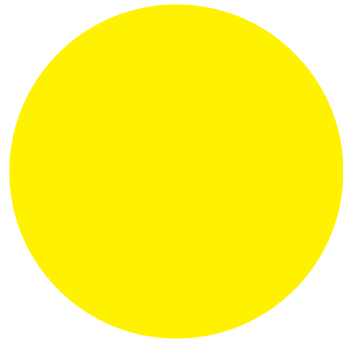


Iran: US obstacle in way of resolving int'l issues



UN court: Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory 'illegal'

Israel to face new military threat in its war on Gaza



By Mansour Barati
Middle East affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The recent Yemeni drone strike on the heart of Tel Aviv, Israel, not only caught the regime off guard but also signifies a major shift in the Gaza conflict. Previously, the conflicts between Yemen and Israel had been one-sided, with Yemen carrying out missile attacks on targets mainly in the Eilat port or on ships heading for Israel in the Gulf of Aden. Unlike its northern border with Hezbollah in Lebanon, where there has been a reciprocal exchange of fire, Israel has not retaliated directly to Yemeni attacks. Instead, the UK and US forces have focused on areas within Yemen. Yemeni attacks on Israel, mainly in Eilat, had primarily economic implications and did not present a direct military threat. However, the recent drone strike, which evaded Israel's air defense system and resulted in casualties in Tel Aviv, has altered the situation. Yemen has now emerged as a direct military threat to Israel. This development compels Israel to reassess its response strategies. Failing to react could undermine Israel's deterrence, while a direct response could escalate the Gaza conflict into a regional war, which is not in Israel's best interest.

Reports suggest that Israeli authorities are deliberating on how to address this threat, as not taking action could have significant consequences for Israel. The extent of this response remains uncertain. In this context, one could argue that the assault on Tel Aviv signifies a pivotal moment in the Gaza conflict and Israel's struggle. A key question arises: why was Israel's air defense system unsuccessful in detecting and intercepting this drone? Israeli sources claim human error, suggesting the operator mistook the drone for an aircraft from a neighboring country. However, there are doubts about this explanation. It is possible that the air defense system did not detect the threat at all, as no danger alarms were triggered, highlighting a potential weakness in Israel's air defense. Until now, it was believed that Israel's Iron Dome system (air defense) was highly secure, and the only way to penetrate or disrupt it was through extensive missile attacks, as seen during Iran's missile strikes against Israel. However, the recent infiltration of a Yemeni drone has shown that the Iron Dome is susceptible even to a single drone threat, which is certainly a cause for concern and reflection.

The possibility of an Israeli ground attack on southern Lebanon had been a topic of discussion. With the emergence of this new threat from Yemen, Israel faces an even more challenging task in confronting its adversaries in a potentially broader conflict.



Yemen Drone Strike 'Unprecedented' Success

Israeli policemen set up a perimeter around the site of a drone attack by Yemen's Ansarallah movement on Tel Aviv on July 19, 2024. GIL COHEN-MAGEN/APP

At forefront of Saudi envoy's praises of post-Raisi Iran

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AEOI chief: Iran acts according to safeguards, NPT



Iran's position in dealing with the International Atomic Energy Agency is according to safeguards and NPT, spokesperson of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Iran's Parliament quoted President of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami as saying. 2 >

US renews waiver for Iraq to buy Iranian electricity 2 >



NEWS IN BRIEF

US renews
waiver for
Iraq to buy
Iranian
electricity

The United States has granted Iraq another four-month sanctions waiver to purchase Iranian electricity, a State Department spokesperson said.

The United States has issued regular waivers since 2018 so that Iraq can meet its short-term energy needs without running afoul of US sanctions, Al-Monitor reported.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein discussed his country's reliance on US waivers for Iranian energy imports in meetings with Treasury Department officials in Washington last week.

The 120-day waiver, which was renewed on July 11, comes as Iraqis suffer from power outages that are especially common in the sweltering summer months when temperatures exceed 50 degrees Celsius (120 Fahrenheit) and the demand for air conditioning puts additional strain on the country's dilapidated electricity grid.

Last weekend, protests over the power shortages erupted in the central Iraqi cities of Diwaniyah and Najaf.

Vietnamese
leader Nguyen
Phu Trong
dies at 80

The general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party Nguyen Phu Trong, considered the country's top leader, died on Friday aged 80, his party said.

In a statement, it said Trong - who had led the party since 2011 - passed away on Friday "due to old age and serious illness" at a military hospital in Hanoi, AFP wrote.

The announcement came a day after the party announced Trong would hand the reins of power to the country's president and former public security minister To Lam.

The party said Trong would be focusing on treatment for an undisclosed medical condition, the first time it had referenced longstanding speculation about the ageing leader's health.

Trong is the first party general secretary to die in office since the death in 1986 of Le Duan, a brother-in-arms of Ho Chi Minh. He is also the first leader to have held three consecutive mandates at the head of the party, after the liberalisation of the economy in 1986.

AEOI chief: Iran acts according to safeguards, NPT

Iran's position in dealing with the International Atomic Energy Agency is according to safeguards and NPT, spokesperson of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Iran's Parliament quoted President of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami as saying. Regarding the "Strategic Action Plan to Lift Sanctions and Protect Iranian Nation's Interests", which was approved in the 11th parliament, he said that this law helped the Atomic Energy Organization to move more strongly, Ebrahim Rezaei told IRNA on Friday. Bushehr nuclear power plant is among top in the power plant association and has saved 104 million barrels of oil, he noted. Referring to the report of the head of the Atomic Energy Organization about the development of radiation systems, he said that these systems are used in the fields of agriculture, food, medicine and radiopharmaceutical industries, and they have had a successful effect so far.



Yemen Drone Strike 'Unprecedented' Success



International Desk

A drone launched by Yemen's Houthis struck Tel Aviv on Friday, causing one death and at least 10 injuries in the first deadly attack on Israel by the resistance group, whose spokesperson deemed it "a successful operation". The aerial strike rumbled through the center of the city near the US Embassy, causing shrapnel to rain down and spreading shards of glass over a large radius. The US State Department said there was no damage to the embassy or any of its staff members. Claiming responsibility for the attack in a statement on X platform, Houthi spokesperson Yahya Sare'e said they "have a bank of targets" in Israel, including "sensitive military and security targets". They "will continue... to strike those targets in response to the enemy's massacres and daily crimes against our people in the Gaza Strip," he said. The spokesman called Tel Aviv a primary target "within the range of our weapons". Sare'e said the strike was carried out using a new drone called "Yafa", which he said was capable of bypassing interception systems and undetectable by radars. "The operation has achieved its goals successfully," he said.

Confirming that the drone is from Yemen, the Israeli military said it was investigating what went wrong. Chief spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said the drone was detected by air defenses, but an "error" occurred and "there was no interception." "We are investigating the entire chain," he said. Another military official blamed "human error." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing. Israel's air defense system has intercepted thousands of projectiles throughout the war, including Hamas rocket fire from Gaza. But officials warn they are not 100% effective, and the systems appear to have struggled against small and hard-to-detect attack drones.

Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant met military commanders to review air defences and said Israel had to be ready for all scenarios. "We must be prepared for defensive and offensive actions," he said, according to a statement from his office.

Strike attracts praise

The Houthis' unprecedented strike received praise from resistance groups in the region, with top Houthi official Mohamed Ali al-Houthi stating that the "first operation" to

strike Tel Aviv represented a "qualitative shift" in the group's anti-Israel campaign.

The leader of the resistance movement, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, expressed that it is "a great honor and blessing to be confronting America directly."

Hezam al-Asad, a member of the movement's politburo, called the strike "unprecedented".

In an interview with Al Mayadeen, he said the attack marked a "new phase" of operations against Israel which would increase in the coming period.

Mohsen Rezaei, a former Iranian military commander expressed his greetings to the Houthis on his account on X platform, stating: "The Yafa's landing in Tel Aviv marks the beginning of the story".

'Stop genocide in Gaza'

Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, another Houthi politburo member, said attacks would only stop if a Gaza ceasefire was reached. "Our demand is fair: stop the genocide in Gaza, lift the siege on its residents, and we will stop our military operations," he said on X, sharing footage of the aftermath of the drone strike. The regime's bloody nine-month onslaught on Gaza has so far killed 38,848 Palestinians, mostly women and children, leaving 89,459 others injured. The Houthis have previously claimed attacks targeting the southern Israeli resort of Eilat and port cities of Ashdod and Haifa, but Friday's strike is the first operation claimed by the group against Tel Aviv.

AP, AFP, and Reuters contributed to the story.

Software bug causes worldwide IT chaos

'Robust Iranian systems not affected'

Airlines, banks, TV channels and other business across the globe were scrambling Friday to deal with one of the biggest IT crashes in recent years, caused by an update to an antivirus program. Aviation officials in the United States briefly grounded all planes, while airlines elsewhere cancelled or delayed flights, as systems running Microsoft Windows crashed, AFP reported.

Microsoft said the issue began at 1900 GMT on Thursday, affecting users of its Azure cloud platform running cybersecurity software CrowdStrike Falcon.

"We recommend customers that are able to, to restore from a backup from before this time," the US software giant said in a technical update on its website.

CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz said in a post on several social media platforms that a fix had been rolled out for the problem, describing it as a "defect found in a single content update for Windows hosts".

Experts suggested applying the fix would not be straightforward. And the global nature of the failure prompted some commentators to question the reliance on a single provider for such a variety of services.

Shares in CrowdStrike slumped by 20 percent in pre-market trading. From Amsterdam to Zurich, Singapore to Hong Kong, airport operators flagged technical issues that were disrupting their services. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said in a notice to airlines early on Friday that all flights



"regardless of destination" were to be grounded.

Turkish Airlines said it had cancelled 84 flights and other airlines reported booking systems had crashed.

Reports from both the Netherlands and Britain suggested health services may have been affected by the disruption, meaning the impact could eventually be even wider.

Media companies were also struggling, with Britain's Sky News saying the glitch had ended its morning news broadcasts and Australia's ABC similarly reporting a major "outage". Banks in Kenya and Ukraine reported difficulties with some digital services, supermarkets in Australia had issues with payments, mobile phone carriers were disrupted and customer services in a number of companies went down.

Robust Iranian system

Iran's Supreme Council of Cyberspace (SCC) said in a statement on Friday that the country does not use Microsoft services due to sanctions as domesticized systems have been replaced from a long time ago, and so far, we have not had any reports of service outages. The SCC was monitoring

Passengers wait to board a flight to Sicily at Gatwick Airport in London on July 19, 2024. BBC

from the early hours of the global outage in Microsoft services to have a detailed assessment of disruptions to manage the situation, but no halt in providing services to people has been reported so far.

"Iran was banned from receiving these services years ago due to Western sanctions, and with the initiatives of Iranian elites, local alternative services have been designed which are now operational," read the statement. Iran's capabilities in the field of providing domestic cloud services enables the country to export such services, as the ground is paved to transfer experience or export products in this field.

Meanwhile, Saeid Chalandari, the CEO of the Imam Khomeini Airport City said that the flights of the airport were carried out on Friday without any problem. In order to reduce dependences, the IKAC has been using domestically-developed software to check-in passengers, the official noted.

Enchanting Shahyun Lake in Dezful

Iranica Desk

Shahyun Lake, also recognized as Dez Dam Lake, is celebrated as one of Iran's most beautiful lakes and a prominent tourist destination in Dezful, Khuzestan Province. Situated in the northwest of Dezful, approximately 23 kilometers northeast of Andimeshk, adjacent to Pamnar village, the Shahyun region spans over 302 square kilometers and is located 15 kilometers north of Dezful.

This enchanting lake was formed 50 years ago with the construction of the Dez Dam, earning the titles of Shahyun Lake or Dez Dam Lake. Regarded as one of the nation's most stunning artificial lakes, it offers an ideal setting for boating and recreational activities.

The lake stretches for 65 kilometers, with its area fluctuating slightly during high and low water levels, typically around 6,000 hectares. The lake reaches depths of up to 50 meters. Sourced from the mountains of Arak and Aligudarz, the lake's water flows through the Zagros Mountains and various small streams before entering the lake.

Within the lake, numerous small and large islands can be observed, adorned with almond trees, enhancing the lake's beauty. The sizable island at the lake's center, spanning over 60,000 square meters, creates a stunning landscape.

The area around Shahyun Lake is geologically split into north-

ern and southern sections, forming part of the Zagros Mountains. As you approach the central region, hilltops, cliffs, and sandstone formations emerge. The foothills and abundant springs in this region showcase themselves, adding to the lushness and beauty across seasons. The Shahyun region lies near the Zagros Mountains to the north and the warm plains of Khuzestan to the south, resulting in a distinct climate in this area. Winds from the southeast bring hot summers and mild winters, while those from the northwest moderate summer temperatures and bring cooler winters.

The wildlife around Shahyun Lake includes small animals such as foxes and rabbits, alongside beautiful birds like partridges, quails, and seabirds. Leopards have also been spotted in the more rugged areas of these regions. Additionally, the lake is home to fish species such as trout.

One of the wonders of Shahyun Lake is its varying temperatures. Being a large reservoir, the lake exhibits different temperature zones due to the entry of cool seasonal currents from the region's heights in some areas or the emergence of underground springs into the lake bed. These factors have significantly lowered the water temperature compared to its surrounding environment, creating a favorable habitat for trout.

Travel tip: For those who enjoy exploring new destinations,

you are recommend visiting the charming tourist villages near Shahyun Lake. Pamnar village is a standout location that offers delightful sights, enriching your travel experiences. The mesmerizing view of Shahyun Lake from this village is truly captivating and definitely worth experiencing.

Fishing regulation: Dez Dam Lake plays a vital role in the freshwater ecosystem and serves as a habitat for various indigenous fish species. Fishing is strictly prohibited during the breeding season, typically from mid-February to April. Engaging in fishing activities during this period or without the required permits in other seasons is deemed illegal and harmful to the freshwater ecosystem.

Safety advisory: When visiting the lake, it is advisable to avoid swimming. Even if you are a skilled swimmer, it is best to refrain from swimming in this reservoir without local guidance. The vicinity of the dam walls poses a significant risk of being drawn into the water turbines, leading to perilous whirlpools.

For those interested in an overnight stay in the Shahyun, Pamnar village is an excellent choice. Situated close to the lake, this village provides accommodations where you can relish a rustic evening and admire the picturesque lake scenery. Additionally, setting up tents and camping by the lake can offer an exciting and memorable experience.



IRNA

Mysteries of Seh Gonbadan Tower

Seh Gonbadan Tower, which translates to "three domes," is a historic monument situated in the southeast of Urmia, the capital of West Azarbaijan Province. While its relief suggests it was constructed in the 12th century, it was officially brought to public attention in 1852 by Nikolai Vladimirovich Khanykov, a Russian ethnographer. To explore this exquisite and distinctive tower, visitors must make their way to Ostad Barzegar Street.

The historical and architectural significance of Seh Gonbadan led to its inclusion on Iran's National Heritage List, recognizing its value as an ancient structure. Some historians and experts in Islamic architecture speculate that a fire temple stood in place of the tower during the Sassanid dynasty era. However, no concrete evidence has been uncovered to substantiate this claim.

The relief on the tower, on the other hand, offers valuable and trustworthy information. Alongside the precise construction date, the text reveals the tower's patron as Sheith Ghate al-Mozafari, an elder of the Seljuk dynasty. The design and façade of Seh Gonbadan Tower bear a striking resemblance to struc-



gardeshgari724.com

tures from the 12th century, particularly those found in the city of Maragheh, East Azarbaijan Province, belonging to the Seljuk dynasty.

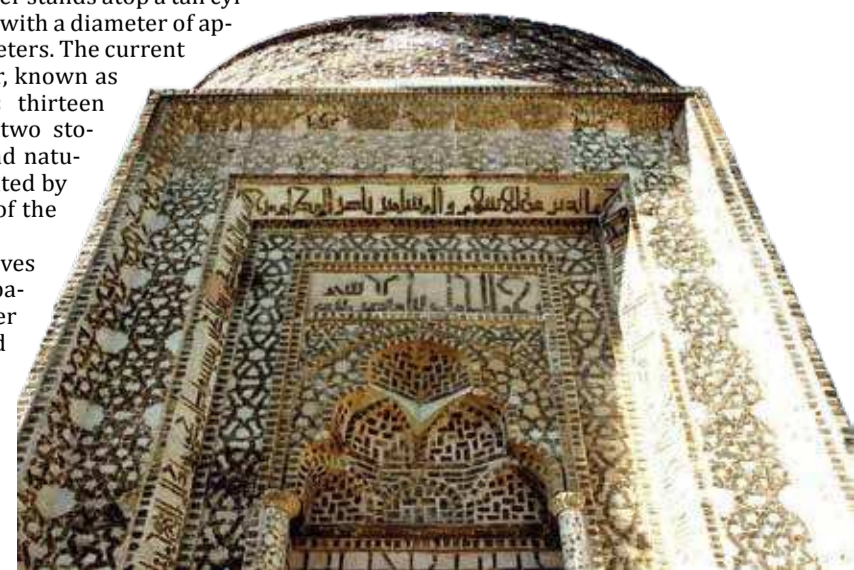
Seh Gonbadan Tower stands atop a tall cylinder-shaped base with a diameter of approximately five meters. The current height of the tower, known as Seh Gonbadan, is thirteen meters, featuring two stories. Ventilation and natural light are facilitated by windows on each of the tower's four sides.

The lower story serves as a basement, separated from the upper story by a vaulted cover. The upper level houses a tomb chamber accessed through

a doorway measuring two and a half meters in height, indicating the tower's likely use as a tomb as well.

Thankfully, much of the original structure remains intact, including the façade, tablets, and brick walls. Decorations on the entrance gateway of the tomb chamber, crafted from stone and plaster, are notably unique, showcasing geometric motifs and inscriptions in Bannai script.

It's worth noting that the base of the building is constructed from gray stones, extending up to six meters, transitioning to quadrilateral bricks for the tower's upper sections.



‘The grey zone’

How IDF views some journalists in Gaza as legitimate targets

By Harry Davies,
Manisha Ganguly, et al.
Journalists

INVESTIGATION

The investigation is part of the Gaza project, a collaboration led by the Paris-based non-profit Forbidden Stories, which has analysed the deaths of journalists in Gaza since Israel began its offensive.

The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) records at least 103 Palestinian journalists and media workers killed in the war in Gaza. Other lists suggest that the number is higher.

Since foreign media are blocked by Israel from entering Gaza, the work of documenting the war on the ground has fallen to Palestinian journalists in the territory, many of whom have continued to work despite grave risks to their safety.

In a war in which Israel has dropped tens of thousands of bombs on a densely populated territory, it is perhaps inevitable that so many journalists have been killed. Among the dead are also doctors, teachers, civil servants, aid workers, paramedics, and poets.

That so many Palestinian journalists and media workers — working for a wide range of local and international outlets — have been killed, injured, or detained by Israeli forces has raised concerns among press freedom organisations that the IDF has deliberately sought to silence critical reporting.

Among those listed by the CPJ as having been killed in Gaza since October 7, approximately 30% worked for media outlets affiliated with or closely tied to Hamas. Working with Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), a Jordan-based non-profit, the Guardian identified at least 23 individuals killed since October 7 who worked for the largest Hamas-run outlet in Gaza, al-Aqsa media network.

Considered to be the Hamas movement's official channel, al-Aqsa employed hundreds of people and operated a widely watched TV channel and numerous radio stations until the war curtailed its output. The outlet appears to have had the highest number of journalists killed during the current war.

Asked about the al-Aqsa network casualties, a senior IDF spokesperson told reporters in the Gaza project consortium that there was “no difference” between working for the media outlet and belonging to Hamas's armed wing, a sweeping statement legal experts described as alarming.

As Israel's offensive in Gaza has become the deadliest conflict for journalists in recent history, its military has repeatedly said it is not deliberately targeting the media. “There is no policy of targeting media personnel,” a senior official said, attributing the record number of journalists killed to the scale and intensity of a bombardment in which so many of Gaza's civilians have died.

However, an investigation by the Guardian suggests that amid a loosening of the Israel Defense Force's interpretation of the laws of war after the deadly Hamas-led attacks on October 7, some within the IDF appear to have viewed journalists working in Gaza for outlets controlled by or affiliated with Hamas to be legitimate military targets.



A funeral ceremony in Khan Younis for the Palestinian TV reporter Abu Hatab, one of more than 100 media workers killed in the Israeli offensive
ANADOLU AGENCY

“It's a shocking statement,” Adil Haque, a law professor at Rutgers University in the US said, describing the position as showing “a complete misunderstanding or just a wilful disregard for international law”.

‘Reporting is not direct participation in hostilities’

Almost as soon as Israel began its aerial bombardment of Gaza in response to Hamas's assault on southern Israel — in which 1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken captive — the al-Aqsa headquarters were evacuated as executives believed the IDF would target the organisation, two sources said.

Operating in a media landscape tightly controlled by Hamas, the Islamist movement that has governed Gaza since 2007, al-Aqsa's programming is unmistakably pro-Hamas and anti-Israel.

On its TV channel, which now broadcasts as Seraj, news programmes are interspersed with footage of fighters attacking Israeli forces. Before the war, the

channel also broadcast religious programmes and dramas such as *Fist of the Free*, seen as Hamas's response to *Fauda*, a popular Israeli Netflix series about its security forces.

“Hamas believes the media is an important tool to approach people and deliver their message,” a veteran Gaza-based journalist said. Its media office gives instructions and appoints people in charge, they said. “They defend Hamas, no matter what.”

In 2018, the IDF bombed al-Aqsa's offices and claimed its building was used for military purposes. The following year, the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, used broad legal powers to designate the media group as a terrorist organisation. The outlet, the designation claims, is “a propaganda arm of Hamas and constitutes a central platform for the distribution of inciting messages by the terror organisation”. Al-Aqsa has also been under US sanctions since 2010.

However, such designations

were made in domestic law and were not a blank cheque that allowed the IDF to kill its employees, legal experts said.

Under the laws of war, a journalist can lose their civilian status if they engage in planning, preparing, or carrying out combat operations. Simply working for an organisation such as al-Aqsa does not make someone a legitimate target to be killed.

“Reporting the news is not direct participation in hostilities,” Janina Dill, a professor at the University of Oxford and expert in the laws of war, said. “Even if they reported the news in a biased way, even if they did propaganda for Hamas, even if Israel fundamentally disagrees with how they report the news. That is not enough.”

Combatants, civilians

Multiple Israeli sources said there had been a permissive approach to targeting across the IDF in a war aimed at the “total destruction of Hamas”.

A person with knowledge of legal advice given to IDF commanders said journalists working for Hamas-affiliated media were seen to exist within a “grey zone” and there was a “problematic” view among some in the IDF that “whenever there's someone getting a salary ultimately from Hamas” they were considered to be a legitimate target.

“Hamas invests a lot of resources in its propaganda teams. They often won't do an activity if they don't have a photographer. They must document everything,” a military intelligence officer said. “So, some will tell you: ‘Look, a Hamasnik is Hamasnik.’”

In an interview with Radio France, one of the Guardian's partners in the Gaza project, the senior IDF spokesperson and reservist Col Olivier Rafowicz said there was “no difference between the political and the military wing of Hamas”.

“Al-Aqsa belongs to the Hamas war organisation and the people who work for it are active members of the war organisation of

Hamas,” he said. Numerous legal experts said this was a troubling position. While there may be particular individuals who engaged in both journalism and combat activities, they said, the suggestion that everyone working for a media organisation was a militant failed to distinguish between combatants and civilians.

“This is the most fundamental idea in international humanitarian law,” said Haque, the Rutgers law professor. “It is shocking to hear that a member of the IDF would openly and publicly reveal either their ignorance or their disregard for this fundamental principle.”

Attention must be paid, he said, to the differences between the activities of Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam brigades, and its political apparatus that employed tens of thousands of people in Gaza and ran schools, hospitals, courts, and municipal services.

“If a journalist is not part of Hamas's military wing, if they are not a fighter by role or function, then they're a civilian unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities,” Haque added. After this article was published, the IDF issued a statement distancing itself from Rafowicz's remarks, made in a phone interview last month in which another IDF spokesperson was also present. “Rafowicz erred as these comments mischaracterise IDF targeting policy,” the IDF said.

Killed, arrested and detained

In response to a Guardian request for details about multiple al-Aqsa employees who had been killed, an IDF spokesperson said it “does not target civilian objects” but that the outlet “employs terrorists and affords them the facade of journalists”.

The spokesperson listed six of al-Aqsa's dead workers and alleged they were members of Hamas's armed wing and “assumed the disguise of journalists”. The IDF refused to provide any evidence to support the claims, citing intelligence sources.

Although journalists who have worked in Gaza said the way in which Hamas's military wing embedded itself within civilian life did not preclude using the media and some may wear “two hats”, Israeli officials have repeatedly characterised journalists killed



in the war as terrorists with little evidence. Irene Khan, the UN's special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, told the Gaza project Israel had "spread disinformation about journalists being linked to militants" and failed to meet the "burden of proof" to make such claims.

in or lost their homes. According to a survey by ARIJ of more than 200 journalists in Gaza, almost all said they had been displaced by the Israeli offensive and half said they were living in tents. Eighty-six percent said their homes had been either partially or entirely destroyed. "It's psychologically very difficult," said Mohammed Abed, a Ga-

ber of dead janitors, the number of taxi drivers, you will end up with higher numbers as well," a senior Israeli source said. Among the journalists caught up in the destruction was Salma Mkhaimer, a 31-year-old Palestinian freelance journalist based in Jordan, who covered women's rights and had worked for a number of Gaza-based media outlets, including



Reba Khalid al-Ajami (L), a TRT Arabi journalist, reports from Rafah amid Israeli attacks in February. ANADOLU AGENCY

According to al-Aqsa sources, scores of its workers have been killed and injured, with others arrested and detained by Israeli forces. One of the al-Aqsa journalists the IDF alleged were terrorists is Issam Bahar, a freelance journalist for the outlet who was killed in mid-October. A close relative told ARIJ that he "did not have any political or other activity" and was "only a journalist and a teacher of the Qur'an". According to the relative and information collated by the non-profit watchdog Airwars, Bahar, 38, was sheltering at a relative's home in Gaza City when an Israeli air strike killed him at night along with six family members. His wife and 14-year-old son were among the dead.

Bombed in sleep

In a war in which more than half of Gaza's buildings have been destroyed according to the UN, journalists — like many of the territory's population — have been killed

za-based Agence France-Presse photojournalist. "So many journalists have died while sleeping along with their families. When we interviewed the survivors, they told us they were at home. 'We had dinner and talked to the neighbours. And when we went to sleep, they bombed us.'" In previous wars in Gaza, a former IDF lawyer said, targeting someone at home would require a "clearcut case" that they had "crossed the threshold to be a direct participant in hostility". In the current war, they said, "there appear to have been different rules of engagement" and the "level of destruction has been taken to a different level". Officially the Israeli military maintains journalists have not been deliberately targeted. Many in the military attribute the record number of journalists killed to the IDF's intensive bombardment of a densely populated territory. "I'm sure that if you counted the number of dead teachers, the num-

al-Aqsa. Mkhaimer was visiting family in the territory with her baby boy, Ali, when the war began. Trapped at her family's home in an area the IDF said would be safe, she was on the phone with her husband on 24 October — the day of Ali's first birthday — when an air strike hit the building, killing her, her baby, and 23 relatives. In an interview with the Guardian, Mkhaimer's husband, Alaa Naser Abushawer, said that as someone who was married to a journalist, it was "very painful" that so many others like his wife had been killed in Gaza. He said an end to the war was needed "for us both, Israelis and Palestinians". This, he recalled, was something his wife had told him during their final conversation: "On my last call with Salma, she said: 'We must stop the war.'"

The full article first appeared on The Guardian.

Worse than genocide: Killing truth



By James E. Jennings
President of Conscience International

OPINION

There have been many genocides throughout history, but the first to be displayed on TV in all its sickening horror before the entire world is the Israeli genocide against the civilians of Gaza. Truth is the first casualty of war. So, it's no surprise that the slick Israeli propaganda machine has managed to make Israel's slaughter of 37,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including more than 15,000 children, acceptable to multitudes of Americans. With the exception of the widespread campus protestors, most Americans are by now convinced that Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants are all fanatical Islamists who deserve to be killed like vermin. That's not only a lie — it is a damnable lie. There is an even bigger atrocity in this war and a more unbearable one than killing children — if that is possible — and that's when the truth is killed. When your good is labeled evil, it's maddening.



A protester has tape over his mouth with the word "antisemit" written on it at a pro-Palestine rally in Dusseldorf, Germany, on November 4, 2023. CHRISTOPH REICHWEIN/PICTURE ALLIANCE

Today, the decency and moral outrage of millions of US youth is being slandered by ranting propagandists like MSNBC's Joe Scarborough, and, of course, the entire FOX News crew, labeling the campus protest movement anti-Semitic. The claim is false and must be exposed as another damnable lie. It's more than illogical, it's silly, to say that anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism. The vast majority of campus protesters are not anti-Semites and have no trouble separating the actions of extreme Zionist ideology as played out in Gaza from their classmates and friends who happen to be Jews. "The naming of things is the rectification of things," Confucius taught. Antisemitism is Antisemitism. Zionism is Zionism. The two are not the same. Otherwise, how could Senator Bernie Sanders, a Jew, attack Netanyahu's extreme Zionist government so strenuously, and how could so many of the student demonstrators who are against Zionist Israel's Gaza campaign themselves be Jewish? When Republican Congresswoman Elise Stephanic, a Jew, attacked the Jewish George Soros, a celebrated progressive Jewish philanthropist on CNN recently for supporting the protesters, wasn't she herself being an Anti-Semite?

Neither George W. Bush nor Joe Biden are Jews. They are Christians — but are certainly big-time Zionists. Bush by leading America into the morass of the Iraq War primarily designed to protect Israel, and Biden in Gaza, by giving Israel all the money and bombs it needs to kill so many thousands of civilians. "Don't kill children, but here's money and ammunition to do it with." Nobody is fooled by that, still less university students who have had to display their critical thinking skills before they could even get into college. Increasing numbers of Jewish organizations are rejecting Israel's descent into doctrinaire Anti-Arab racial policies that echo Nazism's extreme philosophy. They know that race-hatred is racism, but that doctrinaire racial superiority vs. inferiority is racial-ism, which is far worse. The situation in Gaza is unbearable for a civilized world to witness. Painting an entire generation of idealistic American college youth with the slander that they are racists is unbearable. If anything is worse than genocide, it is claiming that those who oppose it are the greater cause of evil.

The article first appeared on Inter Press Service.



A JewBelong billboard in Oakland, California, is papered over by a Jewish anti-Zionist group, on February 1, 2023. X

Wrestling U15 Asian Championships: Iran wins six medals, settles for FS third place



● FARSHAD BANDANI/LAWF

Sports Desk

The freestyle event of the U15 Asian Championships in Sriracha, Thailand, was one to forget for Iran as the wrestling powerhouse finished third in the team table with six medals, including three golds.

Japan collected a remarkable six gold medals across 10 weight classes to lift the team trophy with 197 points, followed by India, which failed to win a single gold – claiming four silvers and five bronzes – but still managed to beat Iran to the runner-up place with 163 points.

The Iranian squad also bagged a silver and two bronze medals to tally 161 points.

Representing Iran in the 48kg contests, Arman Elahi came out on top against Japanese Ibuki Kamikawa 6-3 in the final showdown, while Hooman Kalhori finished his campaign with the ultimate prize of the 62kg class, thanks to a 6-0 victory over Tajikistan's Idris Bakhromov.

Sam Daneshvar won a third gold medal for Iran when he defeated Indian Ronak Ronak 5-3 in the 85kg final.

Elsewhere, Sadra Fooladzadeh

had to settle for the silver medal of the 75kg class after a 4-3 loss to Adilbek Yerbolatov in the final. Meanwhile, Benjamin Ashofteh (38kg) and Amir-Ali Farasati (68kg) left the competitions with a couple of consolation bronzes in their respective weight classes. The freestyle contests came after Iran had pipped Uzbekistan to the Greco-Roman crown earlier in the Thai city.

Iranian boys notched up triple golds as well as double silver and bronze medals apiece to stand atop the team podium with 170 points, with Uzbekistan finishing on 169.

Amir Kazemi (48kg), Mahdi Gholamian (62kg), and Esmail Nabavi (68kg) were the Iranian gold medalists, with Abolfazl Zahiri and Amirhossein Bakhtiarnejad taking the silvers at the 57kg and 85kg contests respectively.

Benyamin Rastgar (44kg) and Amirhossein Alvani (75kg) added two bronzes to Iran's Greco-Roman medal haul.

The Asian age-group championships will continue with the under-20 competitions starting today, with Iran putting double team titles on the line.

Alipour aiming high after reunion with Reds

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Ali Alipour said he will be looking to repeat his good old days in the Persepolis shirt and receive an international call-up after signing a two-year contract with the Persian Gulf Pro League champion as a free agent.

Alipour, 28, left the Thera Reds in 2020 to join C.S. Marítimo but his time in the Portuguese top flight was hit by a couple of side-lining injuries as he only managed 17 goals across four seasons – including two in 19 appearances for Gil Vicente last term. Alipour bagged 72 strikes –

56 of which makes him the Reds' all-time top scorer in the Iranian Pro League – and 33 assists in 212 games for Persepolis, winning four league titles and a domestic cup trophy, while he was part of the team that reached a first AFC Champions League final in 2018.

"Thank God I'm back in Persepolis. The club has always been like a home to me and I have fond memories of my previous spell here," Alipour said upon signing the contract.

Persepolis archrival Esteghlal, as well as a couple of Turkish clubs, reportedly approached the Iranian in recent weeks but Ali-

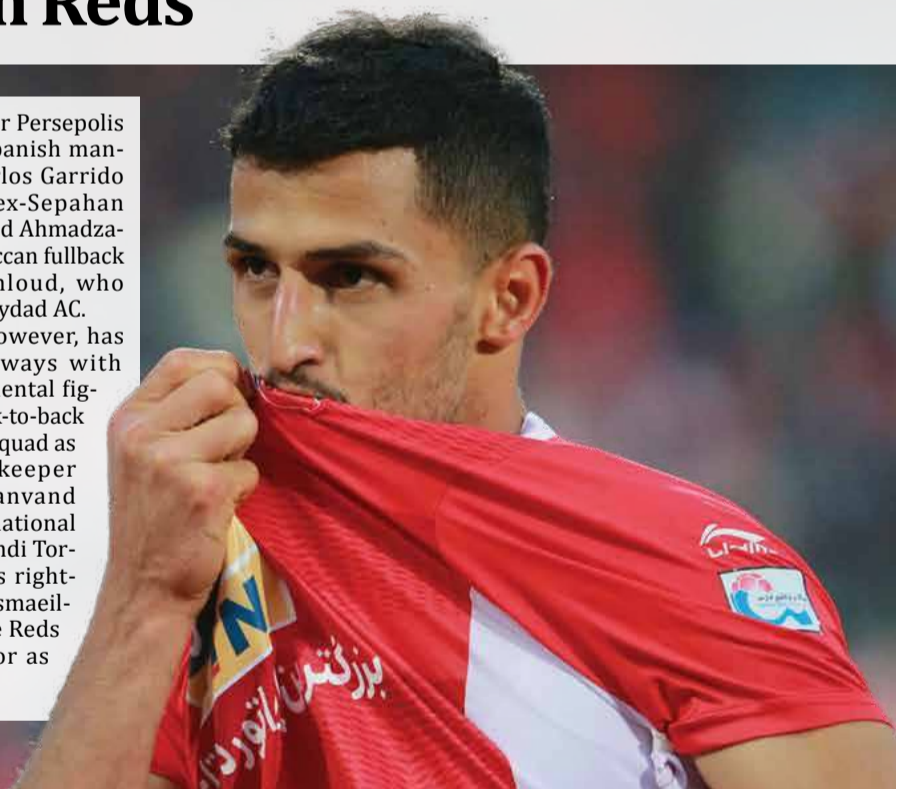
pour said it was "hard for me to turn down the offer from the team that I had won all my trophies and top-scorer awards with."

on his future aspirations, Alipour said: "I just hope the teammates and supporters will help me convince [Iran head coach] Amir Qalenoee to give me an opportunity in the national team."

Despite an impressive goal-scoring record in club football, Alipour only has three international caps under his belt – the last of which came as a cameo under Belgian Marc Wilmots in a friendly against South Korea back in 2019.

Alipour is the third sum-

mer signing for Persepolis under new Spanish manager Juan Carlos Garrido – following ex-Sepahan winger Farshad Ahmadzadeh and Moroccan fullback Ayoub El Amloud, who joined from Wydad AC. Persepolis, however, has had to part ways with three instrumental figures of its back-to-back title winning squad as Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand and his international teammate Mahdi Torabi, as well as right-back Danial Esmaeilifar all left the Reds to join Tractor as free agents.



● PAXAM PARSAEI/XJC

Lloris says Fernández video is 'attack on French people' as Argentinian minister sacked



● KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

THE GUARDIAN – Argentina's undersecretary of sport has been sacked after calling for Lionel Messi to apologise for the racist and transphobic song about France's players that the former captain Hugo Lloris has described as "an attack on French people".

Chelsea said on Wednesday they had "instigated an internal disciplinary procedure" against Enzo Fernández after the midfielder posted a video on Instagram that showed him and some of his Argentina teammates involved in the chants as they celebrated their victory against Colombia in the Copa América final. He later apologised, saying the video did not "reflect my beliefs or my character", and is expected to be fined by his club.

Fifa has confirmed it is investigating the incident, which Julio Garro had also urged Messi – who captained Argentina at the Copa América – and the Argentinian Football Association (AFA) president, Claudio Tapia, to apologise for.

But the office of Argentina's president, Javier Milei, issued a strongly worded statement on X confirming that Garro had been dismissed. "The president's office says that no government can tell the Argentina national team – world champion and two-time Copa América champion – what to comment, what to think or what to do, or to any other citizen," it said. "For this reason, Julio Garro is no longer undersecretary of sports of the nation."

The vice-president, Victoria Villarruel, also hit back at the country's critics on social media. "No country with a colonial history is going to put us down for a song sung on a field nor for speaking a truth that nobody wants to admit," she wrote. "Enough of pretending to be offended, hypocrites. Enzo I am with you, Messi thanks for everything! Argentines always keep your heads high! Long live Argentina!"

Villarruel said Argentina's history had been forged by people of all races: "We never forced our way of life on anyone, nor will we tolerate that someone tries to do the same to us."

Lloris, who captained France at the past two World Cups – includ-

ing their run to the final at Qatar 2022 when the chant was first sung by Argentina fans – said the players involved should have shown "more responsibility".

"They deserve a lot of credit for what they have done on the field for the last four or five years," Lloris said. "But when you win, you are an example for others, especially kids. It was a proper attack about the French people, especially for the French people who have African origin and family."

Demba Ba, the former Chelsea and Senegal striker, wrote on X: "Argentina, land of asylum for former Nazis on the run. From 1945, [Juan] Perón hosted war criminals. And it surprises you ..."

Iran: US obstacle in way of resolving int'l issues

Iran's interim foreign minister said the United States' unilateral approach to international issues has proven to be a failure, stressing that Washington is not part of the solution, but an obstacle in the path of peace.

Speaking to reporters in New York on Friday, Ali Bagheri Kani criticized the US's withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and its export of weapons to Israel amid the regime's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, Press TV reported.

"The Americans' claims that unilateralism can bring about peace, stability and security to the world have failed," he said.

"Practically, the American's approaches to the Iran nuclear negotiations, as well as the Palestine issue and the Zionist's aggression against Gaza, demonstrated that they cannot be part of the solution, but they are themselves the main obstacle."

The top diplomat also noted that the US is not qualified to be a "neutral mediator" as it disrupted the JCPOA's implementation and is even "encouraging" Israel to commit more crimes in Gaza

by providing the regime with lethal arms.

Bagheri Kani made the remarks after he attended two United Nations Security Council meetings focusing on the developments in Palestine and multilateralism.

Call for end to Israel's genocide

He said that in the meetings, he had underlined the need for an immediate end to the Gaza genocide and highlighted the consequences if the regime committed a "strategic mistake" by invading Lebanon.

"The Zionists are killing and injuring 20 oppressed Palestinians almost every hour. Thus, the world should not remain silent and passive in the face of these continued crimes that are being normalized," he added.

The interim foreign minister further hailed resistance as an effective element in the region, saying it plays a major role in creating regional stability and prevents the Israelis from escalating their offensive and massacre in the region.

Israel unleashed its brutal Gaza onslaught on October 7, 2023, after the Hamas resistance



group carried out its historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for the regime's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people. The Tel Aviv regime has so far

killed at least 38,848 Palestinians, mostly women, and children, in Gaza, and injured 89,456 others in the besieged Gaza Strip. The Iranian official also held

separate meeting with President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mirjana Spoljaric Egger on Thursday, during which he praised the ICRC's efforts regarding

Palestine and Gaza, describing the humanitarian conditions of oppressed Palestinians as very worrying.

'Wrong approaches'

"Unfortunately, politically-motivated and wrong approaches together with double standards have so far frustrated attempts aimed at ending the Gaza crisis," he said.

Egger, for her part, expressed deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and appreciated Iran's contributions to the Geneva-based humanitarian organization.

Meanwhile, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Masoya lauded Iran's "constructive" role in humanitarian issues and stressed the need for enhancement of cooperation between the two sides.

Masoya made the remark during a meeting with Bagheri Kani in New York on Thursday.

She called for greater efforts in order to stop the Gaza war, and end the current alarming situation in the war-ravaged territory.

UN court: Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory 'illegal'

International Desk

Israel's decades-long occupation of the Palestinian territories is illegal and needs to end "as rapidly as possible", the UN's top court said Friday.

The UN's General Assembly asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in late 2022 to give an "advisory opinion" on the "legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem [AI-Quds]".

"The court has found that Israel's continued presence in the Palestinian Territories is illegal," ICJ presiding judge Nawaf Salam said Friday, adding: "Israel must end the occupation as rapidly as possible."

Evacuation of settlers

The ICJ added that Israel was "under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers" from occupied land.

Israel's policies and practices including the building of new settlements and Israel's continued maintenance of a wall between the territories "amount to annexation of large parts" of the occupied territory, it said.

'Great day for Palestine'

Palestinian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Varsen Aghabekian Shahnai hailed "a great day for Palestine" while Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu



AFP

slammed the ICJ ruling as 'decision of lies'.

"This is a great day for Palestine, historically and legally," Aghabekian told AFP, speaking on behalf of the Palestinian Foreign Ministry.

"This is the highest judicial body in the world and it has presented a very detailed analysis of what is going on through Israel's prolonged occupation and colonization of the Palestinian territory in violation of international law." The ICJ held a week-long session in February to hear submissions from countries following the request - supported by most countries within the assembly. Most speakers during the hearings called on Israel to end its 57-year occupation. They warned a prolonged occupation posed an "extreme danger" to stability in the Middle East and beyond.

Knesset resolution on Palestinian state

On Wednesday, Israel's parliament, Knesset, voted 68-9 to pass a resolution that rejects the

establishment of a Palestinian state.

Mustafa Barghouti, the secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative, condemned the move, saying "This resolution represents a rejection of peace with Palestinians and an official declaration of the death of [the] Oslo agreement."

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the resolution "once again showed the world the racist nature of the Zionists' usurping regime".

The Palestinian resistance movements of Hamas and Islamic Jihad also called on the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to withdraw its recognition of Israel.

"The leaderships viewed that, in light of the Knesset's declared position rejecting the Palestinian people's right to establish their independent state, the national collective is required today to take a unified stance to confront these attempts to erase the Palestinian cause," they said in a joint statement.

Trump expands lead on Biden after shooting: Polls

Democrats call for Biden to step aside as nominee



Donald Trump



Joe Biden

International Desk

Former US president Donald Trump has expanded his lead over President Joe Biden in recent polling after last week-end's assassination attempt. A survey released Thursday by CBS News found that among likely voters, 52 percent said their choice for president is Trump, while 47 percent said the same about Biden. Trump's numbers increased, up from 50 percent in a July 3 survey, while Biden dropped 1 percent.

Biden fared better in battleground states but still trailed Trump. Fifty-one percent of likely voters in battleground states say they choose Trump compared to Biden's 48 percent.

Most respondents said the way Trump handled the assassination attempt at his Butler, Pa., rally last Saturday had no

change on their vote, but 26 percent said they are more likely to consider voting for Trump after the shooting and 7 percent said they are less likely to consider him.

Biden's poor debate performance last month sparked fear among Democrats about his ability to beat Trump in the election and serve another four years if reelected. Calls for him to step aside and let someone else, namely Vice President Harris, run have persisted in the weeks after the debate.

The survey found that Trump would also lead if Harris were the nominee, 51 percent to 48 percent. A Morning Consult survey released Thursday also found Trump widened his lead after the shooting.

Democrats at the highest levels are making a critical push for Biden to reevaluate his election bid, with former presi-

dent Barack Obama expressing private concerns to allies and former speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi privately telling Biden the party could lose the ability to seize control of the House if he doesn't step aside.

Pelosi has told Biden she believes he cannot win the Nov. 5 election and backed California lawmaker Adam Schiff's call for him to step aside, a top White House source with direct knowledge of the matter said.

So far, 21 House Democrats and two Senate Democrats have directly called on the president to exit the race. Several people close to Biden also said Thursday that they believe he has begun to accept the idea that he may not be able to win in November and may have to drop out of the race, bowing to the growing demands of many anxious members of his party.

Caspian states begin rescue drill hosted by Iran

Iran is hosting a rescue drill with the participation of all five Caspian Sea littoral states. The drill began on Friday and will last until Sunday, according to Mehr News Agency.

The exercise, named "CASAREX 24", is hosted by the Northern Fleet of Iran's Navy. The motto of the rescue drill is "Together for a safe and secure Caspian Sea".

At forefront of Saudi envoy's praises of post-Raisi Iran

'Strong institutions', cultural vibrancy

Arts & Culture Desk

In a meeting with the Secretary General of Iran's Public Libraries Foundation, the Saudi Ambassador to Iran, Abdullah bin Saud Al-Anazi, expressed his condolences on the passing of former Iranian president Raisi.

He commended Iran's smooth transition, stating that the country's institutions have ensured continuity despite the loss, iranpl.ir wrote.

"The tragedy that befell the Iranian nation was indeed immense," Al-Anazi said. "However, it is evident that Iran is a country of strong institutions. The seamless continuation of governance since Mr. Raisi's passing speaks volumes."

Al-Anazi praised Iran's library network, highlighting the existence of 3,800 public libraries as evidence to the country's cultural vibrancy.

He expressed his belief in cultural diplomacy and its potential to bring nations closer together. "What unites us is far greater than what divides us," he added. The Saudi diplomat also emphasized the importance of women's role in nurturing future generations and their central position in educating children.

He noted the Saudi leadership's commitment to promoting libraries and reading culture, with hundreds of libraries across the country primarily dedicated to study and reading.

Mehdi Ramazani, the Secretary-General of the Public Libraries Foundation, reciprocated the sentiment for expanding cultural exchanges between the two countries. He highlighted the foundation's efforts to foster



international connections, particularly with influential nations and neighbors.

Iran boasts one of world's most equipped libraries

Ramazani also shed light on Iran's public library network, stating that it is one of the most extensive cultural networks in the country.

He explained that beyond traditional libraries in mosques, schools, and universities, Iran boasts nearly 3,800 public libraries that serve as hubs for cultural and social activities, offering around 60 different

services. Approximately 800 of these libraries are located in rural areas, bringing literary access to all corners of the country.

"I can confidently say that the network of public libraries in the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the most well-equipped in the world," Ramazani asserted.

He also discussed the foundation's international conference on "Public Libraries and Small Businesses," emphasizing the potential for libraries to contribute to job creation. The event attracted library association leaders from five countries and



Saudi Ambassador to Iran Abdullah bin Saud al-Anazi (2nd-L) and Secretary General of Iran's Public Libraries Foundation Mehdi Ramazani (2nd-R) pose for a photo following a meeting. iranpl.ir

experts from 20 others, fostering productive exchanges and showcasing Iran's library capabilities. Ramazani highlighted the foundation's focus on children and adolescents, with all public libraries in Iran now featuring dedicated children's sections.

He attributed the success of this initiative to the foundation's "White Hoopoe program", which has resulted in children and adolescents comprising around 60% of library members nationwide. In addition, Ramazani noted the significant female presence among library members, staff, and managers, reflecting the foundation's inclusive approach. He also mentioned Iran's membership in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and its acquisition of a seat on the federation's specialized committees. Ramazani, referring to the mod-

els of public library management, stated, there are three models for managing public libraries worldwide. In European countries, public libraries are entirely community-based and are run by municipalities; in some countries like China, the public library is directly under the government; and in countries like the US, managing public libraries is a combination of community involvement and government support.

The method of managing public libraries in Iran is closer to the third method. The country's Public Libraries Foundation is a non-governmental public organization run by a board of trustees, and the real members of the board of trustees are appointed by the president. The secretary-general of the institution is also a member of the board of trustees. There are also provincial and county public library associations in the provinces and counties of the country, which are actually a combination of community presence and government support. In terms of financial resources, part of the budget of public libraries is provided through government assistance and part through receiving half a percent of municipalities' revenues.

The meeting underscored the potential for cultural diplomacy between Iran and Saudi Arabia, with both sides expressing a desire to strengthen ties and explore opportunities for collaboration, particularly in the realm of libraries and cultural exchanges.

This engagement comes as a positive step toward enhancing relations between the two influential Middle Eastern nations.

Iran, North Caucasus broaden tourism ties

Arts & Culture Desk

Direct flights between Iran and the North Caucasus have sparked a new era in bilateral relations, with a tourism delegation from the region set to visit Iran next week.

This reciprocal visit follows an Iranian tourism delegation's trip to the North Caucasus last year in October, ISNA wrote.

The upcoming visit, facilitated by an invitation from Iran's private tourism sector, will see the delegation spend eight days exploring Tehran, Kashan, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Qeshm Island, starting July 22.

Asma Shojaei Baghini, a member of Iran's Travel Agents Association and the manager of the travel agency facilitating the delegation's visit, empha-

sized the potential for tourism exchange between Iran and the North Caucasus.

She highlighted the interest expressed by the people of Dagestan, who trace their roots to Iran, and the broader potential for the region as a new market for Iranian tourism.

The establishment of direct flights between Tehran and Grozny, the capital of the Chechen Republic, just a month ago, has been a pivotal development

in facilitating travel between the two regions.

Shojaei underscored the importance of this direct connection in fostering stronger tourism ties and enabling the realization of mutual tourism potential.

The delegation, comprising representatives from eight travel agencies across the North Caucasus, along with officials from the "Caucasus RF" institute and government tourism representatives, will gain firsthand

experience of Iran's tourism offerings during their visit.

Shojaei also emphasized the broader benefits of familiarization tours, highlighting how they positively impact various sectors beyond just the tour organizers.

She expressed a desire for greater collaboration and support from both the private and public sectors in organizing such tours, acknowledging the long-term benefits for Iranian tourism.

With Western sanctions and the Ukraine conflict impacting Russia's international travel landscape, the North Caucasus presents an opportunity for Iran to diversify its tourism markets and build on the growing interest from Russian and Chinese tourists.



Iran's 'And Next Year, When Spring' to compete at Italy's Giffoni festival

The Iranian short film 'And Next Year, When Spring' has been selected to screen at the 54th Giffoni Film Festival in Italy.

Directed by Mehdi Boroumand and Saeid Asadi, the film will be presented in the Parental Experience section (Short Shorts) of the festival, which focuses on showcasing films for children and youth, ISNA wrote.

Written by Sahar Sotoudeh and produced by Ashkan Ashkani and Bahar Moridi, the film stars Shaghayegh Mokhtari, Yazdan Poursoleimani, Zeinab Mokhtarzadeh, Hamid Hadi, Hassan Adhami, Samaneh Yousefi, and Farid Adhami.

'And Next Year, When Spring' will compete for the Gryphon Award of the Italian festival, which runs from July 19 to 28 in Salerno. The Giffoni Film Festival is one of the largest and most signifi-

cant festivals dedicated to children's and youth cinema in the world.

The film adds to the growing list of Iranian cinema gaining international recognition and showcases the diverse talents of Iran's film industry.

