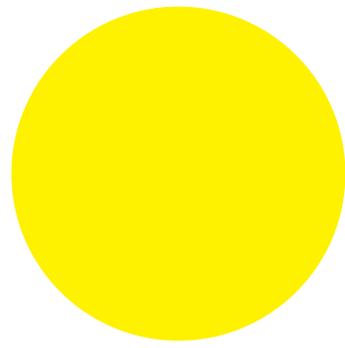


Commander of Iran's Quds Force 'in good health': **IRGC**



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An Israeli officer investigates the scene where a rocket fired from Lebanon landed in Israel on October 7, 2024. ● REUTERS

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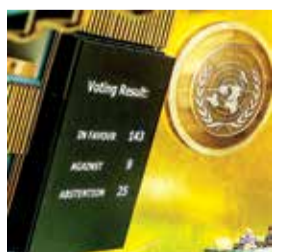


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Iran's largest gas company cooperating with over 100 local NTBFs



Economy Desk

The managers of the South Pars Gas Complex, which is the largest gas company in Iran, devote very special attention to new technology-based firms (NTBFs) and domestic manufacturers, said managing director of the complex, adding that the SPGC has a very close cooperation with more than 100 domestic startups. Domestic manufacturers have always proven that they are with the SPGC and now the managers of the complex have prioritized using the power and capacity of domestic NTBFs, companies and manufacturers, Shana quoted Ahmad Bahoush as saying. "Some of these firms are in the form of a consortium, with which our complex has contracts in various fields, while it also has direct cooperation with industrial parks that include several startups," he stated. Currently, more than 95% of the required and strategic parts and equipment of SPGC refineries have been indigenized, Bahoush said, expressing hope that the figure will increase to 100% this year following greater cooperation with domestic producers and companies. Iran is one of the four largest producers and consumers of natural gas in the world. The country injects more than 850 million cubic meters per day of natural gas to its nationwide grid during cold winter months. Total gas output in Iran has exceeded 1 billion cubic meters per day, a bulk of which comes from South Pars, the world's largest gas field which is located on the maritime border between Iran and Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



14 megaprojects underway to avoid power shortages: *Minister*

Economy Desk

The Iranian Energy Ministry is preparing 14 megaprojects on stable electricity supply to avoid power shortages next summer. Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi made the announcement in a meeting with senior officials of the country's power industry, stressing that stable electricity supply during the peak days for energy consumption of the next year hinges on the timely overhaul of the power stations in the cold season of the current year, IRNA reported. Saving water reserves for maximum use of the capacity of hydroelectric power plants and developing the capacity of renewable power stations can also help Iran to address problems in supplying electricity next summer, the minister added. Speaking at the meeting, Homayoun Haeri, a deputy energy minister, said according to the Energy Ministry plans, power plants with a total production capacity of 3,629 MW will be constructed to

lower outages.

"The Ministry of Energy has planned 14 megaprojects with the aim of reducing the power shortages during the peak demand of electricity of next year, six of which are related to the development of power plant capacity, two projects are related to the development of the electricity network, another two projects are in financing as three ones are related to consumption management and optimization, and one project is dedicated to the maximum use of network capabilities," added the deputy minister. He referred to the installation of smart electricity meters and banning the use of cryptocurrency mining centers as other plans of his ministry to reduce power shortages next year.

Iran is expected to face a 25,000-MW power shortage next summer if no measure is taken with regards to Iranian electricity network, said the head of the Nirop Research Institute (NRI) on Saturday, adding that the figure hit 19 MW during the hot days of the current Iranian year.



Speaking at the Second International Conference on Air Conditioning and Thermal and Refrigeration Facilities in Tehran, Majid Amidpour noted that during the year to March 19, nearly \$96 billion of financial opportunities were missed in the country's energy sector.

Mistakes were made in the past as industrial development was done in the country without paying attention to the energy sector, which led to electricity shortages, he criticized. "It is expected that the private sector will come

to invest, and we at the Ministry of Energy have planned different financing models for their investment," Amidpour said. Iran enjoys a high potential in the field of renewables and with its development, the challenges can be solved to a great extent.

The abundance of renewable resources such as solar, wind, biomass and geothermal energy in Iran, where the national power grid is under growing pressure from runaway demand, is so great that its development and expansion is inevitable.

300 mcm of water released into Iran from Helmand River

An Iranian official said that some 300 million cubic meters of water were released from the Helmand (Hirmand) River into Iran thanks to the Islamic Republic's successful diplomacy on the country's water rights from the shared river with neighboring Afghanistan. Firouz Qasemzadeh, a spokesman for Iran's Water Industry, said at a news conference on Monday that 300 million cubic meters of water had flown into Iran during the last water year (from September 23, 2023 until September 21, 2024), IRNA reported. He said that abundant



rainfall in March and April this year in Afghanistan and the region was one of the reasons behind the amount of the release into Iran. As a result, concerns over the shortage of water in

southeastern Iran were partly alleviated, the official went on to say, adding that important projects are still underway to reduce the southeastern region's dependence on water from Hirmand River.

Iran's largest steel plant with domestic tech to open next year

Economy Desk

The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has plans to complete Bijar Sponge Iron Plant in the western province of Kurdistan as the largest unit which will use an Iranian-developed technology to churn out direct-reduced iron. Putting the progress of the unit at 40%, Mohammad Aqajanjou, the head of the IMIDRO said on Monday that the Bijar mill will produce 1.6 million tons of sponge iron



per annum. A total of 70 trillion rials (\$116.7 million) has been invested in the construction of the project, which will create direct jobs for 500 individuals as well as 4,000 indirect jobs, the official stated. PERED or Persian Reduction has been invented and patented

by Mines and Metals Engineering, an Iranian engineering company registered in Germany. The technology involves a direct reduction process converting iron oxides, in the form of pellets or lump ore, to highly reduced product suitable for steel making.

Iran's six-month trade deficit nears \$7b: *IRICA*

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced that the country had a trade deficit of about \$7 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2024). Iran's foreign trade value (excluding crude oil, kerosene and fuel oil) hit \$58.3 billion between March 20 and September 21, 2024, the IRICA added. According to the report, more than 70,342 tons of non-oil products (with the crude oil, kerosene and fuel oil excluded), valued at \$25.758

million, were exported from the country in the first half of the current Iranian year, showing a 3.45 and 6.48 percent growth in weight and value, respectively compared to the same period last year. In this period, 18,269 tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$32.5 billion, were imported into the country between March 21 and September 21, 2024, registering a 2.8 and 6.5 percent growth in weight and value, respectively compared to the same period last year.



According to IRICA, the country's foreign trade (both imports and exports) exceeded 88,611 tons, valued at \$58.331 billion, in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar

year. Iranian products were mainly reported to China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Afghanistan in this period, the report added.

Defining the historic boundaries of Batvand is crucial

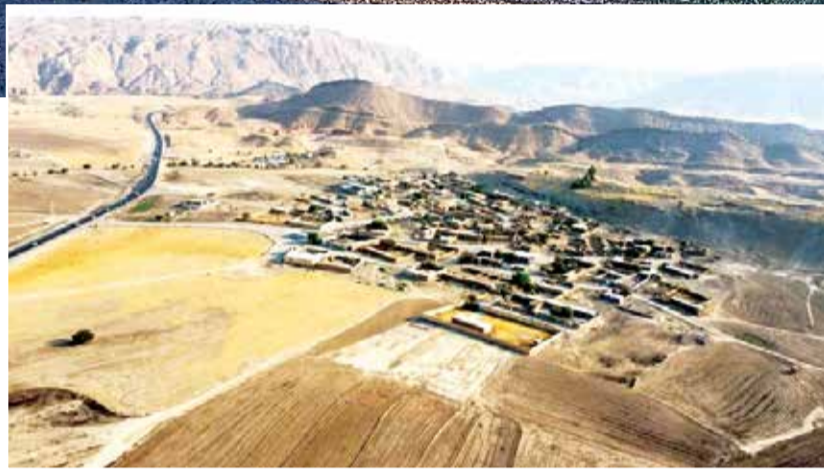


Iranica Desk

The Director General of Khuzestan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced the completion of studies aimed at defining the boundaries of the historical site of Batvand in Masjed Soleyman.

Mohammad Hussein Arastoozadeh stated that the Batvand Site has been documented in archaeological studies as a group of separate hillocks that together form an archaeological site. He explained that this area consists of scattered remnants located near each other, extending in an east-west direction opposite the village of Batvand, chtn.ir wrote.

He continued, noting that the remnants of the Batvand site are spread over a mountainous and rocky region, covering the summit, slopes, and lower lands of



the hillocks, within a span of about one kilometer.

Arastoozadeh added that the structure and distribution of the Batvand's artifacts are consistent and largely uniform throughout the area. As a result, they have been studied as a cohesive site to gain a better understanding of the ex-

tent and distribution of the settlement and related artifacts in the region, despite the site's size.

He stated that a separate registration file has been established for the historic sites of Masjed Soleyman, specifically for Batvand. However, given the proximity of the artifacts north of the village of

Batvand, it seems that these phenomena cannot be separated from one another and should be studied and registered collectively.

He further emphasized that the archaeological layers of the Batvand were formed on the natural terrain and the hillocks. He noted that the Shour River flows 750 meters south of the Batvand, and studies have shown that it contains evidence from the Parthian, Sassanid, and Islamic periods. However, due to its location near the village and the risks posed by local construction activities, it appears that parts of the site may have been lost over time.

Arastoozadeh pointed out the longstanding issues between village residents and cultural heritage authorities. The absence of an approved map for the boundaries of this valuable site means there is no legal document to reference

in emergencies or judicial proceedings. To establish the extent and boundaries of the Batvand Site within the village and agricultural lands, and considering its significance, the Khuzestan Province's Cultural Heritage Organization has prioritized the program to define the area and boundaries of this hill.

He stressed the necessity of conducting exploratory excavations to determine the boundaries of this important archaeological site, stating that having a map of the site's area and boundaries is crucial. This mapping is essential for addressing frequent requests for construction, renovation, or changes in land use, as well as for development activities from local government, the Housing Foundation, and other entities. Cultural heritage authorities need to rely on the area and boundary map to prevent further destruction of the remaining parts of the hill.

Unique features of the Golpayegan Minaret

Iranica Desk

The Golpayegan Minaret in the city of Golpayegan, Isfahan Province, dating back to the Seljuk period, stands 18 meters tall atop a hill. In the past, fires were lit on its summit during the nights and on foggy days, allowing caravans to navigate their way into the city and avoid getting lost.

Mehdi Farasat, a cultural heritage expert, discussed the characteristics of this minaret in an interview with IRNA, stating: "This minaret, also known as the Fanous-e Sahra (Desert Lantern) or the Silk Road Lantern, is supported by an octagonal base and features two entrance doors located on the northern and southern sides."

He added that these doors lead to two staircases, each with 64 steps, with no visible connection between the two. The arrangement of the twin staircases is spiral and parallel, designed to accommodate an average-height person ascending the structure. Farasat speculated that, in ancient times, one staircase may have been used for ascending and the other for descending, IRNA wrote.

He further explained: "Each side of the minaret's base is adorned with beautiful brick

decorations and a tall archway, with half-columns carved from bricks at the edges. Above the entrance door, there is also an arch featuring intricately carved brick shapes, and at the base's end is a brick inscription in Kufic script, which includes verse 53 of Surah Az-Zumar, engraved on it."

Farasat elaborated on other features of the minaret, noting: "From the top of the polygonal base, the minaret rises in a circular form, its body dec-

orated with simple brickwork featuring geometric patterns. At the top, several windows are installed, surrounded by a wooden frame."

He continued: "Based on examinations and consultations with relevant experts, it is suggested that for the construction of the minaret, a pit was first created in the firm soil of the hill. The construction of column then began from the bottom of this pit, with foundations established around it to

provide support. These foundations are likely shaped like semi-crescents and resemble a nail with four protective arms surrounding it."

The only factor that could damage the minaret is the saturation of the soil around it with water, which could loosen its nail-like foundation. To prevent this, the designer wisely constructed it on a hill.

Otherwise, the minaret would have developed at least one crack over the years, considering the earthquakes and storms that have occurred in Golpayegan, however, this structure has proven resilient against various vibrations.

Farasat discussed the changes that have occurred in this building over time, stating: "Based on consultations and research from relevant experts and the examination of the architecture and construction of buildings from the Seljuk and Safavid periods, it is believed that the top section of the minaret was used as a place for observation and guidance during the Seljuk era. In the Safavid period, the windows and related space were blocked and covered with beautiful tile work." The Golpayegan Minaret is registered as a national heritage site in Iran.



Investigation sheds light on Israeli crimes in yearlong war in Gaza

By Richard Sanders and Al Jazeera Investigative Unit*

ANALYSIS

When they entered Gaza on October 27, after three weeks of aerial bombardment following Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, Israeli troops took their iPhones with them.

"We live in an era of technology, and this has been described as the first livestreamed genocide in history," Palestinian novelist Susan Abulhawa told Al Jazeera's investigative unit (I-Unit). In the year since, Israeli soldiers have posted thousands of videos and photos on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube. These videos and photos form the foundation of the I-Unit's new film, which investigates Israeli war crimes primarily through the medium of the evidence Israeli soldiers themselves have provided.

It is, according to Rodney Dixon, an international law expert featured in the film, "a treasure trove which you very seldom come across ... something which I think prosecutors will be licking their lips at".



Al Jazeera's investigative unit (I-Unit) investigated thousands of videos and photos posted to social media by Israeli soldiers.

The bodies of a father and his child killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, lie in front of the morgue at Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, on Oct. 22, 2023.

FATIMA SHBAIR/AP



How was this investigation conducted?

As journalists in the West sought to portray the war on Gaza as complex and nuanced, a flood of social media posts from Israeli soldiers suggested they regarded it as anything but. The I-Unit decided to investigate these posts.

It expected to have to dedicate considerable resources to geolocation – the use of satellite maps and other sources to identify specific locations – and to the use of facial recognition software to scan the internet to identify the soldiers featured in the photos and videos. What it found, however, was that, for the most part, soldiers posted material in their own names on publicly accessible platforms and often gave details of when and where the incidents depicted took place.

The I-Unit began collecting these videos and photos, compiling a database of more than 2,500 social media accounts.

It showed the footage to a range of military and human rights experts, including Dixon, Charlie Herbert, a retired

major-general in the British Army, and Bill Van Esveld, the associate director for the Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch.

It also employed teams on the ground to film the testimony of witnesses and made use of Israeli drone footage collected by Al Jazeera Arabic.

What did the investigation find?

The behaviour displayed in the photos and videos ranges from crass jokes and soldiers rifling through women's underwear drawers to what appears to be the murder of unarmed civilians. It will be for prosecutors to decide the guilt or otherwise of the soldiers, but both Dixon and Van Esveld told Al Jazeera that several of the incidents documented merited investigation by international investigators.

Most of the photos and videos fell into one of three categories: wanton destruction, the mistreatment of detainees and the use of human shields. All three may be violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Wanton destruction

The videos frequently show soldiers smashing up and destroying property and possessions. Others show houses being set alight. The most commonly recurring feature was the detonation of buildings.

"The fact that they've been able to rig these buildings up with explosives shows very clearly that there's no current threat from those buildings," Herbert told Al Jazeera.

"There's no justification for destroying a structure if the enemy isn't in it," said Van Esveld. "You can't go around wantonly, unnecessarily destroying ... civilian property ... It's banned," he added. "And if you do enough of it, it's a war crime."

What does IHL say about the destruction of property?

Article 8(2)(a)(iv) of the Rome Statute prohibits "extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly".

Mistreatment of detainees

Some of the videos show large numbers of detainees stripped to their underwear, being held in stress positions and mocked for having soiled themselves. One shows naked and near-naked detainees, bound and blindfolded, being kicked and dragged around on the floor.

In one video, a French-Israeli soldier films a detainee being pulled from the back of a truck and says: "Look, I'm going to show you his back. You're going to laugh at this. He was tortured."

"Torture is one of the most serious international crimes ... Very often, though, it's difficult to get evidence ... This kind of material where you have persons on camera admitting that they have participated in torture would be very useful to any investigator or a prosecutor," Dixon told Al Jazeera.

Soldiers' videos are complemented by witness testimony gathered by the I-Unit's team in Gaza. The film includes three accounts of beating and abuse.

"They took my son, the eldest, who had just been married," said Abu Amer. "He was tortured. I could hear his screams as they were suffocating him and beating him in the adjacent room. There was nothing we could do with the rifles pointed at our heads. We could not make a move."

Abu Amer says a soldier told his son: "Nothing prevents us from killing you. We could just kill you all. That's normal. No one will deter us, and no one will call us to account."

Women were also abused. Hadeel Dahdouh said a soldier kicked her in the stomach. "He beat me on the back with the gun and on the head with a piece of metal in his hand. I said to him, 'loosen the handcuff', but he would only tighten it further."

Another Palestinian from Gaza, Fadi Bakr, said he was forced to lie on a decomposing corpse by a soldier who threatened to execute him.

Later, at the Sde Teiman detention centre in southern Israel, he said he saw guards using a dog to rape a young male inmate.

What does IHL say about the mistreatment of detainees?

Article 8(2)(a)(ii) of the Rome Statute prohibits "torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments"; while Article 8(2)(b)(xxi) prohibits "committing outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment".

Human shields

The I-Unit interviewed six individuals who testified to being used as human shields by Israeli troops.

Abu Amer described how during clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian fighters, the Israeli soldiers "took us, the men, and placed us

near the balcony. They placed their weapons above our heads and fired at the young men on the other side."

He says he was then forced to inspect buildings for booby traps and ambushes while a soldier monitored him from a balcony with a machinegun. "He said, try anything and I'll shoot you."

Footage gathered by Al Jazeera Arabic supports this. It shows a detainee being forced to inspect empty buildings while being monitored by a drone.

Separate footage shows bloodied detainees being fitted with cameras so they can enter buildings troops have not yet secured.

A photo taken by an Israeli soldier in Gaza City in November – and posted online – shows two detainees walking in front of a tank with a soldier behind them. In an interview, one of the men later described how they were coerced and used as human shields.

At the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis in February a young man was forced to act as a messenger by the Israelis, ordering displaced people to evacuate the building. The man was then shot dead by a sniper in front of his mother. Using people to perform military tasks is "in many ways the definition of using persons as a human shield", Dixon explained.

The I-Unit interviewed the victim's mother and another witness.

What does IHL say about the use of human shields?

Article 8(2)(b)(xxiii) of the Rome Statute prohibits "utilizing the presence of a civilian or other protected person to render certain points, areas or military forces immune from military operations".

Are there any particular units that feature prominently in the photos and videos?

The 8219 Combat Engineering Battalion – also known as the Gadhan Commando – features prominently in videos posted online.



Israeli soldiers stand by a truck packed with bound and blindfolded Palestinian detainees, in Gaza, on Dec. 8, 2023.

MOTI MILROD, HAARETZ/AP

It destroyed hundreds of buildings in Gaza City and then progressed to the south of the Strip where, between December 28 and June 9, it entirely destroyed Khirbet Khuza'a, a town of 13,000 people close to the fence separating Gaza from Israel.

"We ... destroyed a whole village as a revenge for what they did to Kibbutz Nir Oz on 7/10," wrote Captain Chai Roe Cohen of the 8219 battalion's C Company in an Instagram post on January 7. Nir Oz lies just on the other side of the fence from Khirbet Khuza'a and was attacked on October 7, with about one-quarter of its residents killed or taken captive.

"The revenge rhetoric that we've heard from some Israeli soldiers ... is disturbing. Atrocities don't justify atrocities," Van Esveld told Al Jazeera. The 8219 was commanded during its operations in Gaza by Lt Col Meir Duvedvani.

"The International Criminal Court will ... look for those who are high up the chain of command ... and evidence coming directly from commanders about the orders that they gave and the way in which they command and control the troops would be vital evidence," said Dixon.

The I-Unit also scrutinised a video

placed online by a soldier called Shalom Gilbert, a member of the 202 Paratroopers Battalion. The video shows three unarmed men being killed by snipers.

"Just because a civilian is walking in an area where combat is going on does not make them fair game ... If they get involved in hostilities at a particular moment, yes, they lose their civilian status. They can be targeted. But then you have to show the evidence that they are presenting a threat to you ... It's potentially a matter that the International Criminal Court would want to look at," said Dixon.

The 202 contained a sniper team, known as the Ghost Unit, comprising 21 individuals.

Western complicity

The Israeli regime is currently under investigation for genocide at the International Court of Justice. This raises the possibility that any countries that have lent assistance to Israel's war effort may also be open to charges.

Between 2019 and 2023, 69 percent of Israeli arms imports came from the United States and 30 percent from Germany. Both have continued to supply weaponry throughout this conflict, although German supplies

have dipped since the beginning of this year.

The film features reporting by Declassified UK, which shows the central role played by the British base at RAF Akrotiri on the island of Cyprus. The British have been running surveillance flights over Gaza since early December, supposedly to facilitate the rescue of Israeli captives.

In the film, Declassified's Matt Kenard argued that this "doesn't explain" the flights. There were "only two British hostages in Gaza ... There was up to 1,000 hours of [surveillance] footage by March."

The R1 Shadow planes the British use have target acquisition capacity.

"When you start acting in a conflict to a level that the people on the ground who are doing the fighting are using your information as they fight," you may become "a party to the conflict," Van Esveld explained.

"If you continue to know and continue to supply weapons and targeting information, if you're supplying targeting information, despite knowing what the result is, and the result is a gross human rights violation, then you also get to complicity. So, you know, the deniability that you're deeply involved in what's going on in



▶ Palestinians are treated at the Khan Younis hospital after being wounded during an Israeli army bombardment of the Gaza Strip on December 5, 2023.
● FATIMA SHBAIR/AP

Gaza begins to evaporate," he added. The I-Unit asked the United Kingdom government about its surveillance flights. It told us: "The UK is not a participant in the conflict between Israel and Hamas ... As a matter of principle, we only provide intelligence to our allies where we are satisfied that it will be used in accordance with International Humanitarian Law ... Only information related to captive rescue is

passed to the Israeli authorities." It added: "Our priority remains achieving a ceasefire in Gaza so captives can be released, civilians protected and aid flood in."

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.

*Richard Sanders is an award winning TV producer specialising in history and news and current affairs.

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

Gaza and Lebanon: Victims of global inaction

It's been a year since the outbreak of the Gaza war and Israel's assault on the region. More than 42,000 people have lost their lives in the past year. In recent weeks, Israel has shifted its attacks to southern Lebanon, and there is no end in sight to the conflict. International organizations have also proven powerless in exerting pressure on the Israeli regime. A similar scenario played out with Russia's war in Ukraine, which is still ongoing. The outbreak of these two wars, particularly the severity of Israel's atrocities in Gaza and Lebanon, and the international community's helplessness and the inaction of major powers, have raised a big question mark in the public's mind: Where is the world and international relations headed? In this regard, Iran Daily had an interview with Sasan Karimi, a scholar and researcher in international relations.



▶ A Palestinian reacts as a child is carried from the rubble of a building after an airstrike in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Oct. 21, 2023.
● FATIMA SHBAIR/AP



▶ Smoke and flames rise over Beirut's southern suburbs after an Israeli strike, as seen from Sin El Fil, Lebanon, October 3, 2024.
● REUTERS

IRANDAILY: Many analysts argue that the Hamas attack on Israel last October, followed by the ensuing war in Gaza, as well as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, have marked significant changes in the international order. The international community's inability to effectively address these crises has lent credence to this notion. In your opinion, are we witnessing the dawn of a new era in international relations?

KARIMI: I, however, disagree with these experts and believe that the October 7 attack and the subsequent Gaza war are still within the framework of the existing "post-polar" order, and therefore, there haven't been any significant changes in international relations.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bipolar order, or the East-West bloc, the United States thought it could single-handedly manage the world, thus entering a unipolar world. However, it gradually became clear that managing the world in a unipolar manner was an illusion. The US itself realized this reality after the Persian Gulf War. In other words, the world is in a post-unipolar order where there is no single dominant power that can lead the world. In this order, various actors have entered the

scene, and non-state actors have also become players, including anti-security groups like Daesh (ISIS).

The October 7 attack revealed the weakening of the positions of international powers and organizations. There are global powers and organizations, but their determining power has been weakened. The October 7 attack on Israel was not carried out by a state, but by a political-military movement, confirming that in the post-unipolar order, these non-state organizations also have determining power.

What are the characteristics of this post-unipolar order? Does it serve the interests of more countries, or do major powers still reap the most benefits?

One of the key features of the post-unipolar order is the geographical relocation of power. In other words, power or the exercise of power is no longer limited to a specific region, such as the West. Instead, multiple actors are playing roles in different parts of the world on various issues. Another characteristic of this era is that we no longer see long-term alliances or fixed strategic partners. Rather, we see issue-based alliances, where two countries or actors may be united on one

issue while simultaneously disagreeing and competing on another. Furthermore, power has become more diffuse, extending beyond traditional hard power to include cultural, normative, and symbolic power. International actors are no longer limited to states and international organizations; new players have entered the scene.

Do you think this post-unipolar order will continue, or will the two major crises, the Ukraine and Gaza wars, change its trajectory?

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bipolar order, everyone was expecting a unipolar order centered on the United States, and the period from collapse to the establishment of the unipolar order was seen as a transitional phase. However, this transitional phase lasted a long time, and it ultimately became clear that the unipolar order was an illusion. It's now unpredictable whether a new order is emerging or not. What is clear is that the world is at a critical juncture, and international or-



ganizations and major powers are experiencing significant inaction in the face of international crises. Even other powers or actors, such as the so-called emerging powers, are also inactive in the face of the two current crises, the Gaza war and the Ukraine war.

How do you see the future of the Gaza and Ukraine conflicts, particularly the Gaza war, which has now spilled over into Lebanon and caused significant damage?

I believe that both crises will be influenced by the upcoming US presidential elections. The next US administration, whether it's Harris or Trump, will have to take a more serious approach to addressing these conflicts. While Harris and Trump may have different scenarios in mind, the US cannot avoid dealing with these crises, especially given its ongoing competition with China.

In such circumstances, how do you think the Islamic Republic of Iran and its new government can continue to play an effective role as a regional

The October 7 attack on Israel was not carried out by a state, but by a political-military movement, confirming that in the post-unipolar order, these non-state organizations also have determining power.

power and secure its interests?

In my opinion, in the current tense situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran should not fall into the trap of reacting to the initiatives or plans of its opponents or enemies. It seems that so far, Iran has behaved wisely and cautiously, and despite the escalation of tensions and even confrontations with Israel, it has not fallen into Netanyahu's trap. Netanyahu wants to expand the scope of the war to gain more political and military support from the world, especially the West, and to cover up his own crimes in Gaza and Lebanon. Iran has responded to Israel twice, but it has not gotten entangled in a war with this regime. This is a wise policy. At the same time, the Islamic Republic must also have its own initiatives and plans. Having initiative and implementing it requires active diplomacy and presence on the regional and global stage. The fact that the Iranian foreign minister traveled to Lebanon in the midst of the insecurity prevailing in the country, and then went to Syria, means being present on the scene. Abbas Araqchi's presence in Lebanon showed that it is possible to take initiative and be active even in the most critical situations and at the center of the crisis.

World Cup Asian qualifiers:

Iran names squad for Uzbekistan, Qatar games



FFIRI

Sports Desk

Head coach Amir Qalenoiei named Iran's 27-man squad for the upcoming matches against Uzbekistan and Qatar in the World Cup Asian qualifiers.

Iran will play away to Uzbekistan in Tashkent's Bunyodkor Stadium on Thursday before hosting Qatar at the Imam Reza Stadium in Mashhad five days later.

Uzbekistan and Iran are the top two in Group A of the qualifiers with six points after two rounds of matches – separated by the number of goals scored – with Asian champion Qatar in fifth place of the six-team table with one point.

Mahdi Taremi's first-half strike saw Iran edge out Kyrgyzstan 1-0 at home in September before Mahdi Qayedi scored the only goal of the game as Qalenoiei's side defeated the United Arab Emirates in Al Ain.

The top two of each of the three groups will qualify for the 2026 World Cup – co-hosted by Mexico, the United States, and Canada – with the third and fourth teams heading into the fourth round of the qualifiers – featuring two three-team groups.

Persepolis center-back Hossein Kan'anizadegan will miss the double-header due to a knee injury he suffered during the 1-0 win against Chadormalou in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Saturday.

Tractor winger Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh, the leading marksman in the Iranian top flight with four goals, has been named in the squad and will be hoping to make a first international appearance in two years.

Golgozar defender Mohammad-Mahdi Zare' has received a first international call-up after helping his team register five clean sheets in six domestic league outings, while Alireza Jahanbakhsh, who has been without a team since leaving Feyenoord in July, is also in the list.

The following is Iran's full squad:

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Tractor), Payam Niazmand (Sepahan), Seyyed Hossein Hosseini (Esteghlal)

Defenders: Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Arya Yousefi (Sepahan), Milad Mohammadi (Persepolis), Ali Ne'mati (Foolad Khuzestan), Mohammad Daneshgar (Sepahan), Mohammad-Amin Hazbavi (Sepahan), Mohammad-Mahdi Zare' (Golgozar Sirjan), Saleh Hardani (Sepahan), Abolfazl Jalali (Esteghlal)

Midfielders: Saeed Ezzatollahi (Shabab Al Ahli), Mohammad Karimi (Sepahan), Mohammad Qorbani (FC Orenburg), Mohammad-Javad Hosseinzadeh (Dinamo Makhachkala), Saman Qoddous (Ittihad Kalba), Omid Nourafkan (Malavan), Alireza Jahanbakhsh (-), Mohammad Mohebbi (FC Rostov), Mahdi Qayedi (Ittihad Kalba), Mahdi Torabi (Tractor), Ali Qolizadeh (Lech Poznan), Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (Tractor)

Strikers: Mahdi Taremi (Internazionale), Sardar Azmoun (Shabab Al Ahli), Shahriar Moghanlou (Ittihad Kalba).

LeBron and Bronny James make NBA history

BBC – LeBron James and Bronny James made NBA history by becoming the first father-son duo to play together on the same team during the Los Angeles Lakers' pre-season game against the Phoenix Suns.

Bronny, on his 20th birthday, entered the court during the second quarter in a 118-114 defeat by the Suns.

Never before had a father and son played in an NBA game of any type – including pre-season – at the same time.

"Wow that was surreal," LeBron wrote on X following the match. Speaking to reporters, he added: "We came out of a timeout and

we kind of stood next to each other. I kind of looked at him.

"It was like being in The Matrix or something. It just didn't feel real. But it was great to have those moments."

LeBron scored 19 points on the night, with four assists and five rebounds. Bronny went scoreless during his 13-minute run, finishing with two rebounds and four turnovers.

Bronny joined the Lakers as a second-round draft pick from the University of Southern California in June.

LeBron, 39, is the NBA's all-time record point-scorer and a four-time NBA winner.

The veteran is entering his 22nd season in the NBA.

He signed a new two-year deal with the Lakers following Bronny's arrival at the franchise.

The 2024-25 NBA season begins on 22 October, with the Lakers in action against the Minnesota Timberwolves after champions the Boston Celtics face the New York Knicks.



Bronny James (9) steps onto the court with father and Lakers team-mate LeBron James during the first half of a pre-season NBA game in Palm Desert, CA, US, on October 6, 2024.

WILLIAM LIANG/AP



India's Mohun Bagan withdrawn from ACL Two after skipping Tractor game



AFC

Sports Desk

Indian Super League club Mohun Bagan Super Giant has been withdrawn from the AFC Champions League Two after refusing to travel to Tabriz for the Group A match against Iranian top-flight side Tractor, the Asian Football Confederation announced on Monday.

The two sides were to meet in Tabriz's Yadegar-e Imam Stadium on October 2, but the Indian team failed to show up for the game, citing "security concerns"

amid political unrest in the Middle East following the assassination of Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli air strike in Lebanon on September 27.

All matches played by the Indian club are now "cancelled and considered null and void in accordance with Article 5.6 of the Competition Regulations," read the AFC statement.

"For the avoidance of doubt, no points and goals in the club's matches shall be taken into consideration when

determining the final rankings in Group A pursuant to Article 8.3," add the governing body of the sport in the continent.

"The matter will now be referred to the relevant AFC Committee(s) as appropriate for their decision(s)."

Mohun Bagan SG had played to goalless stalemate against FC Ravshan of Tajikistan at home in their group opener, while Tractor walked away with a 3-0 victory at Al Wakrah.

Tractor will next play FC Ravshan in Tabriz on Oct. 23.

Hezbollah's new strategy;

Striking Haifa for Dahieh, Tel Aviv for Beirut

International Desk

Hamas and Hezbollah resistance groups launched rocket attacks on the occupied territories on Monday on the first anniversary of the former's Operation Al-Aqsa Storm last October.

Hamas's armed wing said it fired a barrage of rockets at Israel's commercial hub Tel Aviv on Monday. The Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades "struck deep into the occupation's territory, targeting the city of Tel Aviv with a barrage of M90 missiles as part of the ongoing war of attrition," the group said in a statement.

Projectiles fired from Gaza set off sirens in central Tel Aviv. The attack, which also saw missiles launched into northern Israel, injured at least two people. Hamas's armed wing vowed to keep fighting what it described as a "long war of attrition."

"We choose to keep up the fight in a long war of attrition, one

that is painful and costly for the enemy," said Abu Obeida, spokesman of the group's armed wing.

Khaled Meshaal, the former head of Hamas, said on the Al Arabiya TV channel that Hamas's operation on October 7, 2023 took Israel back to "square zero and threatened its existence." Meshaal said last year's daring attack was "a natural response to the occupation and its accelerating plans for settlement, siege and aggression against al-Aqsa," referring to the flash-point al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the occupied Old City of al-Quds.

He also accused Israel of threatening Egypt and Jordan, despite long-standing peace agreements between the countries, saying, "The enemy wants everyone in the region to be subject to him and he does this even with countries that do not fight him."

He added that Israel "attacks Arab and Islamic national secu-

rity everywhere."

Israel launched the war on Gaza after Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Flood against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodshed and devastation against Palestinians.

Israel's war on Gaza has claimed the lives of nearly 42,000 Palestinians so far. Israel has also been targeting Lebanon since October 2023, when it launched the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. Since late last month, the regime has escalated its strikes on Lebanon, killing more than 2,000 people and displaced thousands of Lebanese.

Lebanon's Hezbollah has been responding to the aggression with retaliatory operations.

On Monday, Hezbollah hit the regime's third-largest city of Haifa with rockets in the first direct attack on the northern city that evaded the regime air defense



Israeli security forces check the damage at a building hit during a rocket attack from the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2024 in Kfar Chabad near Tel Aviv.
● JACK GUEZ/AFP

systems. Hezbollah said it targeted a military base south of Haifa with a salvo of "Fadi 1" missiles.

Israeli media said 10 people were wounded in Haifa and Tiberias. Police in Haifa said several buildings and properties were

damaged, with several reports of minor injuries and some people having been taken to a nearby hospital.

UNSC's inaction on Israeli warmongering imperils regional stability: *Iran*

Qalibaf calls for global 'serious' measures against Israel

International Desk

The spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry said the inaction of the United Nations Security Council on the Israeli regime's warmongering is seriously endangering stability in the region.

In a statement on Monday, Esmail Baghaei denounced Israel's military assaults against Syria and called for a serious action at regional and international levels to stop the aggression and hold the regime accountable.

Israel frequently targets military positions inside Syria, especially those of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, which have played a key role in helping the Syrian Army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists.

The Israeli regime rarely comments on its attacks on Syrian territories, which many see as a knee-jerk reaction to the Syrian government's phenomenal success in confronting and decimating terrorism.

Damascus has time and again called on the UN Security Council to put an end to the regime's attacks that violate Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Syrian Defense Ministry said on Sunday that Israel had carried out airstrikes on military positions in central Syria, reporting no casualties.

"At approximately 20:05 (17:05 GMT) the Israeli enemy launched an air aggression coming from the direction of north Lebanon, which targeted military sites in the central region, causing material losses," the ministry said in a statement.

Baghaei said Israel continues its genocidal war against the people of Palestine in Gaza and

conducts heavy assaults against Lebanon and Syria.

He added that the Security Council's passivity vis-à-vis the Israeli regime's crimes will bear seriously adverse consequences for global peace and security. The Iranian spokesman emphasized that Israel's aggression against Muslim and Arab countries exposes the regime's "militancy and expansionism" nature.

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf in a letter to his counterparts across the world called on the international community to take serious measures to immediately stop the regime's attacks in Palestine and Lebanon.

"The Israeli genocide of the oppressed people of Gaza and the current situation in Lebanon are the examples of the expansionist and arrogant policies of the criminal Zionist regime" he said, adding that the regime's actions are a clear example of crimes against humanity, a flagrant violation of international law and are a serious threat to the peace, security and stability of the region and the world.

Israel launched the war on Gaza after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Flood against the occupying entity on October 7, 2023 in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians.

Israel has also been targeting Lebanon since October 2023, when it launched the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. Since late last month, the regime has escalated its strikes on Lebanon. Hezbollah has been responding to the aggression with retaliatory operations.

Pope slams world's 'shameful inability' to end Mideast conflict

International Desk

Pope Francis on Monday slammed the "shameful inability" of world powers to end the conflict in West Asia, on the first anniversary of Hamas's Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on Israel's positions in the occupied territories.

"A year ago, the fuse of hatred was lit; it did not sputter, but exploded in a spiral of violence, in the shameful inability of the international community and the most powerful countries to silence the weapons and put an end to the tragedy of war," he said in an open letter to Catholics in West Asia, AFP reported.

"Blood is still being shed, as are tears. Anger is growing, along with the desire for revenge, while it seems that few people care about what is most needed and what is most

desired: dialogue and peace."

The 87-year-old had previously declared Monday a global day for prayer and fasting for peace, following similar initiatives for other conflicts in recent years.

In his letter, the leader of the world's almost 1.4 billion Catholics offered solidarity with followers in the region -- "a small, defenseless flock" -- on what he called "this sad day".

But the pope also addressed "the men and women of every confession and religion who in the West Asia are suffering from the insanity of war: I am close to you, I am with you".

"I am with you, who have no voice, for despite all the talk of plans and strategies, there is little concern for those who suffer the devastation of war, which the powerful impose on others; yet they will be subject



to the inflexible judgement of God," he added.

Nearly 42,000 Palestinians -- mostly women and children in Gaza and more than 2,000 people including top commanders of Hezbollah resistance group in Lebanon have been killed in Israel's strikes

over the past years.

The regime launched its deadly attacks on the Gaza Strip following Hamas's operation in the occupied territories. Israel's campaign has displaced nearly the entire population of Gaza -- 1.9 million of its 2.3 million Palestinians.

Commander of Iran's Quds Force 'in good health': *IRGC*

International Desk

The top commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, Esmail Qa'ani, is in "good health," the elite force's deputy commander Iraj Masjedi said on Monday, after rumor circulated that he had been out of contact since Israel's heavy strikes on Beirut last week.

"He is in good health and is carrying out his activities. Some ask us to issue a statement... there is no need for this," Masjedi was quoted as saying by Iranian state media in reference to Qa'ani.

Reuters, citing unknown officials, reported on Sunday that Qa'ani, who traveled to Lebanon after the last month assassination of Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike, has not been heard from since the onslaught on Beirut late last week that was re-

ported to have targeted high-profile Hezbollah official Hashem Safieldine.

On Monday, Iranian media also published a message from Qa'ani, which was conveyed to a conference in solidarity with Palestinian children in Tehran, adding that the commander could not attend "due to his being in another important meeting."

In the message, Qa'ani extended his salutations to the participants of the event and offered his profound apologies for not being able to take part in the conference due to participation in another special meeting. On January 3, 2020, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei appointed Esmail Qa'ani as the new head of the Islamic IRGC Quds Force following the US assassination of Major General Qassem Soleimani in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Invitation
for Tender

Second Announcement

شرکت ملی مس‌نیکو ایران
National Iranian Copper Industry Co. (NICICO) intends to hold a tender for "procurement of Rotary Blasthole drilling machines with a diameter of 9 7/8 & 13 inches". In order to get more information, please refer to the official website of company as below:

<https://en.nicico.com/>

Necessity of establishing Palestinian state

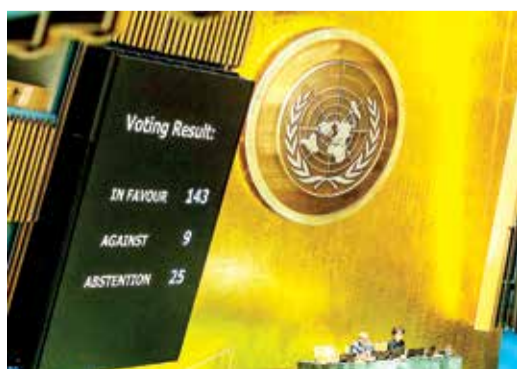
By **Abed Akbari**
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the subsequent developments should not be analyzed solely as a military confrontation. The brazen strike by Hamas, which can be regarded as a turning point in the fight against Zionism, is an epic account in which Palestinian resistance, for the first time, amazingly shattered the pride, arrogance, and military superiority of the Zionist regime of Israel. The fact that an armed Palestinian group, through a precise and complex operation, penetrated the highly secure structures of a regime like Israel in just a few hours, advanced 40 kilometers into the occupied territory, killed nearly 1,200, and captured several high-ranking Zionist generals is not something that military analysts worldwide can dismiss as routine. Almost all military experts, whether supporters or opponents of the Zionist regime, see this operation as historic, agreeing on the humiliation of Israel, a regime that carried the title of the world's fourth-largest military power. No expert has been able to unravel the secret behind this success, as, according to their own statements, the security and protective structures designed by the Zionists appeared "impenetrable."

However, the more significant defeat for the Zionist regime, and the greater achievement for the resistance groups and the Palestinian people, did not occur on the battlefield of conventional warfare but rather in the realm of soft power and the construction of a new narrative around the Palestinian issue. A global wave of support has caused considerable concern among the leaders of the Zionist regime. Recently, the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies reported a significant rise in global support for Palestine after October 7, alongside a noticeable decline in support for Israel. The report noted that in the first six days of the conflict, 69% of worldwide protests were against Israel and in support of the Palestinians, while 31% were in favor of Israel. However, following Hamas's declaration of a "Day of Rage" on October 13, anti-Israel protests surged dramatically, with 95% of protests supporting Palestine and opposing Israel, while only 5% supported Israel.

Another key aspect of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, despite Israel's months-long crimes that followed, is the global consensus on the necessity for establishing a Palestinian state. Today, there is widespread agreement on the need for a Palestinian state. From a legal perspective, the four criteria for statehood are population, territory, sovereignty, and government. However, in today's global community, these principles are only realized when "recognition" is present. Just as the League of Nations, following World War I, accepted the need for the formation of an Armenian state due to the tragedies of the ethnic cleansing of Armenians and to prevent further Armenian aggression, the events following October 7 encompass both issues: on one hand, a successful attack by Palestinians, and on the other, a great tragedy of ethnic cleansing. Therefore, the recognition of a Palestinian state can be considered one of the most important achievements in the aftermath of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.



A screen shows the voting results during the United Nations General Assembly vote on a draft resolution that would recognize the Palestinians as qualified to become a full UN member, in New York City, US on May 10, 2024.
 ● REUTERS

Al-Aqsa Storm; a tale of regional paradigm shift

PERSPECTIVE

Hossein Jaber Ansari, chief of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) and former spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated in a special news program on Saturday night, October 6, 2023, to analyze the latest developments in Palestine, Lebanon and the region. Jaber explained that prior to the October 7 Palestinian operation, it was believed that the Palestinian issue had been neglected; therefore, we must give high marks to the architects of the Al-Aqsa Storm for transforming the Palestinian issue from a forgotten condition into a central topic of the world and the region. The following text is a summary of his remarks.



Disruption of normalization

The retaliatory operation, known as Al-Aqsa Storm, marked a pivotal turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, disrupting a long-standing assumption that the Palestinian cause had been relegated to the margins of global attention. Before October 7, Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu had declared the Palestinian issue effectively resolved, citing the normalization of relations between Israel and 98% of the Arab world. The process of normalization, which began with Saudi Arabia, was seen as a chain reaction that would eventually encompass the entire Arab region. However, the events of October 7 created a seismic shift.

Revival of Palestinian cause

This operation halted the momentum of normalization, casting doubt on its sustainability. Israel's response, characterized by widespread destruction and loss of life, created a profound psychological impact, not just on the current generation but for future ones as well. The disruption has severely undermined the foundations of normalization, making it politically and socially untenable. The Al-Aqsa Storm brought Palestine back into the heart of regional and global affairs, restoring its status as the focal point in the Middle East.

Regional solidarity

For decades, the Palestinian cause seemed like a forgotten chapter, but in the aftermath of October 7, it became a defining narrative once more. The most significant outcome of this operation was the revival of the Palestinian issue after nearly two decades of marginalization. Al-Aqsa Storm not only reignited hope within Palestin-

ian society but also demonstrated the efficacy of resistance. It sent a clear message that Palestinians are not alone in their struggle. Hezbollah swiftly declared its engagement in the conflict, and resistance movements in Iraq and Yemen also entered the fray, signaling an unprecedented level of regional solidarity.

Iran's strategy and regional resistance

This was the first time Yemen, through the Ansarullah movement, fully engaged in the broader Middle Eastern resistance against Israel. Iran, the architect of the post-Revolution resistance strategy, continued its support for this long-term approach, which seeks to exhaust Israel's military machine. Since the 1979 Islamic

Revolution, Iran has offered an alternative to the two dominant paths in the Arab world—classical military confrontation or capitulation. The third way, as taught by Imam Khomeini and continued by the Supreme Leader, is long-term resistance aimed at wearing away Israel's capabilities.

Consequences of Israel's aggression

Despite the ferocity of Israel's retaliatory campaigns, the regime finds itself unable to declare an end to its military operations. The moment Israel ceases its offensive, Hamas fighters will inevitably reemerge, underscoring the futility of Israel's strategy, which has yielded nothing but destruction. In an attempt to break the resistance, Israel has extended its operations beyond Gaza, targeting areas from Beirut to Tehran, but these actions only serve to consolidate regional unity against it.

Futility of Israel's broader strategy

At the heart of Israel's broader strategy is an effort to impose a new order in the region, one that forces the abandonment of the resistance doctrine and weakens support for Palestine. Yet, history has shown that this mission is impossible. The Palestinian resistance and its regional allies cannot be subdued by targeted assassinations, nor can the aspirations of an entire people be extinguished through violence. From Sheikh Ahmed Yassin to Yasser Arafat, Palestinian leaders have been martyred, but the resistance lives on.

Path to liberation through long-term resistance

Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the resistance movements across the region represent a clear challenge to Israel's attempts to reshape the geopolitical landscape. The Palestinian struggle, far from being a forgotten issue, has reclaimed its position at the center of Middle Eastern politics, with the resistance proving that the path to liberation lies in a sustained, long-term strategy of attrition. The resistance will continue, and Israel's attempts to break this unity will ultimately fail.

Smoke is seen in the Rehovot area as rockets are launched from the Gaza Strip at Israel on October 7.
 ● REUTERS