

Iran stresses as vital regional support for Syria, Iraq in anti-terror fight

FMs of Iran, Iraq, Syria discuss resurgence of terrorism

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi emphasized during a meeting in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on Friday that the support of all regional countries for the governments of Syria and Iraq in their fight against terrorism is vital.

Araqchi, who was in Baghdad to attend a trilateral meeting of foreign ministers from Iran, Iraq, and Syria, met with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, during which he stated that the failure of regional countries to address and eliminate terrorism in Syria will lead to the country becoming a hub and safe haven for terrorist groups throughout the region, as reported by IRNA. Foreign-backed armed groups led by the Hay'at Tahrir al-Shams Takfiri group carried out a surprise assault in Syria's Aleppo and Idlib countryside last month, and overran a number of villages and towns before entering Aleppo on November 27.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-sponsored militancy since March 2011, with Damascus saying the Western states and their regional allies are aiding terrorist groups to wreak havoc in the Arab country.

During the Friday meeting, the Iraqi prime minister also ex-

pressed his gratitude for Iran's support in promoting stability and security in the region, particularly in Iraq.

Sudani emphasized the significance of continuous consultations with Iran, particularly in light of the current volatile situation in the region, especially in Syria, and highlighted the necessity for both countries to collaborate closely. "What is happening in Syria is inseparable from the events that took place in Gaza and Lebanon, which have threatened the security and stability of the region," he said.

The Iraqi prime minister emphasized the significance of stability and security in Syria for Iraq and the entire region, and reaffirmed his country's readiness to back the Syrian government and people in overcoming the current challenges and tackling terrorism. On Friday, the foreign ministers of Iran, Iraq, and Syria met in the Iraqi capital to discuss the latest developments in Syria.

Speaking to reporters, Araghchi said the unfolding developments in the Arab country necessitate protracted and serious negotiations.

He said the status quo in West Asia, particularly in Syria, is very sensitive, requiring consultations and coordination among all concerned countries.

Araghchi also conveyed his country's readiness to support the Syrian government, people, and army as needed.

In a separate meeting with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, Araghchi stated that the ongoing instability and insecurity in Syria pose a threat to the security of all regional countries "as terrorist groups backed by the Zionist regime and the United States have a long-term plan to create chaos and violence in the region."

Araghchi reiterated the importance of coordination and consultation with regional countries to prevent the spread of insecurity. Iraqi foreign minister also underscored his country's principled stance on supporting Syria's territorial integrity and national sovereignty, as well as its fight against terrorism.

Hussein acknowledged the tangible threat of terrorism to the Iraqi government and people, and revealed that Iraq has launched extensive diplomatic efforts at the regional and international levels to garner support for countering takfiri terrorism.

Astana Process

Meanwhile, the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran and Russia will meet in Doha today as part of the Astana Process, established to seek a political solution to the



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) meets Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in Baghdad, Iraq, on December 6, 2024.
IRNA

13-year-old Syrian conflict. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has announced that he will meet with his Turkish and Iranian counterparts in Doha to discuss the ongoing situation in Syria. The main focus of the meeting will be to address recent developments and work toward stabilizing the region.

Region is in a bind: Erdogan

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday he hoped Syrian rebels would continue their advance against President Bashar al-Assad's forces in Syria, but voiced concern about terrorist organizations in their midst, Reuters reported.

Erdogan told reporters after Friday prayers he was closely following the push which he said was heading to the Syrian capital. But he suggested he had mixed feelings, given some of the forces involved.

"The target is Damascus," he said. "I would say we hope for this advance to continue without any issues."

"However, while this resistance there with terrorist organizations is continuing, we had made a call to Assad," he added, referring to his approaches to Assad earlier this year to meet and normalize ties after more than a decade of animosity.

"These problematic advances con-

tinuing as a whole in the region are not in a manner we desire; our heart does not want these. Unfortunately, the region is in a bind," he said, without elaborating.

As insurgents pressed on with their offensive against government forces, a senior UN official warned on Friday that up to 1.5 million people could be forced to flee a surge in fighting in Syria.

The violence has already displaced 280,000 people since it erupted in late November; Samer Abdeljaber, the World Food Program's Director for Emergency Coordination, Strategic Analysis and Humanitarian Diplomacy, told reporters in Geneva.

Amnesty affirms Israeli genocide in Gaza



Displaced Palestinian children play next to tents set up on an area in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip, on December 5, 2024.

ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

National Desk

Human rights group Amnesty International said Israel is committing genocide in the Gaza Strip amid its ongoing war in the region, adding that it has sought to deliberately destroy Palestinians by mounting deadly attacks, demolishing vital infrastructure, and preventing the delivery of food, medicine and other aid. In a report released Wednesday, the organization listed facts about the war,

which began Oct. 7, 2023, after Hamas struck the Israeli-occupied territories in a surprise attack and took more than 250 people as captives. In response, Israel vowed to eliminate the Palestinian resistance group and bring the captives back, AP reported.

However, the war has ravaged the Gaza Strip for a year and more than 44,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to local health officials. Extreme famine and disease have been rampant in the region as Palestinians grapple with the war and cease-fire talks have largely been stalled. "In isolation, these are serious violations of international humanitarian law or in-

ternational human rights law," Amnesty wrote. "But looking at the broader picture of Israel's military campaign and the cumulative impact of its policies and acts, the conclusion we came to is genocidal intent."

The group also argued that Israel's continued actions after Hamas's initial attack cannot be justified as a response or defense.

"Our damning findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide. It must stop now," Amnesty Secretary-General Agnès Callamard said in the report.

Even after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other members of his hardline cabinet were issued warrants for arrest by the International Criminal Court last month over the course of the war, the regime has rejected Amnesty's report that it is committing genocide or violating international law.

Still, in the report, the human rights group analyzed the pattern of Israel's conduct over a nine-month stretch and reviewed official statements from the cabinet and military officials.

"Through its research findings and legal analysis, Amnesty International has found sufficient basis to conclude that Israel committed, during the nine-month period under review, prohibited acts," the report reads.

"The organization has also found sufficient basis to conclude that these acts were committed with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, as such, who form a substantial part of the Palestinian population," the group wrote.

The organization called on Israel to "immediately stop" its killings, bodily and mental harm and what it called a deliberate conflict of poor conditions of life. Amnesty asked Israel to comply in good faith with the International Court of Jus-

stice's proceedings, and to participate and uphold an immediate, sustained cease-fire.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said Thursday that at least 44,612 people have been killed in nearly 14 months of war.

The toll includes 39 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to the ministry, which said 105,834 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has attacked the Kamal Adwan Hospital and several nearby residential buildings in northern Gaza, killing at least 39, Palestinian medics said, including at least 20 in an attack that set ablaze tents sheltering displaced families in a crowded camp in the south of the territory.

Also, the United Nations health agency has no indication that a warning was issued before Israel's bombing early on Thursday of north Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital, the World Health Organization's regional representative said on Friday.

Iran launches first indigenous space tug, nano-satellite into orbit

National Desk

Iran launched a space tug and a nano-satellite into orbit using a domestically-manufactured satellite launch vehicle (SLV) on Friday morning.

In a milestone for Iran's space sector, a space tug, the Saman-1, along with a research payload, the Fakhr-1, were successfully sent into space from the Imam Khomeini Space Launch Terminal, southeast of Semnan, using the Simorgh launcher.

The space tug domestically designed and manufactured by Iranian experts and technicians was launched into space aboard the homegrown SLV. The research payloads were also placed in an orbit around the Earth, with an apogee of 410 kilometers and a perigee of 300 kilometers. In its eighth launch, the Simorgh set a new record for the liftoff of

payloads. During this multi-phase mission, it successfully placed the Saman-1 orbital transfer block and two other research payloads, weighing nearly 300 kilograms, into orbit.

Designed and developed by technicians from the Iranian Space Research Center (ISRC), the Saman-1 system is designed to place satellites in higher orbits, reducing costs and eliminating the need for large launch vehicles with high fuel consumption. The space tug was test-launched in October 2022. Reflecting on the system, Hassan Salaryieh, chief of Iranian Space Agency said that the system "means a quicker and smoother process of obtaining the orbital point synchronized with the Earth once a satellite elevates its orbital height from the geostationary orbit to the operational one."

One of the payloads of today's launcher was, the Fakhr-1 communication satel-

lite. This satellite, developed by experts from the Ministry of Defense's Iran Electronics Industries, was placed into a 410-kilometer orbit, Press TV reported. The nano-satellite, named in honor of the martyred scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, has a 3U size and weighs less than 10 kilograms.

One of the goals of this space mission, according to Tasnim news agency, was to validate the multi-payload launch capability of the Simorgh launcher.

Key subsystems used in the Fakhr-1 include the central computer, power and energy management, radio communications, and flight dynamics. After separation from the launch vehicle, the satellite transmitted telemetry data, including information from its subsystems and sensors. During its first pass, the satellite correctly received and executed commands from ground stations.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

