

# Putin can help ease Iran-Israel tensions



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
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## INTERVIEW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed his readiness to mediate between Iran and Israel, although he described it as a difficult task. Does Russia have the capacity to do so? Are Iran and Israel prepared to accept such a proposal? Iran Daily raised the matter in an interview with Hassan Beheshtipour, an international affairs expert and university professor.



**IRAN DAILY:** Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned during a visit to Turkey that the region had become a powder keg due to Israel's policies. In your opinion, what concerns or realities is this warning based on?

**BEHESHTIPOUR:** This warning is based on the criminal behavior and actions of the Israeli regime, which spares no violent act. Israel attacks UN peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon, targets educational centers and hospitals, pounds refugee camps and shelters, and has no qualms about burning humans alive. The regime is not bound by any international rules, and it is natural that such violent acts will be met with reactions from resistance groups. In fact, violence begets violence. Therefore, Benjamin Netanyahu's aggressive policies have turned the region into a powder keg, which could explode at any moment. This is especially true given Netanyahu's tendency to escalate the crisis to the entire Western Asia region.

Recently, Russian President Vladimir

Putin announced his readiness to mediate between Iran and Israel, although he described it as an uphill task. Do you think Moscow and Putin have the power to do so?

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met with Putin during his trip to Turkmenistan, and I believe that one of the topics of their talks was likely the regional crisis, the Gaza war, and tensions between Iran and Israel. Russia has very close ties with Israel, and Putin has maintained a personal relationship with Netanyahu since 2005. The relationship between Israel and Russia is a structural one, encompassing cooperation in various areas such as security, politics, and economy. At the same time, Russia also has good relations with Iran, making it one of the few countries that has cordial ties with both Iran and Israel. Therefore, Russia and Putin have the capacity to help bring down tensions.

How can Russia's intention to mediate be

realized? Will Israel and Iran accept this mediation?

One side of the equation is Israel, which I doubt will accept mediation for a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip or to reduce tensions with Iran. Netanyahu sees the survival of his hawkish cabinet tied to the continuation of the crisis. If a cease-fire is established, a war inquiry commission will not let up on him, and given the domestic opposition, the conditions for his cabinet to collapse will be set. Unless a Donald Trump victory in the US election tips the balance in Net-



anyahu's favor domestically. Therefore, it seems unlikely that Netanyahu is willing to accept Russian mediation and a cease-fire.

On the other hand, Iran does not seem to have any objections to Russian arbitration. Iran's main goal is a cease-fire and an end to the killing of innocent people in Palestine and Lebanon, and to prevent the war from spreading to the entire region. A cease-fire, from Iran's perspective, is not a compromise or betrayal, but a necessary means for the survival and revival of the Resistance Front. Iran will welcome any measure that brings an end to the war.

**Regardless of Russia's close relations with Iran and Israel, does Russia's interests also require the region to see peace and calm, or do you think Moscow's interests lie in the continuation of the crisis?**

The answer to this question dispels some of the misconceptions about the relationship between Iran and Russia, as the relationship between the governments of Tehran and

Moscow has been criticized by many on both sides. In particular, many in Iran believe that Russia's interests, due to the war in Ukraine, require the Gaza war to go on and for tensions to heighten between Iran and Israel. In my opinion, this assessment is completely incorrect. Over the past year, the Gaza war has not led to any developments or changes in the Ukraine war, and the Gaza war has not overshadowed the Ukraine war. In fact, at one point, Ukraine even crossed into Russian territory.

Furthermore, if Putin can rein in Netanyahu and talk him into reducing tensions and agree to a cease-fire, this would be a major victory and a trump card for Russia in the international arena, which would boost Moscow's prestige and have a positive impact on Russia's relations with Iran, Arab countries, and the Muslim world.

It is in Russia's interests to restore calm to the region as it would allow Moscow to better dodge sanctions and have better relations with regional countries.

# Iran's tourism needs new strategy to flourish



By Hani Rastegaran  
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## OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Economic policymaking in countries annually sets the guidelines and basis for achieving per capita incomes. Today, world is faced with a broad perspective in the economic sector, which leads to the utilization of monetary and financial cycles in line with achieving the projected revenues in annual budgets. The topic of tourism economics, from one side, has transcended its traditional viewpoint, entering a new flow to utilize emerging resources and capacities. Historical and natural tourism has become a routine, while research on new methods of financing specialized tourism is rapidly growing. The use of gamification techniques, a process-based structure on a defined system for scoring, a process for ranking, and a space for determining optimal points, was previously only relevant

in virtual space algorithms but is now influencing many industries. But how can these new subtleties be utilized in Iran's tourism industry and its economy?

In the Seventh Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the annual attraction of 15 million tourists is planned. Although this figure is small compared to neighboring countries like Turkey, which has a target of 60 million in this area, research shows that there are not enough infrastructures in the country to attract even this number of tourists. Therefore, predictions suggest that if the situation continues without appropriate support, this industry will move towards stagnation and decline instead of economic development and job creation. Thus, support and cooperation from organizations and entities related to specialized areas of foreign tourism, such as creating appropriate accommodations, road infrastructure, and roadside hostels for infrastructure development, is essential. In this context, Iran's membership in economic

groups of developing countries like BRICS can lead to the development and growth of the tourism industry, and in the current Iranian year (2024-2025), policies like mutual visa abolition with various countries and negotiations to facilitate visa issuance must be pursued to promote tourism.

On the other hand, Iran is a land with abundant natural resources and reserves. For years, mines in Iran have been perceived as a material element for wealth generation through the export of raw materials, while other technical and economic aspects have been overlooked. The numerous mines in Iran, including both abandoned and active ones, can provide a groundwork for creating sustainable jobs and income. Open-pit mines of copper, gold, iron, building stones, gemstones, and lead and zinc, if properly utilized to promote tourism, can turn into valuable sites for tourists to visit. These sites potentially offer visits to exploration processes, educational and research activities, exploration and extraction experiences, fa-

miliarity with machinery and tools and their uses, creating mining museums, heritage interpretation centers, and employing specialists and job seekers. The world's new approach is generally that after completing activities and depleting mineral reserves, actions like restoration, conversion into heritage interpretation centers, and using eco-tourism and geo-tourism guides take place so that these places turn into venues for tourist visits and organizing mining tourism tours. Utilizing the knowledge and experience of geo-tourism guides, retired miners, mine experts, and specialists in stones and minerals will turn these visits into purposeful, enjoyable, exciting, and enlightening tours.

The neighboring country, Turkey, generated approximately 800 million dollars annually from 2020 to 2022 solely through specialized tourism in the mining and natural resources sector. Given the definition that abandoned mines, with at least five years of inactivity, can be utilized as a place for visits and are

thus considered non-profit; due to inappropriate market conditions, depletion of mineral reserves, decrease in mineral grade, low quality of minerals, or lack of economic justification for exploitation, their activity has halted and they have become abandoned, presenting a suitable capacity for economic exploitation through conversion into a tourist attraction.

For instance, some mines in Semnan Province, such as the sulfur mine in southern Semnan, Delazian, is a mining area with unique historical and natural features, and thus has been listed in Iran's National Non-Movable Heritage List. Considering that this mine has been identified and exploited since the late Safavid era, and with the application of modern tools, the extraction rate from this mine has significantly increased, it now presents a suitable opportunity to be converted into a tourism site and to invite economic and mining industry activists worldwide and from Iran for visits and enhancing experiences.