

Lebanon's deadly blasts 'disgrace' for West: *Pezeshkian*



and its supporters against the oppressed people of Palestine and the Muslim world.

Israel has claimed the lives of more than 41,000 Palestinians in Gaza since October 7, 2023 when Hamas-led Palestinian resistance groups launched an operation on Israel's positions inside the occupied territories.

Since then, Hezbollah has exchanged fire with the Israeli military on a daily basis to support the Palestinian fighters in Gaza. More than 600 people in Lebanon have been killed since the start of the clashes last October.

The explosions on Tuesday also drew reactions from many other countries and international bodies.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday warned against the risk of escalation in the Middle East after the detonation of pagers.

Blinken said the United States was still gathering facts but it was in no one's interest for the conflict to spread.

'Hybrid war against Lebanon'

Russia's Foreign Ministry said the attack was an act of hybrid war against Lebanon in which it said thousands of innocent people had been hurt.

"It appears that the organizers of this high-tech attack deliberately sought to foment a large-scale armed confrontation in order to provoke a major war in the Middle East," Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, said in a statement.

The European Union's foreign policy chief on Wednesday condemned the explosions of pagers, saying, "Even if the attacks seem to have been targeted, they had heavy, indiscriminate collateral damages among civilians, including children among the victims."

"I consider this situation extremely worrying. I can only condemn these attacks that endanger the security and stability of Lebanon, and increase the risk of escalation in the region," Josep Borrell said.

Borrell added that the "European Union calls on all stakeholders to avert an all-out war, which would have heavy consequences for the entire region and beyond."

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk in a statement described the blasts as "shocking," and said their impact on civilians was "unacceptable."

Those responsible for the deadly explosions "must be held to account," the UN rights chief said.

US views diplomacy as best way to resolve issues on Iran nuclear program



International Desk

The White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the United States views diplomacy as the best way to achieve an effective long-term solution to Iran's nuclear program and that Washington has been "pretty consistent" about the matter in the past three and a half years.

Jean-Pierre made the comments after Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday Iran could hold direct talks with the United States if Washington demonstrates "in practice" that it is not hostile to the Islamic Republic.

Pezeshkian was responding to a question at a news conference in Tehran on whether Tehran would be open to direct talks with the US to revive a 2015 nuclear deal.

"We are not hostile towards the US, they should end their hostility towards us by showing their goodwill in practice," said Pezeshkian, adding: "We are brothers with the Americans as well."

The US under former president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018 and reimposed sanctions against Iran.

After taking office in January 2021, US President Joe Biden tried to negotiate a revival of the nuclear pact under which Iran had restricted its nuclear program in return for relief from US, European Union and UN sanctions.

However, efforts to revive the deal have not yielded so far.

International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian reacted to the Lebanon's deadly blasts blamed on Israel, calling it a disgrace for the Western countries who spare no effort to achieve their "inhumane goals."

Nine people were killed and over 300 wounded Wednesday when walkie-talkies exploded across Lebanon, the government said, a day after pagers used by Hezbollah resistance group blew up, killing 12 and wounding up to 2,800.

"The new wave of walkie-talkie explosions... killed

nine people and wounded more than 300," the health ministry said in a statement.

Simultaneous explosions of wireless telecommunication devices on Tuesday have killed a dozen people, including two children, and wounded some 3,000 others across Lebanon. Iran's ambassador to Lebanon was also among the wounded. Several people were also wounded in neighboring Syria.

Hezbollah and the Lebanese government have accused Israel of responsibility for explosions. Israel has so far declined to comment on

the gory incident. Hezbollah has vowed to punish Israel. "The incident once again showed that although the Western countries and the Americans claim that they are looking for a cease-fire (in Gaza), in practice they fully support the crimes, killings and blind assassinations of the Zionist regime," Pezeshkian said during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

Collapse of humanity

"Using devices, made for welfare of human beings, as a tool for assassination and annihilation" of those who do not hold the same



A partly damaged car is seen after what is believed to be the result of a walkie-talkie exploding inside it, in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, on September 18, 2024.

● MOHAMMED ZAATARI/AP

views of the US, Israel and the West is "an indication of the collapse of humanity as well as domination of savagery and barbarism," the website of the president quoted him as saying.

He called unity among Islamic countries as the best way to stop the crimes committed by the Israeli regime

Pashinyan: Armenia ready to give passage to Azerbaijan under same conditions as Iran

International Desk

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said his country is ready to provide Azerbaijan with a land corridor under the same conditions as Iran gives to Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has been calling for its longstanding request for a transport corridor to be included in a Russian-mediated peace treaty signed between the two countries

after months of deadly conflict in November 2020.

The so-called Zangezur corridor aims to connect the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan, bordering Turkey, to mainland Azerbaijan through the southern Armenian province of Syunik.

Baku has been asking for an unimpeded passage, without checkpoints, and when Yerevan refused to do so, Azerbaijan said it will instead discuss the issue with



Nikol Pashinyan

its southern neighbor Iran.

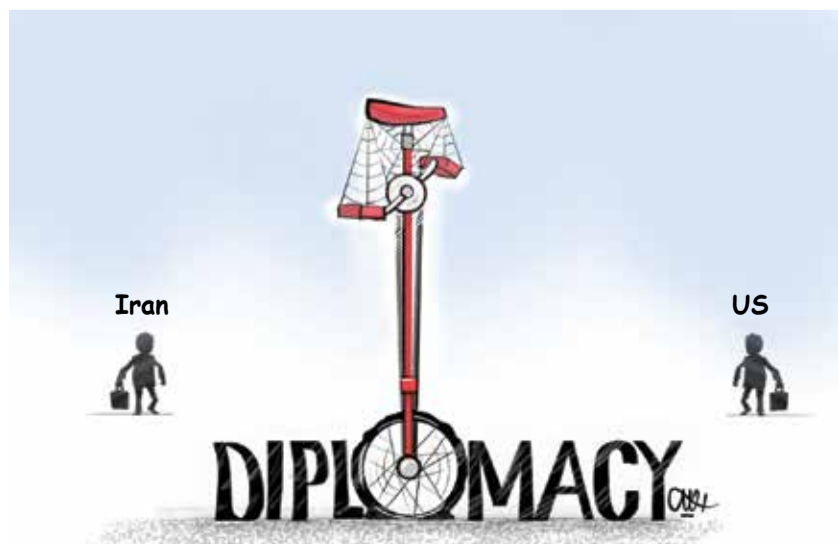
"We are ready to provide our roads through Syunik, Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor, all possible places. By what principles? The roads must function without bypassing, undermining or subordinating the sovereignty, territorial integrity and jurisdiction of the Republic of Armenia, just like in all countries of the world," the Armenian prime minister said.

Iran has also repeatedly an-

nounced its opposition to the Zangezur project that would cut off the transport routes connecting its territory to Armenia. Tehran says that it is against any geopolitical changes in the region.

Since Armenia and Azerbaijan maintain a mutual traffic blockade due to long-running tensions, Baku's connection with Nakhchivan for decades has been Iran, and the connection with Turkey has been Georgia.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Pezeshkian names first Sunni governor-general in 45 years

Iran's new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, on Wednesday nominated a member of the Sunni Muslim minority as the governor-general of Kurdistan Province.

Arash Zerehtan was appointed head of the western province, IRNA news agency said, citing government spokesman Fatemeh Mohajerani.

He is the first Sunni to be appointed as a governor-general in the country since the earliest days of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Zerehtan, 48, has served as a member of parliament for the city of Paveh since 2020.

Sunnis account for about 10 percent of Iran's population, where the vast majority are Shias.

Pezeshkian, 69, took office in July after an early election following the death of president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash.

During his election campaign, Pezeshkian criticized the lack of representation for ethnic and religious minorities, in particular Sunni Kurds, in important positions.

In August, he made another member of the Sunni community, Abdolkarim Hosseinzadeh, one of his vice presidents.



Arash Zerehtan