

# Leader says Hamas vanquished Israel, US in Gaza war

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Saturday that the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas defeated Israel and the US in their war on Gaza, and described the cease-fire deal a "great achievement." Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with Hamas Shura Council chairman Muhammad Ismail Darwish, acting Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya, and other members of the group's political bureau in Tehran on Saturday, Press TV reported.

"You overcame the Zionist regime and, in fact, the US and by the grace of God, you did not let them achieve any of their goals," the Leader added.

Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the suffering of the Gazan people for a year and half of the Israeli war, saying the ultimate result is "the victory of right over wrong."

"The people of Gaza became an example for all those who have their hearts in resistance," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also praised Hamas negotiators, saying their deal forcing Israel to halt its brutal war on Gaza and release thousands of Palestinian prisoners is a "great achievement."

The first 42-day phase of the cease-fire agreement calls for 33 Israeli captives and nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners to be released.

So far, the agreement has held, but US President Donald Trump's proposal to clear Gaza of its inhabitants and take over the territory is creating hiccups amid widespread denunciation around the world.

Ayatollah Khamenei called on the Palestinian resistance to stay put, saying it is "necessary to plan for cultural works and continue the current path of PR



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (r) meets with a high-ranking Hamas delegation in Tehran on February 8, 2025.

● leader.ir

works alongside military affairs and the reconstruction of Gaza." The Leader described faith as the main "asymmetric weapon" of the resistance front against the enemy. "It is because of this faith that the Islamic Republic and the resistance front do not feel weak against the enemies." Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the recent US threats against the Islamic Republic and the people of Iran, saying, "They have no effect on the mentality of the nation and our officials, as well as the country's activists and youth." Iran, which targeted Israel twice with a volley of missiles and drones during the Gaza war, has seen a rise in sanctions and



threats of attack from the US and Israel since Trump came to office.

On Thursday, Washington imposed its first sanctions on Iran after the US president re-

vived his so-called maximum pressure strategy against the Islamic Republic.

## Pezeshkian: Enemy mistaken to think Iran will succumb to sanctions

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday shrugged off new US sanctions targeting Iran, saying, "The enemy thinks that we will starve to death due to the sanctions but this is not the case." Addressing a ceremony held to inaugurate a number of industrial and tourism projects in the southeastern city of Sirjan in Kerman Province, Pezeshkian said that the country maintains a great potential to stand atop other states in the region. The Iranian president said progress would not take place by relying on others and underlined that Iran does not lack anything to become the best country in West Asia. "Today, we lack nothing from the

countries in the region; we can be the best country in the region; we have very high capacities, provided that the views of all officials change and we are able to change the status quo," the Iranian president said. The president's remarks came a day after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that talks with the US would not solve the country's problems, stressing that such negotiations are "not smart, wise, or honorable." US President Donald Trump on Tuesday restored his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran that includes efforts to drive its oil exports down to zero. The move brings back the tough US policy on Iran that Trump practiced throughout his first term.

During his first term in office in 2018, the US president pulled his country out of Tehran's 2015 nuclear pact with world powers and illegally reimposed crippling sanctions on Iran. As the first measure after reimposing the maximum pressure campaign, the US Department of the Treasury on Thursday announced financial bans on an international network "facilitating the shipment of millions of barrels of Iranian crude oil worth hundreds of millions of dollars" to China. The department's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned more than a dozen people and companies in China, India and the United Arab Emirates. The targets include Iranian and Indian citizens, crew management firms and a collection of ships.

## Iran says US bans on ICC aim to grant Israel impunity for criminal acts

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said the United States' decision to sanction the International Criminal Court (ICC) is aimed at granting Israel full impunity for its criminal acts in pursuit of its "colonial erasure" of Palestine. Baqaei made the comments after US President Donald Trump signed an executive order imposing bans on the ICC which has issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former military affairs minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes during the war on Gaza.



Esmail Baqaei  
● IRNA

"Sanctioning ICC for investigating Israel's heinous crimes marks a new low in the annals of US complicity and collusion with an occupying apartheid regime that has committed all sorts of atrocities in pursuit of its 'colonial erasure' of Palestine," the Iranian spokesperson said in a message posted on his X account. Trump's order, which called the warrants "baseless", freezes US assets of people working on ICC investigations of American citizens or US ally Israel, barring them from visiting the United States.

"This is truly an egregious abuse of power aimed at affording Israeli regime the fullest impunity for its criminal acts

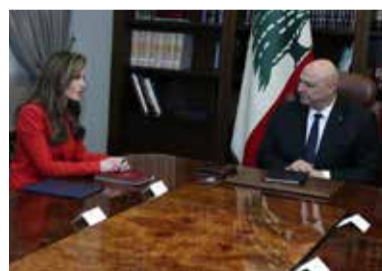
that seriously threaten int'l peace and security," Baqaei further said, calling on the world to "beware and react accordingly" as the US is now targeting inter-governmental institutions through extraterritorial application of its domestic law. Reuters reported that a group of 80 of countries on Friday expressed their "unwavering support" for the ICC, an intergovernmental organization seated in The Hague, Netherlands, which is the only permanent court for the prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. The ICC itself condemned the sanctions as well, saying it will stand firmly in its pursuit of justice.

## Outrage in Lebanon over anti-Hezbollah US meddlesome comments

International Desk

Comments by a US official against Hezbollah resistance movement have sparked outrage in Lebanon, with the popular group decrying them as "blatant interference" in Lebanon's affairs. US deputy special envoy to the Middle East Morgan Ortogus said in a meeting with Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun that Hezbollah "should not be included" in Lebanon's future government and that the inclusion of Hezbollah was a "red line" for Washington. "It is thanks to President Aoun and Prime Minister-designate Nawaf Salam, and everyone in this government who is committed to an end of corruption, who is committed to reforms and who are committed to making sure that Hezbollah is not a part of this government in any form, and that Hezbollah remains disarmed and militarily defeated." Mohammad Raad, head of Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc – the political wing of Hezbollah – in the Lebanese parliament, said the US envoy's statement was "full of hate and irresponsibility." "It targeted a Lebanese component that is an integral part of the national agreement

and Lebanese political life that stood up to Israeli aggression and emerged victorious," Raad said in a statement to the media on Friday. Such American comments "are an unacceptable interference in Lebanese affairs and a disrespect to all diplomatic customs and international diplomacy rules," he added. Mahmoud Qamati, deputy head of Hezbollah's political council, also strongly responded to interventionist remarks by the US envoy and said Ortogus "threatened a large segment of the Lebanese people" through her statements. Stressing that the Lebanese have unanimously agreed to include non-partisan figures in the to-be-formed government, Qamati said, "The US with the Donald Trump administration is implementing a new dictatorship to rule the world but it will not be able to impose its project in the region or prevent Hezbollah from participating in the government." He underlined that, "The US envoy is putting on an empty show of strength and her statement is extreme insolence." Qamati stressed that foreign parties should not be allowed to intervene in Lebanon's internal affairs, saying, "The



Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun (r) meets with US deputy special envoy to the Middle East Morgan Ortogus in Beirut, Lebanon, on February 7, 2025.

● AP

US envoy's statement is a clear threat to a large group of Lebanese citizens." Moreover, a group of young Hezbollah supporters gathered in front of Beirut's airport building on Friday afternoon to protest against the US envoy's comments. Waving Hezbollah's yellow flag, they burned tires and blocked the road leading to Beirut's international airport, with some of them spray-painting the Star of David and the words "USA" and "Trump" on the road for people to trample and cars to drive over.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

