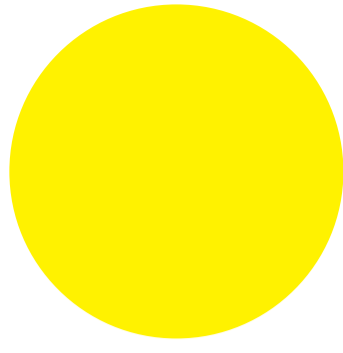


Iran says will use its legitimate right to punish Israel



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# Iran Daily

Vol. 7618 • Saturday, August 3, 2024 • Mordad 13, 1403 • Muharram 28, 1446 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



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## Need for active diplomacy to counter Israel

By Abed Akbari  
International affairs expert

**EXCLUSIVE  
OPINION**

The strike on Beirut and the subsequent terrorist attack in Tehran, resulting in the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, constitute an act of aggression and a violation of Iran's territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and political independence. These acts are contrary to the United Nations Charter and verge on a crime of aggression, reflecting the failures of Benjamin Netanyahu and the Zionist regime of Israel in achieving their objectives since the major defeat on October 7. Unable to resolve its internal and external crises, the regime seeks to cover up its failures by escalating regional conflicts.

The Israeli war cabinet, in coordination with the United States, gave the green light to carry out the two recent strikes, drawing reactions from even some of the regime's Western supporters and warnings from various countries about serious consequences of the aggression. Recent developments in West Asia reveal two opposing trends. The first trend, initiated by the Iran-Saudi agreement and centered around Eastern and non-Western actors, has the potential to lead the region toward greater peace, stability, and development. The second trend, beginning with the Al-Aqsa storm and subsequent brutal attacks by the Israeli regime on Gaza, risks pushing the region toward further conflict and instability. The region now stands between these two conflicting paths.

Decades of struggle and negotiations on the Palestinian issue demonstrate that the Palestinian people cannot be ignored and require a sustainable solution emerging from Palestinian consensus. Given the central role this issue plays in shaping West Asian security dynamics, resolving it is essential for regional stability and development. Conflict management is more than merely limiting and controlling damage; it must contribute to peace, stability, and development, addressing accumulated economic, environmental, and social challenges.

Without this, political, economic, social, and environmental issues in the region will continue to heighten, setting the stage for larger conflicts. As global order trends toward multipolarity, the likelihood of increased intervention by global powers in West Asia rises, turning the region into a battleground for geopolitical games with adverse outcomes for its nations.

### Countering threats

Deterrence is a strategic-tactical mechanism used by governments to reduce threats and enhance national security against aggressive acts by other states. Iran, frequently threatened by its surrounding environment, has consistently sought to bolster its defensive capabilities, expand its security perimeter, and ramp up deterrence through political-security influence, defensive diplomacy, and boosting first and second-strike capacities.

In recent years, given the unique situation of the Middle East as Iran's security environment, shaping deterrence mechanisms has gained significant importance for the Islamic Republic. The region's instability, crises, high terrorist activity, presence of extra-regional powers, and formation of weak states have led to increased security threats around Iran.

In this context, Iran has sought to enhance its deterrence through combined mechanisms. [Page 2 >](#)

# Iran Duty-bound to Revenge

Funerals held for Haniyeh in Tehran, Doha, elsewhere

7 >



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei leads the prayer, next to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, over the coffin of late Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard, during a funeral procession in Tehran on August 1, 2024. [khamenei.ir](#)

## Japan ready to cooperate with Iran on smartening postal services: Minister

2 >



## Iranian hopefuls looking to end medal drought in Paris

6 >



A televised speech by Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah is transmitted on large screens as mourners attend the funeral ceremony of slain top commander Fuad Shukur in Beirut on August 1, 2024. [KHALED DESOUKI/AFP](#)

## Nasrallah: Response to Israel's killing of Hezbollah commander 'inevitable'

7 >

## Need for active ...

## Iran's foreign policy under new gov't

Page 1 > Now more than ever, Iran needs to continue sincere and constructive dialogue and cooperation to achieve a common understanding of regional opportunities and challenges to enhance mutual cooperation while recognizing the obstacles to these goals.

There are extensive commonalities between Iran and the regional countries and Tehran believes shared strengths outweigh real, fabricated, or externally imposed points of divergence. Tehran have moved beyond Iranian-Arab dialogues and entered into regional discussions, and now stand at the stage of regional cooperation. The new Iranian government's foreign ministry must pursue this project on four levels:

1. Bilateral relations: At this level, efforts should focus on restoring ties to a suitable path by reopening embassies and consulates, increasing diplomatic visits, developing economic relations, and boosting tourism.

2. Strengthening regional bonds: By improving bilateral relations, a more favorable environment for regional cooperation and consultation can be created. Political solutions for West Asian crises, such as those in Syria and Yemen, and the need for a strong region to address emerging challenges are principal areas for consensus among regional players.

3. Setting up a regional institution: Iran should work for the establishment of a dialogue forum and eventually a regional organization capable of addressing regional issues at a higher level, providing solutions, and ensuring enforcement.

4. Collective security formation through regional decisions: A collective resolve is required to counter threats like instability, insecurity, terrorism, and Western alliances' inclination to spread weapons of mass destruction in West Asia, ensuring the region does not become a haven for terrorists.

# Japan ready to help Iran smarten postal services: *Minister*

Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Tsuge Yoshifumi announced his country's readiness to cooperate with Iran on smartening postal services.

The minister who visited the Islamic Republic of Iran as a special envoy of Prime Minister Kishida Fumio to attend the inauguration ceremony of President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 30, added that Iranians were the first ones to establish the first post office to courier parcels, reported ISNA.

During his visit to the Postal Sorting Office of Tehran which was accompanied Japan's Ambassador to Iran Tamaki Tsukada, the minister was briefed on the operational units, equipment and postal processes of the office.

He hailed the cultural commonality and good relations between the two countries and said: "We are ready to help Iran's post in the path of



smartening by transferring experience as well as developing

equipment and facilities. In order to develop the ties be-

tween the two countries, the Iran National Post Company has

proposed to print a joint stamp of Iran and Japan.

## Iran-Brazil business forum convenes in Tehran



The Iran-Brazil business forum convened in Tehran to discuss broadening of ties between businesspersons of the two sides.

The forum was attended by senior officials from the two sides including Samad Hassanzadeh, the head

of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture and Brazilian Vice President Geraldo Alckmin, according to otaghiraonline.ir.

Speaking at the event, Hassanzadeh said the capacities of Iran's econo-

my in the fields of medical, energy, petrochemical, mining, food and agricultural industries, and technical and engineering services could be used to develop cooperation with Brazil.

"Iran is interested in developing economic relations with friendly and neighboring countries, and the government is trying to enable the country's economic operators to benefit from such connection and economic relations," he noted. Speaking for his part, Alckmin stated that he has a mission from the President of Brazil to take the necessary measures to strengthen the relations between the two countries as much as possible.

## Guaranteed wheat purchases near 10m tons: *GTC*

Iran's domestic purchases of wheat is reaching 10 million metric tons (mt) this year amid better government supports for farmers that has helped the country cut back on imports of basic goods and commodities.

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (GTC) said that domestic wheat purchases had reached a total of 9.849 million mt since the start of harvesting season in April, Press TV reported.

GTC's CEO Saeid Raad said the purchases had increased by some 17% compared to the similar period last year.

Raad said the value of wheat purchased from domestic farmers this year had reached a total of 1,735 trillion rials (2.9 billion), adding that the government had spent some 470 trillion rials more on wheat purchases compared to the harvesting season in 2023.

## Prospect of Iran's water diplomacy

By Hamed Hekmatara

Expert at Iran's Water Diplomacy Association

### EXCLUSIVE

In his last business trip in 2024, Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi went to East Azarbaijan Province to inaugurate the Qiz-Qalasi Dam and operating the Khoda-Afarin Dam (both on the Aras River and shared with the Republic of Azerbaijan); as the said dams were inaugurated by him and his Azerbaijani counterpart. The event took place 19 years after opening the Doosti Dam (on the Hari-Rud River which is shared with Turkmenistan) by president Khatami and then President of Turkmenistan. In other words, the Qiz-Qalasi and Khoda-Afarin dams are the second concrete manifestation of the importance of water diplomacy for Iran at the highest executive level along with Tehran's effort to use the common waters issue as an opportunity to expand cooperation and water-based regionalism.

In the field of transboundary waters, the issues facing Iran, including water diplomacy and the water dispute, are mainly related to the transboundary basins

of Aras, Hari-Rud and Hirmand (Helmand). This country has common interests with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan in the field of common water resources. Because all three of these countries are located at the downstream of the basins. For this reason, this opportunity has been used favorably through water diplomacy and the conclusion of an agreement for the construction and operation of the joint dams of Aras, Khoda-Afarin, Qiz-Qalasi and Mil-Moghan with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Doosti Dam with Turkmenistan. But the noteworthy point here is that Iran's water interests are less proportional to the upstream countries of Turkey (on the Aras) and Afghanistan (on the Hari-Rud and Hirmand), and strengthening water diplomacy is needed in this regard.

Due to the fact that the Soviet Union, as one of the top two world powers in its era, also been common on the Aras and Hari-Rud basins, basically no agreement has been made so far to share the water rights in the mentioned basins; Unlike the Hirmand basin, which is common between Iran and Afghanistan, and both countries

have reached an agreement on the sharing of water rights in 1953. In fact, the Soviet Union, as the undisputed hegemon of the region in its common basins, which had common water interests with Iran (both were in the downstream position), started to conclude water agreements with Iran in line with water diplomacy, which was mostly without participation and disregard for the interests of upstream countries with lower power.

However, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the formation of a greater balance in the power of the countries in the region, the upstream countries of Turkey and Afghanistan are trying to make more use of their water rights, and due to the lack of water agreements with the downstream countries as a legacy of the bipolar world, some water disputes are emerging in the region. In fact, sometimes there is a belief among some elites and officials of the upstream countries in the region that undisputed Soviet power and hegemony and Iran's abundant oil revenues in the 1970s gave these countries an increasing and hegemonic power in the region,

and this led to construction of joint dams in the downstream parts of the common basins without the participation and permission of weaker upstream countries.

In this regard, although the ruling governments of Afghanistan emphasize the implementation of the 1973 Hirmand Treaty with Iran; as the history of the last half century after the signing of the treaty shows, it is not unlikely that Kabul will continue to strengthen its national interests by increasing the cultivated area and producing hydroelectric power in upstream parts of the Hirmand basin or bargaining for alternative concessions by diverting the Hirmand water from the Hamun Lake to the Gowd-e Zereh Depression. It seems that there is a need to tie the water interests of Iran with Turkey and Afghanistan through water diplomacy in such a way that the upstream countries welcome the implementation of existing or future treaties on transboundary waters and do not consider them imposed.

According to the above, it seems that the issue of water disputes of Iran with Turkey and Afghanistan cannot be easily resolved

and there is a need for more and continuous attention and effort in this field of foreign policy. In this regard, one of the main slogans and promises of the 14th government and President Pezeshkian is the development of foreign policy. To the extent that some influential figures in Iran's foreign policy are key pillars of the new government. In fact, according to the debates and election campaigns, the 14th government believes that strengthening the foreign policy in the current situation has great importance for the country and will even affect the improvement of the domestic policy. In the field of transboundary waters, the sustainable provision of Iran's water rights from transboundary waters through successful water diplomacy has an impact on the water, food and livelihood security of citizens living in the border provinces and relevant internal policies.

The Department of Water Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established as the main custodian in the field of pursuing Iran's water diplomacy with its neighbors during the era of President Rouhani and with the support of the then Deputy

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abbas Araghchi. Considering that there have been speculations about the election of Araghchi as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the 14th government, and considering his interest and expertise in the issue of transboundary waters and the increasing aggravation of the water crisis in the region, the issue of common water resources can reach the top of foreign policy issues in the new government.

Paying more attention to the issue of transboundary water diplomacy as an increasingly important part of foreign policy, in addition to its positive effects on the country, will also turn the existing water disputes with some neighboring countries into the axis of convergence in the region. Improving the level of the Water Diplomacy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cooperation of this department with institutions with similar goals in other ministries and the private sector, and supporting the ideas and participation of relevant experts in this direction can be registered as part of the positive and practical steps of the 14th government in the field of transboundary waters.

# Architectural and natural splendor of Fat'habad Garden



## Iranica Desk

Fat'habad Garden, also known as Biglarbeigi Mansion, is a prominent tourist attraction in Kerman Province and has been designated as a national heritage site. Once a flourishing estate, its architectural style served as a model for the renowned Shahzadeh Garden in Mahan. Today, after extensive restoration efforts, Fat'habad Garden features tree-lined pathways, a large pool, enchanting nighttime lighting, and a range of amenities, including restaurants and tea houses, making it a beloved destination for visitors. The history of Fat'habad Garden dates back to the Qajar period, with construction beginning during the reign of Mohammad Shah and spanning five years. It has served as a retreat for subsequent rulers of Kerman. This historical site is part of an endowment established by Rostam Khan Amiri, a descendant of Fazl Ali Khan Biglarbeigi. In recent years, the complex has undergone significant restoration, overseen by Kerman Province's Cultural Heritage Organization. Fat'habad Garden showcases unique beauty, with its charm evident both day and night, enhanced by stunning lighting.

## Architectural highlights

Upon entering the mansion, visitors are welcomed by a large pool reflecting the main building — a captivating sight. Located at the northern end of the garden, the Fat'habad Mansion is a two-story structure adorned with arched niches and features three and five-door rooms. Built from raw clay bricks and mud mortar, it is elegantly plastered. Inside, exquisite plasterwork highlights the artistry of master craftsmen. Above the entrance, openings once housed magnifying glasses that illuminated the rooms by reflecting light from lamps. History enthusiasts will appreciate a dedicated section in the garden showcasing the biographies and images of Kerman's former rulers, providing a glimpse into the region's rich past. The painting room within the main mansion, once the residence of the governor of Kerman, is beautifully decorated with exquisite paintings created using water gilding. Just 30 meters east of the main mansion lies the Four Seasons Mansion, a single-story structure distinguished by its central dome and columned porches, elegantly adorned with intricate brickwork and plaster. The qanat, flowing through

the center of this luxurious garden, along with the presence of the Four Seasons Mansion and the main building, creates a serene and delightful environment. The centrality of the pool, a hallmark of ancient Persian gardens, is prominently displayed in Fat'habad Garden. This 60-by-5-meter pool is framed by tall trees and a two-story building overlooking the water, culminating in a picturesque view. However, as the qanat gradually dried up, so too did the garden, prompting one of the governors of Mahan to construct Shazdeh Garden, inspired by the beauty of Fat'habad Garden.

## Medicinal herbs

Kerman is renowned for its medicinal herbs, considered one of the province's principal souvenirs. During the restoration of Fat'habad Garden, part of the area was designated for cultivating medicinal plants, harnessing the potential of its surroundings to generate revenue. Today, Fat'habad Garden boasts the largest collection of medicinal plant cultivation in the country, offering unmatched plant diversity.

## Best time to visit

The most favorable time to visit Ker-

man and Fat'habad Garden is from early May to late June. While many travelers prefer the cooler seasons for their visits, the coldest months of the year offer an enchanting view of Biglarbeigi Mansion blanketed in snow for those who can brave the winter chill.

## Restoration efforts

Thanks to dedicated restoration efforts, Fat'habad Garden has become one of Iran's most beautiful gardens, captivating visitors from near and far. Although the qanat had once completely dried up, the installation of a well and a water desalination system has restored the water supply, enabling the garden to thrive once more. This restoration has transformed Fat'habad Garden into a center of historical significance, research, agriculture, and recreation. The green space now cultivates 400 species of medicinal plants from Kerman Province, potentially establishing a remarkable plant bank within the country. Fat'habad Garden is one of the oldest and most beautiful Persian gardens, celebrated for its unique architectural style. The doors of this historical-recre-

ational complex were reopened in August 2015 in the presence of Kerman's governor and the Minister of Interior, allowing the public to enjoy the space after months of meticulous restoration by craftsmen and cultural heritage experts.

## Facilities and visitor experience

Fat'habad Garden offers a variety of facilities to ensure visitor comfort, including a restaurant, juice house, and tea house. These establishments serve a range of dishes, herbal drinks, aromatic plants, and traditional ice cream. Outside, visitors can relax in seating areas, soaking in the refreshing atmosphere of the garden. The area is also equipped with wooden pavilions, known locally as "kaper," where guests can unwind and enjoy a moment of tranquility. For those looking to take home a piece of Kerman, craft and medicinal plant stalls offer a variety of handicrafts and herbal products as souvenirs. Overall, Fat'habad Garden stands as a testament to the history, culture, and natural beauty of Kerman, inviting explorers to discover its many wonders.

# Visit Subatan, a scenic paradise in Gilan Province



The Subatan summer region is one of the most picturesque areas in Iran, renowned for its natural beauty and pleasant climate. Located in Talesh, Gilan Province — the most humid province in Iran — Subatan rarely experiences temperatures that drop below one degree above zero. Even during summer, remnants of snow can be spotted on the heights ranging from 1,900 to 2,500 meters above sea level. Residents typically inhabit Subatan during spring, summer, and part of au-

tumn, migrating to the forests of the Alborz Mountain hillsides and the shores of the Caspian Sea (specifically Lisar) as autumn comes to a close. Only a few families remain in the Huni Yesh summer area during this time. Despite changes in the central areas of Subatan, herders and nomads in the surrounding villages preserve their native culture, living in tents and thatched houses. Notable attractions include Varzan Waterfall, Mahar Waterfall, the stunning Neor Lake, and the districts of Sari

Dash, Hacha Dash, and Majma Dash, as well as various natural and forest parks. Subatan lacks a residential center, but most local residents greet travelers warmly, welcoming them into their homes. A travel from Neor Lake to Subatan Village is highly recommended, offering the chance to experience a lake, forest, and beautiful village all in one trip. Visitors can enjoy a variety of weather conditions — sunny, rainy, foggy, and more — within the same day. There are several ways to reach Sub-

atan, with two popular options. The first is to travel from Talesh, though an off-road vehicle is necessary for safe mountain driving. Alternatively, travelers can hire patrols that take passengers to the area. One interesting aspect of local culture is the cooperation between residents and travelers in collecting litter, reflecting a shared commitment to preserving the environment. Throughout Iran, one can find places with paradisiacal scenery and un-

spoiled nature that captivate every visitor. The lush landscapes of northern Iran are home to several such dreamlike locations. The township of Talesh is located 451km from Tehran, nestled in a mountainous area in the west of Gilan Province. The Alborz Mountains runs parallel to the coastline from north to south, contributing to Talesh's moderate and humid climate, characterized by a relatively high percentage of annual rainfall.

# Israel not interested in peace



By Belén Fernández  
Author, columnist

## OPINION

**Just when you thought the situation in the Middle East couldn't get any more incendiary, the assassination of Hamas's political chief Ismail Haniyeh has propelled regional tensions to a whole new level of bad.** Haniyeh was killed in a strike late on Tuesday in Tehran, the capital of Iran, where he had attended the inauguration ceremony of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. The assassination is without doubt the handiwork of — who else? — “the state of Israel,” although the Israeli cabinet seems to have adopted a “no comment” policy for the moment. One Israeli official, Minister of Heritage Amichai Eliyahu, apparently couldn't contain his exuberance, and took to X to proclaim: “This is the right way to clean the world of this filth ... Haniyeh's death makes the world a little better.” In his social media post, Eliyahu also swore that there would be “no more imaginary peace/surrender agreements”, and that “the iron hand that will strike is the one that will bring peace and a little comfort and strengthen our ability to live in peace with those who desire peace.” That's a lot of usage of the word “peace” for folks who fundamentally don't want, well, peace. To be sure, killing one of the main negotiators for a cease-fire deal in the Gaza Strip is a pretty good way to thwart any prospect of peace for the time being.



Late Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh  
● AFP

The assassination of Haniyeh in Iranian territory gives Iran no choice but to respond to Israel in some sort of military fashion, which it has already shown it is more than capable of doing.

And what do you know? As Reuters noted in its obituary for Haniyeh, the man was “seen by many diplomats as a moderate compared with the more hard-line members” of Hamas. Anyway, it has long been Israel's modus operandi to squelch any opportunities for so-called “moderation” in order to justify its own perennial maniacal behaviour. In a recent Al Jazeera article, titled “Why does Israel step up its attacks when Gaza cease-fire talks

advance?”, journalist Justin Salhani reflected on the intensification of Israel's current genocidal assault in the Gaza Strip even as cease-fire talks were progressing. Salhani recalled a certain relevant precedent during the second Intifada in 2002, in which the Fatah-allied Tanzim military wing was reportedly “set to announce a unilateral cease-fire”. Then, Israel dropped a one-tonne bomb on a Hamas leader's Gaza City home, and that was the end of that. Now, Israel has officially killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians in

Gaza in less than 10 months, though the true death toll is assumed to be astronomically higher. So much for the “ability to live in peace,” to borrow Eliyahu's words. Of course, if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu allows the war to end, he will have to live with a lot of things he doesn't want to live with — like domestic opposition, corruption charges, and other stuff that's no fun. In May, the chief prosecutor for the International

Criminal Court applied for an arrest warrant for Netanyahu for alleged war crimes committed in Gaza — an eventuality that is clearly best avoided by simply continuing to commit more war crimes. And just to be absolutely sure that there remains no conceivable possibility of peace in the near term, Israel is doing its best to provoke its enemies into committing bellicose acts that Israel itself can then use as an excuse to keep waging war.

Just this Tuesday, Israel struck a residential building in the Lebanese capital of Beirut, killing a woman and two children and injuring 74, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health. The target of the strike was a Hezbollah commander accused by Israel of masterminding the July 27 rocket attack on the town of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights that killed at least 12 children. Hezbollah, which normally claims responsibility for its ac-

tions, has vehemently denied perpetrating the Majdal Shams attack — which, it bears underscoring, took place in a territory that is illegally occupied by Israel. But, hey, it was a good enough reason to bomb Beirut. The assassination of Haniyeh in Iranian territory, meanwhile, gives Iran no choice but to respond to Israel in some sort of military fashion, which it has already shown it is more than capable of doing. Following the deadly April Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in the Syrian capital of Damascus, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel. Granted, this was more of a show of force than an attempt to cause damage. But by assassinating Haniyeh in Tehran, Israel is literally playing with fire. In order to derail cease-fire prospects and keep up the killing in Gaza, then, it seems Israel is going to end up with a whole lot more regional blood on its hands. The Cambridge English dictionary defines a “rogue state” as a “nation that is considered very dangerous to other nations” — and there's no nation more rogue these days than the “state of Israel”.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) consults with military commanders at the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv, in a photo released soon after an Israeli strike on a Hezbollah target in Beirut, July 30, 2024.  
● PMO



## Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh will only make Hamas stronger



By Emad Moussa  
Author, researcher

## PERSPECTIVE

**Israel's double assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's political leader, in Tehran, and Fuad Shukr, a senior military figure in Hezbollah, in Beirut, on July 31 has sent shockwaves around the world.**

**A major escalation that could spiral out of control into a regional war; Israel has lashed out, attacking two sovereign nations in 24 hours, all whilst knees deep in mass atrocities in Gaza.**

**Assassinating a Hamas leader in Tehran may ultimately be symbolic. Whilst Ismail Haniyeh played a very different role to Yasser Arafat of the PLO or George Habash of the PLFP, Haniyeh was still a negotiator in the cease-fire talks.**

**By killing Haniyeh, Israel has proven, once again, that it will greenlight the assassination of those party to cease-fire negotiations. But this is nothing new. In fact, Ismail Haniyeh is just the latest in a long history of Israeli assassinations.**

In July 2002, at the height of the Second Intifada, an Israeli F-16 dropped a one-tonne bomb on al-Daraj neighbourhood in Gaza City. The target was Salah Shehadeh, the

head of Hamas' military wing al-Qassam Brigades. An entire residential block was destroyed, killing Shehadeh and his family, along with 15 other people including seven children.

The brutal raid was followed by a wave of assassinations of Hamas politicians and military officials, climaxing with the killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of the movement, in

March 2002. An Apache helicopter fired a Hellfire missile at him as he was being wheeled out of a Gaza mosque after prayer. The 67-year-old and nine other worshippers were killed.

A month later, Israel assassinated Hamas' senior official, Dr. Abdul-Aziz Rantisi. And to complete the circle, in 2012, Israel killed Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari.

Israel's shortsighted policy of assassinating Palestinian political figures is a great example of winning the battle but losing the war.

assassination became an official policy and went through three phases. The first phase came after the launch of the Palestinian armed struggle in 1965, where dozens of Palestinian key figures were eliminated. The second wave came after Oslo in the mid-1990s and targeted primarily Hamas operatives accused of masterminding suicide bombings in Israel. The Second Intifada in 2000 saw a third but particularly intense wave of assassinations that killed tens of resistance

to organise and recruit, but only for a short period. None has amounted to a strategic gain in the long run. Quite the opposite, it often backfired in terms of revenge, re-recruiting, and boosting general antagonism toward the Zionist entity. A study by the US Department of Justice shortly after the end of the Second Intifada concluded that Israeli targeted killing did not have a significant impact on the rate of Palestinian attacks on Israeli targets. It did, in fact, result in increased attacks over a short or long period. One reason for the failure is the in-

Ahmed Jabari was second in command to Mohammed Deif, chief of the Al-Qasam Brigades and Israel's most wanted for two decades. Deif survived multiple assassination attempts and lost his wife and children in one of them in 2014. The Israeli alleged attempt on his life in Mawasi in southern Gaza in early July resulted in a horrific massacre. Israel's policy of 'targeted killing' has become progressively comprehensive, indiscriminate, and mindlessly brutal in the past decade or so, reaching a level of mass atrocities in the current Gaza onslaught. In October 2023, an Israeli jet levelled



Late Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh (C) gestures the victory sign at the Iranian Parliament in Tehran on July 30, 2024. ● ABEDIN TAHERKENAREH/EPA



Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (L) talks with future Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh at his home in the Gaza Strip in 2002. Israel assassinated Yassin in 2004 and Haniyeh in 2024. ● AHMED JADALLAH/REUTERS

the heart of Jabalia refugee camp and killed fifty people to allegedly hunt a Hamas commander. To kill Deif, several jet fighters were deployed and much more firepower was unleashed on an area designed as a 'safe zone' for the displaced Gazans by the Israeli army. Throughout the war, the pattern has been repeated: level areas and kill dozens of innocent people to target a single individual. Not only in the war-torn Gaza Strip but also in the occupied West Bank, with the Israeli army resorting to drones and jet fighters to target Palestinian activists.

**Israel: A rogue 'state'**

In his book *Rise and Kill First*, Israeli journalist Ronan Bergman claims that, since World War II, Israel has assassinated more people than any other country in the Western world. Up to 2019, the time of the book publishing, Israel carried out 2,300 operations, killing several thousand people. There are no official figures to affirm the accuracy or lack thereof of Bergman's claims. However, no other nation has been more forthcoming, and openly comfortable, about assassination as a "state" policy and frequently executed practice as Israel. Jewish terrorist group Lehi initiated the assassination policy in 1944 by killing British politician Walter Guinness, who opposed illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine. After Israel was established in 1948,

figures and, with them, more civilians. Israel's 'targeted killing' has repeatedly come under fire on legal and moral grounds; firstly, because these assassinations are extrajudicial executions — and thus, forbidden under international law — and secondly, because of its sheer disregard for innocent lives. However, Israeli decision-makers prioritise the perceived strategic value of these assassinations over the legal or moral costs, such as international criticism or excessive collateral damage. Israeli officials argue that killing is a last resort when arrest is not an option. It also boosts the Israeli public morale. The goal is selective disincentives that up the cost of 'militancy' — anti-occupation resistance in Palestinian terms — and deter activists and organisations from planning or carrying out attacks against the occupying entity or its civilians. Another typical assessment would be that target killing is disruptive; it deprives dissident groups of valued members and forces them into hiding instead of focusing on resisting/fighting. In part, the practice complements Israel's doctrine of pre-emptive strike — hence the Talmudic reference: "rise and kill first", as per Bergman's book title as well.

**Hamas the Hydra**

That said, experience shows that Israeli extrajudicial killing has reaped tactical benefits by disrupting the target group's command chain and ability

ability, or sheer impracticality, of the Israeli intelligence to strike a balance between the 'repression' of Palestinian dissidence and stopping the flow of resources, which is a replacement for the assassinated leader.

It fails to fully appreciate that — theoretically — demoralising Palestinians by murdering their leaders does not — realistically — amount to a mass or long-term acceptance of the status quo. A reason above all else is the settler colonial context, which leaves Palestinians no options but to fight Israel's occupation, regardless of the cost. The alternative would be the loss of their right to self-determination and, subsequently, national oblivion. Every Palestinian or Arab key figure that Israel has assassinated, including senior leaders, since 1948 has been replaced. Israel killed most of the active front-line members of the PLO between 1965 and 2005, but the movement took the blows and readapted. The Mossad killed Fathi al-Shiqaqi, the founder of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, in Operation Kidon in Malta in 1995, but today's PIJ is much fiercer and better armed.

The core leaders of Hamas — Yassin, Rantisi, and Jabari — were all assassinated, but they were replaced by Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif who are less compromising than their predecessors and have successfully reshaped Hamas' military wing into a capable army-like force to fight Israel's occupation.

The same goes for Hezbollah. Israeli planes blew up Hezbollah's military chief, Emad Mughniyeh, in Syria in 2008, but the Lebanese group has since grown in strength and is today actively and successfully engaging the Israeli army in Northern Israel in support of Gaza.

Israel may have rationalised and justified extrajudicial murder as a way to provide security, but doing so augmented the very antagonism that makes it insecure. Instead of tackling the root of the problem, the occupation and colonialism, Israelis can only see and deal with the symptoms of their deeds.

This headhunting never worked and will not work in the future, unless repeating the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result is no longer the definition of insanity.

*The article first appeared on The New Arab.*

**It's both criminal, desperate**

That's why Israel assassinated Ismail Haniyeh



By Ramzy Baroud  
Author, journalist

**OPINION**

*Israel's assassination of the head of the Hamas political bureau Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31 is part of Tel Aviv's search for a wider regional conflict. It is a criminal act that reeks of desperation.*

*Almost immediately after the start of the Gaza war on October 7, Israel hoped to use the genocide in the Strip as an opportunity to achieve its long-term goal of a regional war — one that would rope in Washington as well as Iran and other Middle Eastern countries. Despite unconditional support for its genocide in Gaza and various conflicts throughout the region, the United States refrained from entering a direct war against Iran and others. Though defeating Iran is an American strategic objective, the US lacks the will and tools to pursue it now. After ten months of a failed war on Gaza and a military stalemate against Hezbollah in Lebanon, Israel is, once more, accelerating its push for a wider conflict. This time around, however, Israel is engaging in a high-stakes game, the most dangerous of its previous gambles.*



People hold up the Palestinian flag and a portrait of assassinated Hamas negotiator Ismail Haniyeh during a rally at Tehran University in the Iranian capital Tehran on July 31, 2024. ● AFP

The current gamble involved the targeting of a top Hezbollah leader by bombing a residential building in Beirut on Tuesday — and, of course, the assassination of Palestine's most visible, let alone popular political leader. Haniyeh succeeded in forging and strengthening ties with Russia, China, and other countries beyond the US-western political domain.

Israel chose the place and timing of killing Haniyeh carefully. The Palestinian leader was killed in the Iranian capital, shortly after he attended the inauguration of Iran's new president Masoud Pezeshkian. The Israeli message was a compound one — that of Israel's readiness to escalate further — and to Hamas, that Israel has no intentions to end the war or to reach a negotiated cease-fire.

The latter point is perhaps the most urgent. For months, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has done everything in his power to impede all diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the war. By killing the top Palestinian negotiator, Israel delivered a final and decisive message that Israel remains invested in violence, and in nothing else.

The scale of the Israeli provocations, however, poses a great challenge to the pro-Palestinian camp in the Middle East, namely, how to respond with equally strong messages without granting Israel its wish of embroiling the whole region in a destructive war.

Considering the military capabilities of what is known as the 'Axis of Resistance', Iran, Hezbollah, and others are certainly capable of managing this challenge despite the risk

factors involved. Equally important regarding timing: the Israeli dramatic escalation in the region, followed a visit by Netanyahu to Washington, which, aside from many standing ovations at the US Congress, didn't fundamentally alter the US position, predicated on the unconditional support for Israel without direct US involvement in a regional war.

Additionally, Israel's recent clashes involving the army, military police, and the supporters of the far right suggest that an actual coup in Israel might be a real possibility. In the words of Israel's opposition leader Yair Lapid: Israel is not nearing the abyss, Israel is already in the abyss. It is, therefore, clear to Netanyahu and his far-right circle that they are operating within an increasingly limited time and margins.

By killing Haniyeh, a political leader who has essentially served the role of a diplomat, Israel demonstrated the extent of its desperation and the limits of its military failure.

Considering the criminal extent to which Israel is willing to go, such desperation could eventually lead to the regional war that Israel has been trying to instigate, even before the Gaza war.

Keeping in mind Washington's weakness and indecision in the face of Israel's intransigence, Tel Aviv might achieve its wish of a regional war after all.

*The article first appeared on The Palestine Chronicle.*



An Israeli protester wearing a mask representing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holds a mock rocket during a demonstration on November 11, 2020. ● JACK GUEZ/AFP

# Iranian hopefuls looking to end medal drought in Paris

## Sports Desk

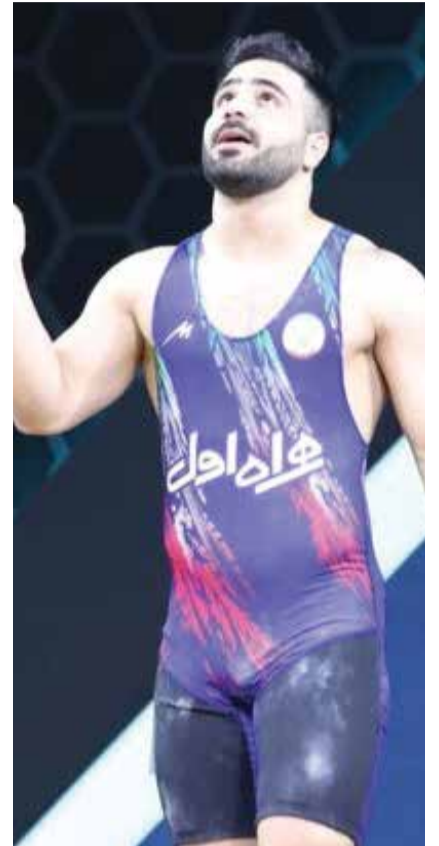
Iranian athletes will be hoping to end the country's wait for a first medal in the Paris Olympics when they get their campaigns underway in the coming days.

The Iranian saber team came within inches of a historic medal in the fencing event on Wednesday, only to suffer a gut-wrenching, last-ditch defeat against Hungary in the semifinals before a loss to the host in the bronze-medal contest.

Meanwhile, the final outcome was nothing more than expected in the rowing, archery, shooting, swimming, and table tennis competitions for the Iranian participants, who were only hoping to improve their individual records and results rather than eyeing a podium finish.

However, with the wrestling, weightlifting, and taekwondo events – the most productive sports for Iran in the history of the Games – coming in the second week of action, several Iranians will be chasing the coveted prizes in the French capital, not to mention Reza Alipour will fancy his chances in the Tuesday's speed-climbing contest.

The gold hunt will begin in Grand Palais Éphémère on Monday, as world superheavyweight champion Amin Mirzazadeh will be among the favorite two – alongside Cuban great Mijaín López – to walk away with ultimate prize of the Greco-Roman 130kg contests in the wrestling competitions.



L-R: Amirhossein Zare' and Hassan Yazdani (wrestling) as well as Nahid Kiani (taekwondo) and Mirmostafa Javadi (weightlifting) will be in action in the second week of the Paris Olympics.

Mahdi Mohsennejad (60kg) will also be in action on Monday, with Amin Kavianejad (77kg), and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) – a bronze winner in Tokyo Olympics – stepping onto the mat a day later, before Saied Esmaeili and Alireza Mohmadi begin their campaigns in the 67kg and 87kg classes respectively a day later. In taekwondo, Nahid Kiani – a gold medalist in last year's

World Championships – will be looking to become only the second Iranian girl to claim an Olympic medal – following Rio 2016 bronze medalist Kimia Alizadeh – in Thursday's -57kg event, while Mobina Ne'matzadeh (women's -49kg), Mehran Barkhrodari (men's -80kg), and Arian Salimi (men's 80kg) will also have their shot at Olympic glory. Thursday's freestyle wrestling

contests will be highly anticipated for Iranian fans, as Hassan Yazdani will kick off his quest to overtake taekwondo great Hadi Saei as the most-decorated Iranian in Olympic history by adding the 86kg crown to his previous gold and silver medals. Amirhossein Zare' – a winner of double world golds following his bronze-winning run in Tokyo Games – will be the ulti-

mate favorite to win the 125kg gold after a dominant display in last year's world event in Belgrade, during which outmuscled familiar foes Taha Akgül and Geno Petriashvili. Younes Emami (74kg), former world champion Rahman Amouzad (65kg), and Amir-Ali Azarpira (97kg) will be the other three Iranians in the freestyle wrestling. Iran will only be represented

by two weightlifters in Paris, though both will be among the medal contenders in their respective weight classes. Mirmostafa Javadi will step onto the men's 89kg stage as the reigning world champion while Ali Davoudi will be eager to add to his superheavyweight silver in Tokyo, though the +109kg class will likely remain Georgian sensation Lasha Talakhadze's territory.



ICON SPORT

## Persepolis signs Algerian keeper Guendouz

### Sports Desk

Persepolis's long wait for a new goalkeeper came to an end as the Persian Gulf Pro League champion signed Algerian shot stopper Alexis Guendouz on a three-year contract from CR Belouizdad on Thursday for an undisclosed fee. Guendouz, 28, will replace Ira-

nian international Alireza Beiranvand, who parted way with the Tehran Reds after helping the club win a seventh Iranian top-flight title in eight years last season to join Tractor. A former player of Saint-Étienne and Pau FC in France, as well as USM Alger in his country, Guendouz made 33 appearances for Be-

louizdad last term – including 22 in Algeria's Ligue Professionnelle 1 – keeping 22 clean sheets, while conceding 19 goals, as his team finished runner-up in the league table and won the Algerian Cup. Capped on five occasions for the national team, Guendouz was Algeria's No. 1 in the run to the final showpiece of the African

Nations Championship last year, which finished in a shootout heartbreak against Senegal. The Algerian is the fourth summer signing for the Reds' new Spanish head coach Juan Carlos Garrido, following Ali Alipour, Farshad Ahmadzadeh, and Moroccan fullback Ayoub El Am-loud.



### Paris Olympics:

## Biles head and shoulders above rivals after clinching all-around gold

**REUTERS** – If anyone needed any confirmation about Simone Biles' standing in gymnastics, the sparkling GOAT necklace she slipped on and ecstatically showed off to a TV camera after she sealed the all-around title at the Paris Olympics on Thursday verified her status as the greatest of all-time.

The world's most decorated gymnast clinched her sixth Olympic gold medal in front of a delirious crowd at Bercy Arena after she left all her challengers in her shade, completing a triumphant comeback three years after withdrawing from the same final at the Tokyo Games.

Aged 27, Biles edged past Brazil's Rebeca Andrade by 1.199 points to become the oldest athlete since 1952 to win the most coveted individual title in women's gymnastics.

"My GOAT necklace is kind of an ode ... it is crazy that I am in the conversation of greatest of all athletes because I still

just think that I'm Simone Biles from Spring, Texas who loves to flip," said the American who owns a jaw-dropping 39 world and Olympic medals.

### Shooting

Switzerland's Chiara Leone ensured Olympic gold in the women's 50-metre rifle three positions remained in her country's possession after triumphing in a rollercoaster final at the Paris Games on Friday.

The top five in the eight-strong field frequently exchanged places heading into the elimination round where the 26-year-old prevailed with an Olympic record tally of 464.4.

Sagen Maddalena (463) of the United States won the silver while Chinese world champion Zhang Qiongyue took bronze.

### Diving

China's Wang Zongyuan and Long Daoyi retained China's men's syn-

chronised 3-metre springboard title at the Paris Olympics on Friday, claiming the country's fourth gold in the sport and keeping alive their goal of taking all eight on offer.

Mexico's Juan Celaya and Osmar Olivera took silver and Anthony Harding and Jack Laughler from Britain won the bronze.

### Rowing

Croatia's Valent Sinkovic celebrated his 36th birthday in style by coming from behind to win a sensational gold in the men's pair together with his brother Martin on Friday.

In the women's race minutes later, the Netherlands took control from the start, opening up a big lead that they never relinquished and cruised to victory to take gold.

The dominance of Dutch women's pair Ymkje Clevering and Veronique Meester in their race was never threatened as they eased to victory in



American Simone Biles poses with her gold medal after the artistic gymnastics women's all-around final at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 1, 2024. HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

6:58.67, leaving Romania and Austria in a furious battle for second place that came down to the last few metres. The Australians looked like they had it

wrapped up, but the Romanian crew squeezed past them just before the finish line to take the silver medal by just over half a second.

# Funerals held for Haniyeh in Tehran, Doha, elsewhere

## International Desk

Iran and Qatar held separate funeral ceremonies for Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on Thursday and Friday, respectively, after he was assassinated by the Israeli regime in Iran's capital Tehran. Massive crowds took part in funeral processions both in Tehran and Doha.

The Hamas chief was in the Iranian capital to attend Tuesday's swearing-in ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian. Haniyeh and his security guard were killed in an Israeli attack on his residence in northern Tehran early Wednesday.

On Thursday, the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei led funeral prayers for the Hamas politburo chief and his security guard at Tehran University.

In a statement issued the day before, Ayatollah Khamenei warned the Israeli regime of a "harsh response" for the assassination of Haniyeh, saying it is the Islamic Republic's duty to avenge the blood of the Palestinian resistance leader.

"The criminal and terrorist Zionist regime martyred our dearest in our homeland and left us bereaved, but it also prepared the ground for a harsh punishment for itself," the Leader said.

## 'Our duty to react'

Addressing the Thursday cer-

emony, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said the Israeli regime is desperate in the face of resistance fighters, adding that the regime's crimes are rooted in its inability to counter the resistance forces.

Qalibaf said the era of "hit and run" for Israel and its main ally US has come to an end.

"It is our duty to react in the right place and at the right time," he pointed out.

## Last farewell in Doha

Also in Qatar, thousands of people bid farewell to the Hamas leader on Friday.

The people gathered at the Arab country's largest mosque, where Haniyeh's casket, draped in a Palestinian flag, was taken before leaving again for burial in Lusail, north of Doha.

Dozens of foreign dignitaries and representatives from Palestinian groups and factions, including senior Fatah figure Mahmoud al-Aloul also attended the funeral ceremony in Doha.

Iran's Vice-President Mohammad-Reza Aref, heading an Iranian delegation, also took part in the ceremony.

Before leaving for Doha, Aref said that the message of the Iranian people and the Islamic Revolution is solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.



Iranians take part in a mass funeral for slain Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on August 1, 2024.  
© khamenei.ir

## Funerals in other countries

Several other Muslim countries, including Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, and Yemen also held funeral ceremonies for the Hamas leader.

Moreover, the assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran drew condemnation from many countries across the world.

US President Joe Biden said

that the assassination of Hamas leader "doesn't help" the talks over a potential cease-fire in Gaza.

Biden added that he was "very concerned" about rising tensions in the Middle East. "We have the basis for a cease-fire. He [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] should move on it, and they [Hamas] should move on it now."

Meanwhile, airlines are canceling flights to Israel as concerns grow over the possible escalation of conflict in the region after the assassination of Haniyeh.

Over the past few days, Air India, Germany's Lufthansa Group, US carriers United Airlines and Delta Air, and Italy's ITA Airways said they had suspended flights to Tel Aviv.

## UNSC members slam Israel's assassination of Hamas leader

### International Desk

Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) condemned Israel's assassination of Hamas Politburo Chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, while permanent representatives the US, UK, and France raised what they claimed was Iranian support for destabilizing actors in the region. The UNSC convened for an emergency session at the request of Iran on Wednesday evening, hours after Haniyeh was killed in an attack on his residence in the Iranian capital, where he had attended the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian a day earlier.

Chinese ambassador Fu Cong strongly called the incident a "blatant attempt to sabotage peace efforts."

## Violation of Iran's sovereignty

Algeria's envoy Amar Bendjama described Israel's attack as an "act of terror" that violated international law and Iran's sovereignty, pushing the world to "the precipice of catastrophe." "This is not merely an attack on one man. It is a vicious assault on the very foundations of diplomatic relations, the sanctity of state sovereignty and the principles that underpin our global order," Bendjama said.

## Serious blow to cease-fire

Russian representative Dmitry Polyansky repeated his country's condemnation of Hani-



Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in a meeting room.

yeh's assassination, saying that the repercussions of the attack was "dangerous" for the entire region. "This is a serious blow, primarily to mediation negotiations between Hamas and Israel focused on a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip," Polyansky said. He warned that Israel's "heinous practice of targeted assassination of high-profile political and military figures" was bringing the Middle East to the brink of a "region-wide war."

## US, UK defend Israel

During the session, US and UK envoys defended Israel with US envoy Robert Wood saying that Israel had a right to defend itself against "attacks from Lebanon's Hezbollah and other terrorists." Wood called on the high body to consider additional measures against what he termed actions that threaten regional peace and security. He also said that the US had no connection to Haniyeh's assassination.

Wood accused Iran and resistance groups of triggering the risk of regional conflict but noted that a "broader war is neither imminent nor inevitable." British UN Ambassador Barbara

Woodward emphasized that increasing violence was in no one's interest.

"Long-term peace will not be secured by bombs and bullets," Woodward said. She also reaffirmed the UK's unwavering commitment to Israel's security, saying that Israel had the right to self-defense.

## Iran's caution

In his address to the emergency meeting, Iran's Ambassador to the UN Amir-Saeed Irvani warned of attempts by Israel to expand the scope of its aggression against the Gaza Strip to the entire region.

"The warmongering leaders of this rogue regime have shown complete disregard for the basic norms and principles of international law," Irvani stressed.

He stressed that the United States, as a strategic ally of the regime and its main supporter, was also responsible for the Israeli crime.

"This act could not have occurred without the authorization and intelligence support of the US," Irvani said. Reuters, Press TV and Anadolu Agency contributed to this story.

## Iran says will use its legitimate right to punish Israel

### International Desk

Iran said it will definitely use its inherent and legitimate right to punish Israel after the regime assassinated Hamas chief in the Iranian capital on Wednesday. Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani in a phone conversation with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres reiterated Iran's "inherent right" to self-defense and reciprocal action after Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh.

"The Zionist regime's terrorist act of assassinating Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran did not only violate the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the Islamic Republic, but also endangered regional and international peace and stability," Bagheri Kani said on Thursday, a day after Haniyeh was assassinated in the Israeli act of terror. He further referred to Wednesday's meeting of the UN Security Council, during which the United States and European countries prevented the body from denouncing Haniyeh's assassination. The aggressive Israeli action will put regional peace and stability at risk, he warned, calling on the international community to stand up against the regime. Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian, was assassinated along with his bodyguard, in an Israeli attack on his residence in northern Tehran early on Wednesday. The terrorist act came hours after Israel assassinated Fuad Shukur, a

senior commander of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, in Beirut.

The UN chief, for his part, said that he had condemned the two attacks by the Israeli regime in Beirut and Tehran in a statement. Meanwhile, he acknowledged that under international law, Iran has the right to legitimate self-defense in response to violations of its national security and territorial integrity.

Additionally, Bagheri Kani talked over the phone with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Friday. Bagheri Kani emphasized that Iran will definitely use its legitimate right to punish the Israeli regime.

Bagheri Kani also held separate talks with Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf. During the conversation, he said Iran will "decisively and effectively" punish Israel for crossing the Islamic Republic's red line.

In a separate phone call with Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Bagheri Kani vowed that Iran would undoubtedly bring the "notorious and criminal" Israeli regime to justice.

"The Zionists have caused bloodshed in Gaza in the past 10 months and now they have expanded the scope of their crimes to Beirut, Tehran, and Yemen," he said, warning that, "if the terrorist criminals are not stopped, they will seriously endanger regional and international peace and security." Safadi, for his part, condemned the Israeli crime as a violation of Iran's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

## Nasrallah: Response to Israel's killing of Hezbollah commander 'inevitable'

Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah warned that the group was bound to respond to Israel's assassination of its top military commander, saying his death and that of the Hamas leader "crossed" red lines.

In a speech broadcast at the funeral of Shukur on Thursday, Nasrallah said "the enemy, and those who are behind the enemy, must await our inevitable response."

He said that fighting has entered "a new phase" after Israel's assassination of Fuad Shukur and Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh.

The Hezbollah chief said Israel has "crossed red lines" in the assassinations and that it must expect "rage and revenge on all the fronts supporting Gaza."

A number of countries had asked Hezbollah to retaliate in an "acceptable" way or not at all. But he said it would be "impossible" for the group not to respond, he added.

"There is no discussion on this point. The only things lying between us and you are the days, the nights and the battlefield," Nasrallah added in an address to Israel.

"I'm not saying we reserve the right to respond at the appropriate time and place," said Nasrallah. "Absolutely not. We will respond. That's final."

Nasrallah reiterated that Hezbollah was not behind the Saturday rocket attack on the Druze town of Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights in which 12 children were killed.

He said Hezbollah would have admitted if it had made a mistake and killed civilians, and suggested it could have been an Israeli interceptor that hit Majdal Shams.

Israel, he said, deliberately carried out the rocket attack in order to make up an excuse for the assassination of resistance commanders. "The motive behind the Majdal al-Shams rocket strike was to pit the Druze community in the occupied Golan Heights against local Shia Muslims. Hezbollah would have acknowledged responsibility had it committed a mistake that led to the death of civilians," Nasrallah said.

Nasrallah stated that Israeli authorities rushed to pin the blame for the Majdal Shams attack on Hezbollah as soon as they found out that the majority of the fatalities were children.

The Hezbollah chief denounces the strike in Beirut that killed Shukur as "an act of aggression and not simply an assassination."

Nasrallah said Hezbollah is "paying the price for its support for Gaza and the Palestinian people" but the movement is now beyond the support phase, declaring an "open battle on all fronts."

The only way to end the war on the Lebanese front is for Israel to stop its "aggression" in Gaza, he added.

He underlined that Israel and its Western sponsors must await a harsh and painful response to the assassinations.

"Our response will certainly come. We are looking for a real and very calculated response. The Axis of Resistance will fight on wisely and courageously," Nasrallah said.

Israel has not commented on Haniyeh's killing but it announced that it had "eliminated" Shukur, describing him as Hezbollah's "most senior military commander" and Nasrallah's "right-hand man".

# 'Iliya, Search of Hero' director calls film 'most anti-Israeli' in children's genre

## Arts & Culture Desk

The director of the Iranian film 'Iliya, Search of Hero' described it as the "most anti-Israeli" film in the children's genre.

The film features four characters from four different parts of the world—Arash from Iran, Habib from Palestine, Jin from China, and Louis from France—whose paths cross in an international incident.

In an interview with IRNA, director Ali Mousavinejad said that he has always been passionate about creating heroes for Iranian children and teens, expressing dismay at their admiration for "false heroes."

The film simulates the conquest of the Fortress of Khaybar by Imam Ali, the first Imam of Shia Muslims, in the form of a video game. It tells the story of a young gamer named Arash, who enters a mysterious online game. Arash's family tries to protect him from the game's dangers, but a greater conspiracy looms.

Mousavinejad explained that the story of the conquest of Khaybar is an epic that can greatly contribute to young audiences' understanding of the character and virtues of Imam Ali. "For years, I wanted to narrate this story in a non-Arab setting in an appealing way for children," he said. The final narrative, which blends live-action and animation techniques, presents the historical event as if the children are listening to a class on early Islamic history.

The director lamented the increasing attacks on religious beliefs in Iran and criticized various institutions for their weak response.

He emphasized that children and adolescents lack the agency to demand their rights and are often overlooked.

On the genre of the film, Mousavinejad clarified that it is primarily an adventure-mystery blend, contrary to assumptions that it falls under fantasy. He asserted that the events and char-



acters in the film are grounded in logic, without any fantastical or superhuman elements.

Regarding the character design, the initial plan was to make the film fully animated. However, after changes to the screenplay, the designs were restarted,

leading to a different artistic direction.

Mousavinejad, himself a parent of two teenagers, shared his interest in video games and noted the significant number of gamers in Iran, estimated at around 40 million by the coun-

try's Computer and Video Games Foundation. He deliberately crafted a narrative world that would appeal to young gamers.

The director also addressed the challenges of producing children's films and animations in Iran, which have led to limita-

tions in this field.

He attributed the lack of consistent and sustained support from institutions as a key factor, along with the reluctance of producers to take on financial risks for such projects, especially those involving animation.

## Iranian short film 'Inadmissible' honored at US festival



The Iranian short film 'Inadmissible,' written and directed by Soroush Yari, has received an Award of Merit at the 8th Artists Forum Festival of Independent Films (VAIFF) in

Chicago. The festival aims to showcase and support emerging and professional talent in the film industry. It offers a cash prize to the best film as selected by a jury of industry profes-

sionals.

'Inadmissible' tells the story of Afghan immigrants in Iran and stars Samir Heyran, Taha Razavi, Ali Hosseini, and Shahrooz Aghaei.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Iranian short film 'Sheep' heads to Brazil

The Iranian short film 'Sheep: Two-legged Animal' continues its global journey and will be screened at the 35th Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival in Brazil.

The film, directed by Mehrdad Kabiri, has been selected to compete in the festival's international competition, Mehr News Agency reported.

'Sheep' tells the story of a student named Amir, who faces humiliation at school due to his circumstances, leading to a transformation within him. The film stars

Maziar Seyedi, Yazdan Kokabi Saba, Shahrooz Aghaeipour, and Mohsen Bani Hashem.

The Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival is one of the most important and largest events in the world, aiming to promote greater exchange between Latin American and international productions.

The festival will take place from August 22 to September 1, showcasing films that contribute to the development of short films in terms of aesthetics, unique forms, and production methods.



## Health officials warn of measles outbreak in Iraq ahead of Arbaeen

### Social Desk

Iranian health authorities warned of a measles outbreak in Iraq and advised pilgrims traveling to the country for the upcoming Arbaeen ceremony to ensure their children under 15 are fully vaccinated against the disease.

Hossein Farshidi, Deputy Health Minister, said measles is a viral disease that primarily affects children, but adults without a history of vaccination or prior infection are also at risk, ISNA wrote. The incubation period for measles ranges from 7 to 21

days, and the disease manifests as fever, respiratory symptoms, and reddish skin rashes that start on the face and spread to the limbs. The disease is contagious through respiratory droplets from four days before to four days after

the appearance of the rash. Emphasizing the high contagiousness of measles, Farshidi stated that timely vaccination is the most effective way to prevent the disease. Unfortunately, he noted that vaccination coverage



in neighboring countries, including Iraq, has been inadequate to control measles, leading to outbreaks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. According to the World Health Organization's data, Iraq has been experiencing a large measles epidemic since last year, with a significant increase in cases in recent months. The number of measles cases in 2023 was 9,651, but it has surged to 28,783 in the first six months of 2024. Farshidi advised Iranians planning to travel to Iraq to ensure their children under 15 are fully vaccinated against measles by visiting health centers with their children's vaccination cards and completing the vaccination if necessary.