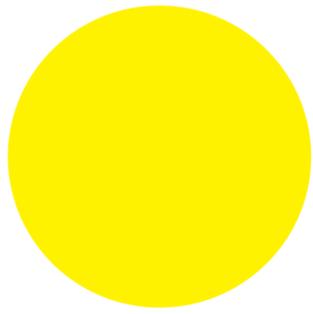


Hezbollah strike bespeaks Israel's loss of deterrence power: **Iran**



Iran Daily

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IranDailyWeb

Iran's export of pistachios up 213% in five months: **IRICA**



Pezeshkian Calls for Global Action to Rein in Israel



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (5th r) holds talks with Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Tehran, Iran on August 26, 2024. president.ir

Israel's economy to fall apart upon escalating tensions with Iran



By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

PERSPECTIVE

Last week, the global rating agency Fitch downgraded Israel's credit score from A plus to A, citing the ongoing economic slowdown in the occupied territories for over a year, which has worsened due to the state of war following Israel's aggression in Gaza since October 7, 2023. In the second week of the same month, Israel announced that it would end this war only after Hamas is completely eradicated. According to defense analysts, although Hamas has not officially disclosed its fighter numbers, they estimate that Hamas and Islamic Jihad have a combined force of around 15,000 combatants. Tel Aviv claims to have killed 60% of Hamas fighters. While Hamas has not released figures on its fighter casualties, independent and credible diplomatic sources believe that 97% of Hamas's military strength remains intact. Despite significant military intervention, Israel has failed to identify and destroy Hamas's underground tunnels. This failure has visibly fueled the anger of Tel Aviv's far-right cabinet, leading to the targeting of families taking refuge in Palestinian schools under the suspicion that Hamas fighters may be hiding there. The targeting of schools by the Israeli military reflects this anger, resulting in the martyrdom of more than a thousand Palestinian children and women.

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Fitch cited the ongoing war in Gaza and geopolitical risks as key factors behind the decline in Israel's economy. The global rating agency also took a negative view of Israel's stance, accusing it of using delaying tactics to avoid a ceasefire agreement with Hamas.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

8m Iranian households enjoy access to fiber optic network



A total of eight million Iranian households have access to fiber optic communication lines, as announced by the deputy of strategy and market development of the Organization of Regulatory and Radio Communications on Monday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the national plan to bring a fiber optic network to homes, businesses, and schools in northwestern province of Ardebil, Mehdi Rouhaninejad also put the progress of the National Project of Fiber Optics at 40 percent, IRNA reported.

"The implementation of fiber optic project in the country started two years ago and according to the plans, the whole country will be covered next [Iranian] year," he noted.

The national fiber optic project is a significant step to promote internet-based businesses across Iran.

"By having access to fiber optic network, businesses can receive internet up to a speed of 1000 megabits per second, as low delay is one of the advantages, and it is also used for online games that will be provided to people at the lowest cost," Rouhaninejad added.

CBI allocates \$28b for imports of basic goods



The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has allocated over \$28 billion of subsidized foreign currency to importers of basic goods during March 20-August 25.

CBI figures showed that some \$28.971 billion has been dedicated to imports of basic goods, medicine, commercial goods and products and imports that have taken place in return for exports of goods or services from Iran, Tasnim News Agency reported.

A sum of \$6.307 billion was supplied for importing medicines and essential goods, and the rest was for trade-commercial products, according to the report. Basic goods and medicine are imported into Iran at a rate of 285,000 rials per US dollar.

Iran's export of pistachios up 213% in five months: **IRICA**

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said the country's export of pistachios in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2024) registered a major growth compared to the same period last year.

IRICA said that \$352 million of pistachios were exported from the country between March 21 and August 22, 2024, showing a 213-percent rise compared to last year's corresponding period, Tasnim News Agency reported. In the five-month period, 36,000 tons of fresh pistachios were exported from the country, indicating a 122 percent growth compared to last year's corresponding period in terms of weight, the report added.

According to the report, Iran exported \$245 million of pistachios with fresh or dry shells and \$103 million of pistachio kernels.



Iran registers 138% rise in exports to EAEU

The head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said that the country's exports of non-oil products to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)'s member states registered a 138 percent growth. Talking about the participation of 300 Iranian companies in Iran-EAEU Business Forum, Mehdi Zeyghami stated that Iran's exports to the EAEU member states indicated a 138-percent growth, Mehr News Agency reported. The deputy industry minister referred to organizing Iran-EAEU Business Forum in the Republic of Armenia on September 30-31 and said

over 300 Iranian companies and also companies from five EAEU member states including Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will take part in this forum. Zeyghami termed the dialogue between Eurasia and Iran as a business event within the framework of 2024 Eurasia Annual Business Conference and added that this prestigious event is organized by the Eurasian Economic Commission in cooperation with the Trade Council of the Eurasian Economic Union and relevant institutions and in collaboration with the Trade Promotion Organization

of Iran. Strengthening and further developing trade-economic cooperation between Iran and member states of the union has been cited as the main aim of organizing the business forum, Zeyghami stressed. Elsewhere in his remarks, the deputy minister of industry said that the implementation of the temporary agreement to set up Free Trade Zone between Iran and UAEU in 2019 doubled the bilateral trade volume in a way that Iran's exports to the member states of the union registered more than 138 percent of growth.

Complex well at Kish Gas Field comes online

Iran's Oil Ministry said local engineers and technicians have finally put into operation a complex gas well in the country's largest independent gas field.

The ministry announced in a report that gas production had started from the seventh well at Phase 1 of Kish Gas Field following a difficult and complicated operation which relied on the technological innovations and expertise of Iranian companies, Press TV wrote. The Kish Gas field is located near the island of Kish in the Iranian territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. Production from Phase 1 of the field is expected to reach some 28.3 million cubic meters per day once all 14 wells in the phase become operational. A contractor said that the seventh well in Kish Gas field was the most com-

plicated of all wells in the field because of its unique geological structure and the pressure in the reservoir.

Abdollah Mehrabi, from the National Iranian Drilling Company, said that launching the well will enable Iran to finally tap its largest independent gas reserve after years of delay in development operations.

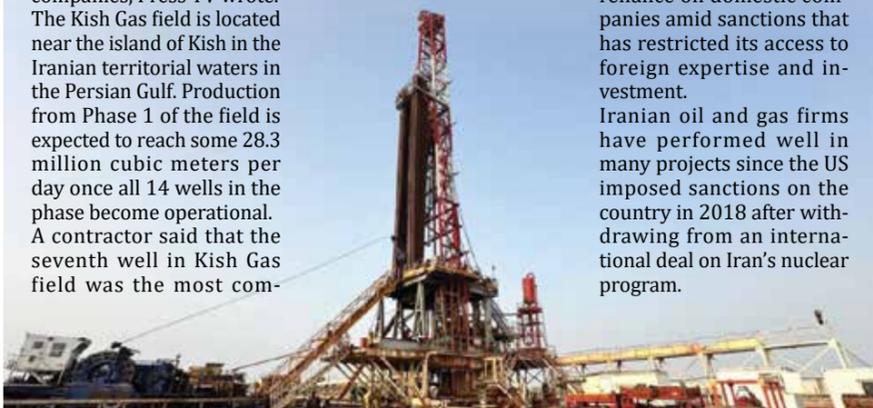
Mehrabi said development works at Kish Gas Field has been awarded to Pars Oil

and Gas Company, a domestic firm which is in charge of some key petroleum projects in the country.

He said other seven wells in the field will become operational soon as contractors build pipelines and installations needed to supply gas from the field to refineries in Asaluyeh on the Persian Gulf coast.

The successful launch of the gas well in Kish is yet another sign of Iran's growing reliance on domestic companies amid sanctions that has restricted its access to foreign expertise and investment.

Iranian oil and gas firms have performed well in many projects since the US imposed sanctions on the country in 2018 after withdrawing from an international deal on Iran's nuclear program.



Cargo handling at Iranian ports hits nearly 95m tons



The Iranian Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said 94,284,476 tons of goods were loaded and unloaded in the country's ports affiliated to PMO in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2024).

More than 10 million tons of oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports between March 21 to August 22, 2024, the PMO added, Tasnim News Agency reported. In addition, more than 21 million tons of non-oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports in the first five months of the current Iranian

calendar year. The PMO added that 32,255,346 tons of oil and non-oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports in this period. In addition, more than 32 million tons of oil goods were loaded at the Iranian ports between March 20 to August 22, 2024. The loading and unloading of goods in the containerized operation sector in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year reached more than 1 million TEU, showing a four-percent growth compared to the same period last year, the PMO noted.

Bountiful fruit heritage of Kerman Province



● baghbazar.com



● IRNA

Iranica Desk

The Hezar Mountain Range in Kerman Province offers stunning landscapes, pleasant weather, a rich diversity of medicinal plants, and a four-season climate that boosts both tourism and the cultivation of various fruit.

This pristine region, with its numerous waterfalls and lush forests, is truly worth visiting.

Kerman Province boasts the largest area under cultivation of fruit crops in the country and is considered the origin of numerous fruits throughout the year. Currently, gardeners in the highlands of Kerman are actively harvesting apples, pears, cherries, and other produce from cooler regions. Meanwhile, in the south and east of the province, freshly ripened dates and figs are being harvested, renowned for their exemplary quality, IRNA wrote.

Many may be surprised to learn that Kerman is also celebrated for its high-quality walnuts and almonds, particularly from the Bardsir, Baft, and Rabor. The province is well-known for its summer fruits, which include cherries, apricots, pears, nectarines, and peaches. However, Kerman is often primarily associated with its unique pistachios, dates, and melons, leading to an oversight of its cooler climate that produces seasonal fruits. This limited recognition may stem from a lack of information, the absence of supplementary processing industries, and other factors.

The cooler climate regions begin less than 10 kilometers from the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Lut Desert, particularly in areas like Sirch, Kuh-

payeh, and other parts of Kerman Province. This extends to various cities in the Hezar Mountain Range, especially in elevated regions, including districts such as Rabor and Orzueeyeh.

The springs in these areas are worth visiting, offering a pleasant summer climate that is not humid, and their beauty rivals that found in the northern parts of the country. In fact, certain locations in Kerman Province, such as Sekonj Village near the city of Mahaan, host cherry festivals that celebrate

local produce.

The regions surrounding the Hezar Mountain Range — from the city of Kerman to the heights of Jiroft, including Sarduiyeh, Delfard, and Jeb-albarez, as well as the districts of Baft and Robar, the Rayin district of Kerman, and areas in Bam like Dehbakhti — enjoy cool weather during the summer, contributing to the production of a variety of seasonal fruits.

Despite Kerman's status as the leading province

in orchard cultivation area, it ranks eighteenth in the country for production volume. The head of the Agricultural Jihad Organization of Kerman Province noted that the province produces 4,469 tons of cherries and 30,300 tons of apricots annually.

In an interview with IRNA, Ali Baqeri mentioned that the area dedicated to cherry cultivation in Kerman is 977 hectares, while apricot cultivation spans 5,167 hectares. He highlighted that most of these products, commonly referred to as *sarbaghi*, are consumed locally.

Baqeri also pointed out that the highest concentration of cherry cultivation is in Bardsir, whereas Rafsanjan and Bam have the lowest production areas. For apricots, the largest area under cultivation is in Baft, while Arzuiyeh has the least production in the province.

Baqeri discussed plans from provincial horticultural management aimed at enhancing productivity and improving both the quantity and quality of cherry and apricot orchards. Key strategies include removing unsuitable and low-yield varieties and replacing them with high-yield varieties. He noted that the average yield for apricot and cherry orchards in Kerman Province is 6.5 tons per hectare, emphasizing that most cherries and apricots are consumed fresh, with no processing facilities currently available for these fruits.

Kerman Province, located in southeastern Iran, is known for its rich history and diverse landscapes. With its unique blend of culture, history, and natural beauty, Kerman Province is a captivating destination for travelers.



● baghbazar.com

Iranica Desk

The Moayedi Icehouse in Kerman is a testament to the art and architecture of desert-dwelling communities, showcasing their adaptation and coexistence with the climate and warm summer ecosystem of the region, according to the deputy head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Kerman Province.

He explained the function of the Moayedi Icehouse, stating: "Icehouses were constructed on the outskirts of desert cities, featuring a large conical well with a channel at the bottom that transferred water from the melting ice into the well. The height of the surrounding walls prevented sunlight from reaching the icebox and its front pools, effectively preserving the cold." He added: The outer steps of the icehouse were used for maintaining and repairing the dome. Every year, a layer of mud and straw had to be applied to the exterior surface of the dome to protect it from rain and sunlight.

Icehouses were generally egg-shaped and had a depth and height of 15 to 20 meters; however, the Moayedi Icehouse has been filled due to a change in the use of its bottom. The height of the dome is designed so that during the summer the heat from sunlight rises, keeping the lower surfaces cool.

He went on to explain: "In front of the tall wall next to the icehouse, there were pools with a depth of 40 to 50 centimeters, connected to a larger pool.

Moayedi Icehouse showcasing engineering innovation in arid landscapes



● neshan.org

During the winter, they would fill the larger pool with water so that the smaller pools could be replenished, allowing the water in the smaller pools to freeze overnight."

The following morning, they would break the ice in the smaller pools and sprinkle them with water again, as smaller ice pieces freeze more effectively. This process would continue for a week. On the seventh morning, they

would move the ice pieces from the outer slope of the icehouse, which extended down to the bottom of the pit, allowing them to accumulate at the bottom.

The use of wheat straw between each layer of ice was a common practice to prevent heat exchange and the formation of large ice blocks for better clarity. After the ice accumulation process, which took between six to seven weeks, they would mud the

northern door and open the southern door in the middle of spring to access the ice.

Today, the Moayedi Icehouse is utilized for educational purposes by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, offering arts and cultural classes, thereby continuing its legacy as a center for community engagement and learning.





US Vice President Kamala Harris gestures happily as she formally accepts the Democratic presidential nomination on Day 4 of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) at the United Center in Chicago on August 22, 2024.
● KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

Message from DNC Democrats do not care about Palestinians



By Mitchell Plitnick
President of ReThinking Foreign Policy

OPINION

The Democratic National Convention did not go well for supporters of Palestinian rights. The one positive to emerge from the DNC was that the first panel ever officially sanctioned by the DNC on the subject of Palestinian rights marked a major step forward politically, and was the result of a powerful grassroots movement to get Palestine mentioned in some official capacity at the Convention. But aside from that small but still significant victory, the Democrats were largely successful in burying their deep complicity in the genocide in Gaza. Protesters outside clashed occasionally with police, and some protesters inside the convention and some associated events caused brief disruptions, but little attention was paid to Gaza on the whole, either from the stage or in the media.

The Democratic National Convention did not go well for supporters of Palestinian rights.

The one positive to emerge from the DNC was that the first panel ever officially sanctioned by the DNC on the subject of Palestinian rights marked a major step forward politically, and was the result of a powerful grassroots movement to get Palestine mentioned in

That doesn't mean the political situation remained stagnant, however, even while Israel was continuing its merciless slaughter, targeting schools and other places of refuge. Unfortunately, the politics have taken an even grimmer turn, leaving little hope that the killing will end anytime soon. Taken together, the recent developments are a recipe for a genocide that will continue for months and ongoing regional escalation.

Gaza cease-fire talks are the new "Peace Process"

Despite the false optimism peddled by Joe Biden and his flunkies, the latest round of cease-fire talks, though ongoing, have already failed. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken collaborated with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to essentially destroy any chance of a cease-fire in the near term. Blinken announced what he termed "bridging proposals," to fill the gaps between Hamas and Israel based on the cease-fire proposal Biden presented at the end of May. Blinken did not address the question of why such proposals were necessary when Biden claimed that the plan he presented back then was actually an Israeli one. After that falsehood became too threadbare, he repeatedly claimed that Israel had accepted it.

Hamas, in fact, had long since stated it would accept the Biden proposal, as endorsed by the United Nations Security Council. Clearly, this was an unexpected turn for Netanyahu, who quickly set about creating new

conditions that Hamas couldn't possibly accept.

On Thursday, an Israeli official told the Times of Israel that Blinken's bridging proposals "meet Israeli security demands," which include continuing the genocide, after a brief pause, until Israel "reaches all of its war aims," and a continued Israeli presence along Gaza's border with Egypt, the so-called Philadelphia Corridor.

One hardly needs a degree in international affairs to recognize that these are not "bridging proposals," but are conditions Hamas couldn't possibly accept. Neither, it should be noted, would anyone else, whether a government or an armed group. Indeed, these conditions have even quietly undermined the triumvirate of the US, Qatar, and Egypt by directly challenging Egypt's stance, backed by two treaties, that Israel may not remain on the southern border. While neither country has loudly objected to the proposal, neither have they backed it. And Egypt has made it clear they will not accept it.

The idea that Israel would remain in the Philadelphia Corridor is an explicit violation of a 2005 agreement governing that strip of land, which forbids Israeli deployment there. Israel has called for scrapping that agreement entirely and revising the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Egypt has categorically refused these requests and warned that continued attempts to implement them could endanger the treaty entirely.

With the latest failure of cease-fire talks, the threat of an attack

on Israel from Iran, Hezbollah, Ansarallah, and the rest of the Axis of Resistance rises again. But the passage of time since the assassination of Hamas' lead negotiator Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran has given the United States the time it needed to re-deploy forces to bolster its naval and air defenses of Israel. This has the potential to render an attack on Israel, which remains highly likely, largely symbolic. But should the Axis decide that is insufficient, it also increases the risk that a more significant attack could spark a regional conflagration that the US could also be drawn into.

Diminishing hope for Harris

The refusal by the Democrats and the Kamala Harris campaign to have a Palestinian-American speaker address the DNC was just the latest misstep by a party that, even when it recognizes its need for progressive, Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian voters, cannot bring itself to confront its own devaluation of Palestinian lives, especially in Gaza.

This wasn't complicated. The Uncommitted Movement and other Palestinians and Palestine advocates in the party just wanted someone to speak to the audience about the suffering in Gaza and the need for a cease-fire. It could easily have been a moderate voice, one which aimed at the hearts of the audience, crafting a speech calling for an end to Israel's slaughter that even the pro-Israel wing of the party couldn't have overtly attacked. Instead, they froze Palestinians

out while giving the space to the parents of an Israeli-American captive, who, while both-sides-ing the conflict (quite understandable given the situation of their son) and very clearly focusing on the Israeli captives, showed more empathy for Palestinians in Gaza in their speech than just about anyone else at the convention. That is a shameful comment on the Democrats, on the Kamala Harris - Tim Walz ticket, and on the party as a whole, including many of its so-called progressive members. The decision to silence Palestinian voices while centering the awful suffering of an American Jewish captive and his family sends a strong message to the Democratic base that the lives of Israeli Jews matter just as much as they should while the lives of Palestinians matter not at all.

There was no political necessity for this. AIPAC and donors might have been unhappy about a Palestinian speaker, but they wouldn't have just dumped Democrats because there was concern expressed for civilians in Gaza. And that wasn't the only concerning signal from Harris at the DNC.

Haile Sofer, the CEO of the Jewish Democratic Council of America and Harris' former national security adviser, declared with confidence that Harris will never halt or condi-

tion military aid to Israel. She made the statement at an event sponsored by the American Jewish Committee on the sidelines of the DNC.

Sofer is a significant figure in both the Democratic Party and the Jewish community, and she does not have a reputation for making policy statements without any basis in fact. Her proximity to Harris lends this statement a good deal of credibility, even though she was not specifically speaking on Harris' behalf but merely giving her own estimation of Harris' views. She knows those views well since she helped shape them.

Somewhat less credible, but still very concerning, was Illinois Rep. Brad Schneider who told the same audience that Ilan Goldenberg, who was hired just last week by Harris as her liaison to the US Jewish community, told him that Harris will not try to re-enter the JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal.

Schneider is a somewhat less reliable source. He is more given to bombastic statements, misunderstandings, and poor judgment than Sofer. He also has a reputation here in Washington for not always thinking much before he speaks. Moreover, the statement itself is widely open to interpretation, both in terms of what Goldenberg might have meant (he may well have been merely trying to assuage fanatical pro-

rael concerns over his own stance on Iran, for example) and in terms of how Schneider himself is reading it. In other words, it's a bit concerning, but it's far from certain that this reflects Harris' actual thinking on policy.

The trouble is, Harris isn't giving us any reason to hold out hope for a better Middle East policy than her current boss has. All the early signals are negative. The much-touted "empathetic tone" that Harris has tried to adopt is not only wearing thin and fading as time goes on, but it also reflects little more than a greater ability than Joe Biden has shown to deceive the American public with sweet-sounding words that thinly veil a genocidal policy in Palestine, a militaristic approach to Iran and the broader region, and pure indulgence of our criminal and brutal allies like Israel.

It is disappointing and dangerous that, in the face of progressives, Palestinians, Muslims, Arabs, and a whole lot of anti-genocide Jews and allies almost begging the Democrats to stop taking their votes for granted and just give them some reason to vote for Harris rather than just voting against Donald Trump, Kamala Harris is failing to get over even that remarkably low bar.

The article first appeared on Mondoweiss.



US Secretary of State Blinken (L) meets with Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Tel Aviv on August 19, 2024, announcing that Israel has agreed to a "bridging proposal" put forward by the US.
● KEVIN MOHATT/POOL

Kamala & Gaza

All words, no deeds make divided party



By James Carden
Former adviser to
US-Russia Bilateral
Presidential Commission

OPINION

This week's protests, which saw thousands of antiwar demonstrators take to the streets (lined with scores of Chicago police) in and around the United Center, pose a critical question to the Harris/Walz ticket: Can they bridge the yawning gulf that divides the street and the establishment on the matter of Israel's war on Palestine?

The answer is, probably not.

On Thursday night during her own showcase speech in which she formally accepted her party's nomination, Harris appeared full-throated in favor of ending the war in Gaza. But are words more important than deeds and were the few words issued on the subject this week persuasive to Democrats who want to actually see an end to the war, and at the very least, the American contribution to it?

Up until Thursday night, Vermont's serial-presidential-also-ran Senator Bernie Sanders was the only other progressive on the DNC stage to give this issue some of the attention protesters believed it deserved (though he didn't go so far as to call for an arms embargo). Earlier in the week, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) threw out one line about Harris "working tirelessly to secure a cease-fire in Gaza" and bringing the captives home, and was quickly admonished for it, even by her own squad members. "Working tirelessly for a cease-fire is really not a thing, and they should be ashamed of themselves," charged Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.).

As antiwar activist and author Norman Solomon has noted, Harris "has toed President Biden's war line, while at times voicing sympathy for the victims of the Gaza war that's made possible by policies that she supports. Her words of compassion have yet to translate into opposing the pipeline of weapons and ammunition to the Israeli military as it keeps slaughtering Palestinian civilians."

Despite their best efforts, the protestors didn't get much traction this week. For proof of this, look no further than the fact that they couldn't even get a Palestinian-American speaker on stage because, as the Washington Post reported, "many Democratic leaders were concerned that such a speech from the podium would threaten the unity that has



been on vivid display at the convention."

Then there's the DNC platform, which recognizes America's "ironclad" commitment to Israel. The Harris/Walz ticket, reads the platform, is dedicated "to Israel's security, its qualitative military edge, its right to defend itself."

A press conference outside the DNC Wednesday morning featuring Reps. Omar, Cori Bush (D-Mo.), and two rather heroic members of Doctors Without Borders, who witnessed firsthand the horror in Gaza, was sparsely attended. Generally speaking, the mood among the antiwar activists out-

side the United Center was resigned.

Irene, who traveled from Long Island, New York, with Jewish Voices for Peace, told Responsible Statecraft (she did not want to use her last name) that in her view they had to do everything in their power to end the war but Biden was making it impossible given the billions in American money and weapons flowing to Israel today. "So, am I optimistic? I'm not optimistic. But silence is complicity." Despite the smears directed at them (guests on Fox News openly call demonstrators terrorists, Hamas sympathizers, and extremists) they are

not giving up. And why should they? Their position is a popular one. A recent CBS News/YouGov poll in June showed 61 percent of Americans oppose sending "weapons and supplies to Israel". Asked about the accusation made last month by Avril Haines, the Director of National Intelligence, that Iran is encouraging the protests, a union organizer from Chicago responded thusly to RS: "The drone strike pioneer Avril Haines? She's speaking out against protestors calling for an end to the slaughter of innocent civilians? At least she's consistent." Ann, another member of Jew-



Members of the Hawaii delegation hold signs with the names of people killed in Gaza during the roll call of states on Day 2 of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois, on August 20, 2024.

● REUTERS

ish Voices for Peace, told RS that Harris's argument to the antiwar faction of the party that basically "it's me or Donald Trump" isn't going to fly. "I think it's a false argument and it's intentional and it's used to instill fear and uncertainty and to make progressives and people with a conscience to feel bad that we are going to put Trump in office," she said.

The contrast with the mood among the delegates couldn't be more stark. The Democrats in the convention hall this week were ebullient. At a DNC event Tuesday night, one came away with the impression that the election had already been won. Among the rank and file, Gaza is a mere afterthought. They might cheer on the idea of "cease-fire" as applause lines, and even support the policy, but are quick to move on and certainly did not have patience for chanting or theater outside or inside.

The attitude, expressed to RS by numerous delegates over the course of the week is: win first, sort out the details later. But meantime, the carnage in Gaza continues.

The full article first appeared on Responsible Statecraft.



Then there's the DNC platform, which recognizes America's "ironclad" commitment to Israel. The Harris/Walz ticket, reads the platform, is dedicated "to Israel's security, its qualitative military edge, its right to defend itself."

Democrats tuned out Gaza protests at DNC

History won't forget



By Mike Ludwig
Reporter

PERSPECTIVE

As Vice President Kamala Harris officially received the presidential nomination Thursday evening, thousands of people marched within sight of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) demanding an embargo on US arms shipments to Israel and an end to the war on Gaza.

Democrats wanted the protests — and any conversation about Palestine in general — kept on the sidelines of their convention as much as possible. But history will remember that the streets of Chicago were full of people demanding an end to genocide and occupation in Palestine as Harris took the stage.

Led in part by Palestinian and Jewish activists, the march was a mixture of joy, anger, grief, and frustration that capped off a week of protests across downtown Chicago. Despite handwringing about security, the protests remained largely peaceful as an estimated 30,000 demonstrators took the streets over the course of the week.

Like previous protests, Thursday's mass march was surrounded by hundreds of police on foot and bicycle at all times. Demonstrators from across the country declared

Harris and President Joe Biden complicit with genocide in Gaza, where Israel's 10-month siege and assault has killed at least 40,000 people and left two-thirds of the enclave's buildings damaged or destroyed.

Some protesters were seasoned activists from the various movements that have found lines of solidarity with Palestine, including anti-war veterans, climate justice activists, and labor organizers. Others were simply horrified by the tremendous suffering in Gaza — and the Democratic Party's si-

lence on the issue after continuously arming Israel with weapons despite allegations of war crimes and forced starvation on the international stage.

"Our votes are no longer free or a given just for the sake that we are Democrats," said Inan, a Palestinian woman from the Chicago area marching with fellow feminists and antiwar activists. "[Harris] has to earn our votes by ending genocide today, tonight."

The full article first appeared on Truthout.



Pro-Palestinian protesters march during a demonstration near the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on August 22, 2024.

● ALEX BRANDON/AP



Protesters clash with the police during a protest in support of Palestinians near the Israeli consulate, as the Democratic National Convention is held in Chicago, on August 20, 2024.

● EDUARDO MUNOZ/REUTERS

Iran U21 dominates Asian Karate Championships



Sports Desk

Iranian under-21 karatekas dominated the Asian Championships in Manila, Philippines, notching up a remarkable 11 medals, including six golds. The medal haul saw Iran top the age-group table, with Kazakhstan in second, thanks to double golds and a silver, while Japan bagged a gold and two bronzes for the third place. Having claimed the runner-up spot in the cadet and junior categories, Iran finished second to Japan in the overall standings with a total 10 golds, four silvers, and nine bronze medals. On Sunday, Iranian boys stole the show in the un-

der-21 kumite contests as Mohammad-Hossein Shirsefat (-55kg), Hossein Alinejad (-60kg), Amir-Reza Borzooei (-67kg), and Mohammad-Erfan Askaripour (-75kg) walked away with the ultimate prize in their respective weight classes. Ali Tavakkoli's bronze in the men's +84kg contests rounded off Iran's medal-laden campaign across the three age groups in the Filipino capital. There was further under-21 glory for the country in the women's draw. Fatemeh Zahra Saied-Abadi outpowered Tien Hsin-erh of the Chinese Taipei 9-0 in the -55kg final, while Hannaneh Salehi defeated Kazakhstan's

Assylay Savidova 6-2 for the +68kg gold. Yalda Naghi-Beiranvand, meanwhile, had to settle for the -50kg silver after a loss to Japanese Mizuki Ishihara. Elsewhere on the final day, Iranian girls Melika Ezzati (kata), Mehrnegar Ahmadi (-61kg), Fatemeh Bodagh (-68kg) finished their campaigns with three bronze medals. Despite a below-par run in the under-21 contests, Japan still managed to finish atop the table with 16 golds, one bronze, and eight bronzes, with Kazakhstan following Iran courtesy of four golds and bronzes apiece, as well as six silver medals.

Wrestling U17 World Championships:

Iran wins three final-day medals but misses out on FS team crown

Sports Desk

The final day of the U17 World Championships saw Iranian wrestlers collect three more medals though it still was not enough for the country to defend its freestyle title Amman, Jordan. Team USA was crowned the champion – a second freestyle trophy for the Americans in three years – with 152 points, 20 clear of second-place Iran, with Kyrgyzstan in third on 104 points. Abolfazl Shamsipour bagged a second freestyle gold for Iran, courtesy of a victory against

Germany's Manuel Wagen in the 71kg final.

There was little to separate the two wrestlers as the showdown was decided when Shamsipour was awarded a point for the German's passivity in the second period, giving the Iranian a 1-1 criteria lead and the scoreline remained unchanged until the end.

Earlier in the day, Iranian Amirabbas Ramezani had to settle for a silver medal in the 45kg contests after he relinquished a five-point lead to suffer a 9-5 loss to

American Samuel Sanchez in the final.

Amirreza Alipour grabbed a sixth freestyle medal for Iran in the Jordanian capital, outmuscling Canadian Michaeljeet Singh Grewal for the 92kg bronze.

Sunday's results came after Reza Afshar had grabbed the 80kg gold on the preceding night, thanks to a 1-1 win against Georgian Nikoloz Maisuradze, while Amirabbas Alizadeh took the silver in the 48kg event following a technical-superiority defeat against Ulugbek Rashidov of Uzbekistan.

Abolfazl Mohammadnejad, meanwhile, finished his campaign with a consolation bronze in the 110kg class when he defeated India's Singh Jaspooran 2-1.

Earlier in the competitions, the Iranian Greco-Roman squad had lifted a third successive team trophy with three golds and bronzes apiece across 10 weight classes.

Armin Shamsipour dominated the 48kg contests, outscoring his opponents 37-1 in four bouts – including a 10-1 triumph over Uzbekistan's Khusnidin Abdulkarimov in the final. Amir-Mahdi Saeidinava clinched a second Greco-Roman gold for Iran, beating Ukrainian Vladyslav Pokotylo 6-2 in the 65kg showdown, while Danial Izadi defeated German Ole Ayke Sterning 4-0 for the 92kg title.

Abolfazl Karami (51kg), Emadreza Mohsennejad (80kg), and Ali-Asghar Dadbakhsh were the Iranian bronze medalist in the Greco-Roman competitions.



Abolfazl Shamsipour celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the freestyle 71kg gold at the Wrestling U17 World Championships in Amman, Jordan, on Aug. 25, 2024. **UWW**



Khatoon Bam off to flyer in AWCL preliminary stage

Sports Desk

Iran's Khatoon Bam got off to a winning start in the preliminary stage of the AFC Women's Champions League, defeating Bhutanese host Royal Thimphu College FC 2-1 in Thimphu on Sunday. The 10-time Iranian champion started on the front foot at the Changlimithang Stadium and was unlucky to see Mona Hamoudi's rasping drive from outside the box bounce off the woodwork in the 14th minute.

The home side took the lead against the run of play in the 27th minute as Ritu Porna Chakma's goal-bound effort from 30 yards out went in off goalkeeper Mahdiyeh Molaei's hands.

Hamoudi drew the visitors level seven minutes later when her sublime side-footed volley on Samaneh Chahkandi's cross found the back of the net.

Molaei made up for her first-half blunder eight minutes after the break as she produced

a brilliant save to deny Monika Chakma from close range. A final twist to the game came in the 75th minute, with influential Zahra Ghanbari floating a free-kick into the box before Shahnaz Ja'fari nodded home the winner.

Sitting atop the three-team table, Khatoon will have the opportunity to see Kitchee FC in action against the host on Wednesday ahead of Saturday's showdown with the Hong Kong league champion. The winner of the group will

join Melbourne City, Filipino club Kaya, and Thailand's College of Asian Scholars in Group B of the inaugural Asian elite clubs' competition – set to be staged in a single round-robin format in Thailand in October.

Khatoon Bam players celebrate their winner in a 2-1 victory over Royal Thimphu College in the preliminary stage of the AFC Women's Champions League in Thimphu, Bhutan, on Aug. 25, 2024. **AFC**

Duplantis breaks own pole vault world record at Silesia Diamond League

REUTERS – Sweden's Mondo Duplantis broke his own pole vault world record when he cleared 6.26 metres at the second attempt at the Silesia Diamond League meeting on Sunday. Duplantis broke the world record for the 10th time, beating the 6.25 metres he cleared after retaining his Olympic gold medal in Paris earlier this month. In Poland, he raised the bar to 6.26, having already clinched victory at 6.00 metres. The 24-year-old had brought the Stade de France crowd to their feet at the Paris Olympics when he broke the world record for a ninth time, and there was always the feeling that Duplantis

was not done yet. "This year I focused on the Olympics, the record just came naturally because I was in good shape," Duplantis said. "So I am not surprised with the record today but I am thankful." On Wednesday, Duplantis cleared 6.15 to win in Lausanne but at the Silesia Stadium in Chorzow he had the bar raised to the world-record height and the Polish crowd waited with bated breath. His first effort was a poor one, perhaps lowering expectations, but then the Swede soared over to huge cheers from the spectators before racing to the track and fall-

ing to the ground. "It almost feels weird and unnatural to get so much love and support from the crowds when I compete. I see that especially in Poland," Duplantis said. "The energy in this stadium just keeps getting better every year. My first world record also came in Poland, indoors in Torun (in 2020), so I have great memories from here." The crowd had already witnessed Norwegian Jakob Ingebrigtsen shatter the long-standing 3,000 metres world record with a time of seven minutes 17.55 seconds to beat the record set by Kenya's Daniel Komen in 1996 when he ran 7:20.67.



Armand Duplantis breaks the pole vault world record by clearing 6.26m in Chorzow, Poland, on Aug. 25, 2024. **ALEKSANDRA SZMIGIEL/REUTERS**

Pezeshkian calls for global action to rein in Israel

International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian called for a joint action by all countries to rein in the Israeli regime and stop its crimes and genocide in the Gaza Strip.

The Iranian president made the remarks during a meeting with visiting Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, whose country alongside Egypt and the United States have been mediating a cease-fire agreement in recent weeks to put an end to months of Israel's brutal onslaught on Gaza. Pezeshkian expressed hope that all other countries that adhere to the international law would stand together to force the supporters of Israel to contain the regime and stop its crimes in Gaza. Appreciating Qatar's efforts to establish a cease-fire in Gaza, Pezeshkian said human rights and all international legal rules are violated in Gaza every hour and minute, but countries claiming to defend human rights are not only staying silent on Israel's atrocities but are supporting the perpetrator.

The Qatari foreign minister said his country would continue its efforts to achieve a cease-fire in



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) shakes hands with Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in a meeting in Tehran on August 26, 2024.
president.ir

the besieged Palestinian territory, stressing that Doha counts on Iran's constructive role in this regard.

More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israeli military action since the beginning

of its devastating war on Gaza in last October. The Palestinian Health Ministry says more than 16,000 of those deaths were children.

Alongside the fatalities, nearly 60% of buildings in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed and

nearly two million Palestinians have been displaced by the Israeli's army and face a grave humanitarian crisis.

Before his meeting with Pezeshkian, the Qatari official also held a separate meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi who

said Iran supports any cease-fire agreement acceptable to Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza. Araghchi added that Iran welcomes Qatar's efforts to swiftly stop Israel's crimes against the "oppressed Palestinian people and to establish cease-fire in Gaza."

Haniyeh assassination

The visit by the Qatar's top diplomat to Iran came as tensions remain high in the region following Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31. Iran has blamed Israel for the assassination and has vowed to punish the regime for the killing of Haniyeh who had traveled to Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the Iranian president.

On Monday, Abbas Araghchi told his Italian counterpart Antonio Tajani that Iran's response to Israel would be "definite, calculated and accurate."

Unlike the Israeli regime, Iran does not seek to increase tensions in the region although it is not afraid of it, Araghchi added. Meanwhile, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said on Monday that the assassination of the Hamas leader cannot be forgotten and revenge for Haniyeh's blood by the Axis of Resistance and Iran is "certain."

General Baqeri underlined that the Islamic Republic and the Axis of Resistance will separately act in this regard.

Hezbollah strike bespeaks Israel's loss of deterrence power: *Iran*

Iran said on Monday that Israel had lost its deterrence power and that the strategic balance in the region had shifted against it, following attacks by the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah.

Hezbollah launched hundreds of rockets and drones at Israel early on Sunday in response to the regime's assassination of Fuad Shukur, a senior Hezbollah commander, in southern Beirut last month.

Israel's military also said it had struck Lebanon with around 100 jets to thwart a larger attack, in one of the biggest clashes in more than 10 months of

border warfare.

"Despite unbridled support from its sympathizers like the United States, Israel could not predict the time and place of a limited and managed response by the resistance. Israel has lost its deterrence power," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani wrote on X. Kanaani said Israel "now has to defend itself within its occupied territories," and that "strategic balances have undergone fundamental changes" to the detriment of Israel.

"The passage of time is not in favor of the Zionist regime and its supporters," the Iranian spokes-

man warned.

Kanaani said Israel may be able to distort or conceal certain realities regarding Hezbollah's retaliatory attacks "but it knows well that the existing facts will not be changed." Israel has reportedly banned coverage of the damage inflicted by Hezbollah strikes. The Telegraph, quoting sources, reported that the Israeli regime issued a censorship decree, requiring reporters to obtain permission before publishing "damage caused by rocket attacks to strategic infrastructure or to military bases" to avoid "harm to Israeli forces on the ground."

Dozens killed in armed attacks in SW Pakistan



Gunmen in southwestern Pakistan killed at least 38 people in three separate attacks on Monday, officials said, while the military said security forces killed 21 insurgents, marking one of the deadliest days of violence in the restive Baluchistan Province, with reports of other shootings and destruction in

the area as well. Twenty-three people were fatally shot overnight after being taken from buses, vehicles and trucks in Musakhail, a district in Baluchistan, senior police official Ayub Achakzai said. The attackers burned at least 10 vehicles before fleeing, according to AP.

In a separate attack, gunmen killed at least nine people, including four police officers and five passersby, in Baluchistan's Qalat district, authorities said. The bodies of six people were found in Bolan, where insurgents also blew up a railway track. They also attacked a police station in Mastung and attacked and burned vehicles in Gwadar, all districts in Baluchistan. No casualties were reported in those attacks.

The military said 14 security forces were "martyred" while responding to the attacks. Those appeared to be included in the overall death toll.

"Sanitization operations are being conducted and the instigators, perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of these heinous and cowardly acts,

targeting innocent civilians, will be brought to justice," the military said in a statement.

Baluchistan has been the scene of a long-running insurgency in Pakistan, with an array of separatist groups staging attacks, mainly on security forces. The separatists have been demanding independence from the central government in Islamabad. Although Pakistani authorities say they have quelled the insurgency, violence in Baluchistan has persisted.

The attack in Musakhail came hours after the outlawed Baluch Liberation Army separatist group warned people to stay away from highways as they launched attacks on security forces in various parts of the province.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Syria's Assad terms Turkey rapprochement efforts as unsuccessful

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said efforts to mend ties with Turkey had so far brought no tangible results.

"The initiatives did not yield any results worth mentioning despite the seriousness and genuine keenness of mediators," Assad said on Sunday in a speech to the Syrian parliament, referring to recent conciliation efforts by Russia, Iran and Iraq. Turkey severed ties with Syria in 2011 after the outbreak of the foreign-backed war in Syria, in which An-

kara supported rebels, Al Jazeera reported.

"The solution is openness," Assad said. "Restoring a relationship requires first removing the causes that led to its destruction." The Syrian president also made clear that while he wants Turkish troops to withdraw from Syria, that was not a condition for talks.

"It's not correct what was announced by some Turkish officials recently, that Syria said if there is no withdrawal, it will not meet with the

Turks," Assad said. "This talk is far from reality," he added.

In July, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been a fervent supporter of Syrian rebels, said he would extend an invitation to Assad "any time" for possible talks to restore relations.

Assad said later that month that he was open to meeting Erdogan but it depended on the encounter's "content", noting Turkey's presence in Syria was a key sticking point.



Russian artist finds inspiration in Iranian culture



Maria Zenkova, a Russian artist, who was one of 600 artists to take part in the 'Patterns of Friendship' festival, said she was captivated by Iran's rich cultural heritage after seeing paintings of the country's historical sites.

Zenkova noted that many of the artworks on display, including her own, feature traditional Iranian clothing. "After seeing the selected works, I realized that Iran has a rich cultural heritage, which really caught my attention," she said. "I thought to myself, 'Iran must be a fascinating country'."

Her painting of Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi was selected for the festival's final round, IRNA wrote.

Zenkova said she wanted to create a majestic image of Raisi as a tribute to his services. "I used contrasting colors to convey his

grandeur, with a dark background and bright clothing," she explained. Raisi was both a political and spiritual leader in Iran, and Zenkova said she was drawn to his importance in Iranian society.

The festival, which was organized by the Iranian Embassy's cultural counselor, brought together 100 Iranian and 100 Russian artists, as well as 40 works by renowned masters. The exhibition is currently on display at the Moscow Academy of Watercolor and Fine Arts, and will travel to other Russian cities before being sent to Iran for display in Tehran, Isfahan, and Shiraz.

Zenkova's participation in the festival was her first introduction to Iranian culture, but it has sparked a new interest in her. "I was struck by the richness of Iranian culture, and I'm eager to learn more," she said.

Archaeologists uncover 3,000-year-old evidence in NE Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

Archaeologists stumbled upon evidence dating back around 3,000 years in northeastern Iran.

The discovery was made during an excavation program at the Yenge Ghale hills in North Khorasan Province, which has been ravaged by looters and farmers in recent decades, ISNA wrote. The hills, which date back to the Iron Age, were registered as national heritage sites in 2007. The recent excavation program aimed to determine the boundaries and propose a preservation plan for the site.

Reza Naseri, a member of the excavation team and a professor at Zabol University, said the Yenge Ghale hills consist of two large mounds that contain evidence from the first millennium BC. "We found cultural materials and pottery from the first millennium BC at both sites," Naseri said. "Their livelihood was based on agriculture and animal husbandry."



Naseri said that during the excavation, 20 test trenches were dug across the site, showing that it was constructed on nat-

ural ridges on the edge of the Bojnourd plain, and was probably used by nomadic groups as a temporary settlement.

Iranian film 'Maral' makes cut for Tirana Int'l Film Festival



Iranian short film 'Maral' will compete with six other films in the Divergent Minds category of Panorama Competition program of the 22nd Tirana International Film Festival, one of Europe's most prominent cinematic events.

The film, written and directed by Parinaz Mehri and produced by Amir Etminan, tells the story of a 15-year-old girl forced to marry her mentally disabled cousin in the absence of her father. Arben Lami, Jonid Jorgji, Irena Prici, and Jona Hasija will serve on Panorama Competition of the festival's jury. The Tirana International Film Festi-

val, which runs from September 22 to 28, brings together filmmakers, producers, and distributors from around the world to share their passion and knowledge of cinema. The festival, which is recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the European Film Awards, aims to create a friendly space for cinema enthusiasts to come together and celebrate the art of filmmaking.

'Maral' marks Mehri's debut as a writer and director, and its selection for the festival is a significant achievement for the Iranian film industry.

Iranian children with autism, Down syndrome demonstrate musical talents

The second music event for children with autism, Down syndrome, and visual impairments was held at the Tehran Conservatory of Music.

Twenty-five children, including 11 with autism, three with Down syndrome, and four with visual impairments, took part in the competition. What made the event stand out was the participation of children without disabilities, who performed alongside their peers with autism, Down syndrome, and visual impairments, IRNA reported.

The children performed a range of musical pieces, including Chopin's 'La Minor' and Schubert's 'Serenade'.

Ailin Agahi, the event's organizer and judge, said the aim was to "break down" misconceptions about children with autism and Down syndrome. "We want to show that these children are no different from others and can participate in all activities, including music," she said. Agahi added that society needs to change its attitude towards autism and Down syndrome. "We need to look at these conditions in a different way, so that these individuals can succeed more and more every day," she said. Behzad Mo'afi, head of the Tehran Conservatory of Music, expressed his delight at the children's performances.

Israel's economy to ...

Since the deadly retaliatory attacks by Hamas on October 7, the Israeli stock market and currency values have gradually declined and remain unstable. The damage to Israel's IT sector alone is estimated to be around \$45 billion, yet concerns about the national economy persist. Earlier this year, Moody's and S&P also downgraded Israel's credit rating. The consumption of goods, trade, and investment in Israel are all on a downward trend, a significant setback for the Israeli regime, with effects

likely to be felt over the next 10 to 12 years unless Israel recognizes Palestinian rights and fosters a climate of peace.

Fitch has separately warned Israel to reduce the level of escalating tensions with Iran, as additional military expenses could be catastrophic for its already shaky economy. The Bank of Israel has estimated that the daily wartime expenditures for 2023-2025 could reach \$55 billion. These funds will likely be secured through a combination of increased borrowing and budget cuts, which means that

military actions are exerting pressure on the economy. On Sunday, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that the first half of 2024 will see a 2.5% annual growth rate, down from 4.5% during the same period last year. Before the war began, Israel's economy was predicted to grow by 3.5% last year, but it ended up growing by only 2%. Other sectors of the economy have taken a significant hit. In the last quarter of last year and in the weeks following the start of the war, Israel's overall GDP declined by 20.7% on an

annual basis. This downturn was due to a 27% decrease in private consumption, a drop in exports, and reduced business investments. At the beginning of the year, household expenses dropped by nearly 50%, as Israeli citizens curtailed their spending to cope with future uncertainties, resulting in reduced industrial production. The war has also led to a massive increase in public expenditure. According to Elliot Garstide, a Middle East analyst at Oxford Economics, military spending in the last three

months of 2023 rose by 93% compared to the same period in 2022. Garstide further noted that monthly figures for 2024 indicate that military spending has nearly doubled compared to the previous year. Most of this increase will be allocated to reservist wages, artillery, and interceptors for Israel's Iron Dome defense system. Israel has also received approximately \$14.5 billion in additional funding from the United States this year, exceeding the \$3 billion annual aid typically provided by the US. According to Garst-

ide's study, there have not yet been significant cuts in other budget areas, such as health care and education, although it is likely that increased conflict will lead to cuts in these areas as well. Oxford Economics has estimated that if a new front with Iran does not open, Israel's economy will grow by 1.5% this year. However, due to slow growth and high deficits, further pressure will be placed on Israel's debt profile, potentially leading to increased borrowing costs and reduced investor confidence.