palestinian state, and sent the proposal to the parliament for final approval, which was needed for the decision to take effect, according to AP. Lawmakers on Tuesday voted with 52 in favor and no one against recognition in the 90-seat parliament. The remaining lawmakers were not present for the vote. "Dear people of Palestine, today's final decision of Slovenia is a message of hope and peace," Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon said on the social media platform X. Slovenia's decision came days after Spain, Norway and Ireland recognized a Palestinian state, a move that was condemned by Israel. Previously, only seven members of the 27-nation European Union officially recognized a Palestinian state. Five of them are former East bloc countries that announced recognition in 1988, as did Cyprus, before joining the EU. Sweden's recognition came in 2014. Addressing the parliament, Prime Minister Robert Golob evoked Slovenia's independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. "We Slovenians have dreamed of this right for 1,000 years. We got it 33 years ago," Golob said. "Unfortunately, the Palestinian nation has not yet received this right." More than 140 countries recognize a Palestinian state — more than two-thirds of the United Nations. On November 15, 1988, during the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat unilaterally proclaimed an independent Palestinian



state with Al-Quds as its capital. He made the announcement in Algiers, at a meeting of the exiled Palestinian National Council. Minutes later, Algeria became the first country to officially recognize an independent Palestinian state. Within weeks, dozens of other countries, including much of the Arab world, India, Turkey, most of Africa and several central and eastern European countries followed suit. The next wave of recognitions came in late 2010 and early 2011, at a time of crisis for the Middle East peace process. South American countries including Argentina, Brazil and Chile answered calls by the Palestinians to endorse their statehood claims. This came in response to Israel's decision to end a temporary ban on Jewish settlement building in the occupied West Bank. The new wave of recognition of a Palestinian state came after Israel launched its devastating war on the Gaza Strip on October 7. Since then, the regime has killed more than 36,550 Palestinians – mostly women and children. On Wednesday, Israel's military pounded central Gaza with heavy air strikes, killing more Palestinians in the besieged territory, AFP reported. Bombardment of central Gaza killed 11 people near the Al-Maghazi camp and two near Deir al-Balah, said witnesses and Palestinian civil defense and hospital officials.

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