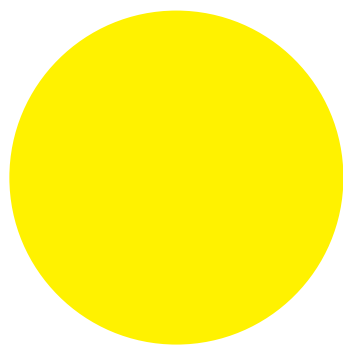


Leader highlights  
seminaries' role  
in building  
Islamic civilization

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## Iran rails against Trump's reported plan to rename Persian Gulf

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A general view of a damaged building at the Government Health and Educational complex in Muridke, Pakistan, after Indian strikes on May 7, 2025.  
• FAROOQ NAEEM/AFP

A recent political tension between India and Pakistan over a deadly attack on tourists in Indian-controlled Kashmir turned into the most serious military confrontation between the two neighbors in two decades with the world countries calling on both nuclear-armed countries to show restraint and act im-

mediately to deescalate. India fired missiles at Pakistan early Wednesday, in what it said was retaliation for last month's killing of Indian tourists. Pakistan called the strikes an act of war and said it downed several Indian fighter jets. The missiles killed more than two dozen people, including

women and children, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and the country's Punjab Province, Pakistan's military said. The strikes targeted at least nine sites "where terrorist attacks against India have been planned," India's Defense Ministry said.

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### Fake names can't tarnish Persian Gulf's historic identity



By Jahanbakhsh Izadi  
International relations expert

O P I N I O N  
E X C L U S I V E

According to unnamed US officials, President Donald Trump plans to announce during his upcoming visit to Saudi Arabia that the United States will henceforth refer to the Persian Gulf by the fabricated name "Arabian Gulf." Such a provocative move is nothing short of an attempt to rewrite history and twist historical facts. In fact, Trump's gesture is aimed at handing out token favors to Saudi Arabia and certain Arab states; among these symbolic concessions is the rebranding of the Persian Gulf—a step seemingly designed to butter up his hosts. Some Arab countries have long been pushing for this name change. Nor is this the first time Americans have adopted the term "Arabian Gulf". US strategic circles have been throwing around this false label for quite some time. But this time, they have come right out with it, making the announcement deliberately as a diplomatic overture ahead of Trump's visit to Riyadh. In my view, such moves will not succeed in pushing through a renaming of the Persian Gulf, nor will they lead to the catching on of the term "Arabian Gulf."

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# Iran rails against Trump's reported plan to rename Persian Gulf

**International Desk**

Iranian officials furiously reacted to a report that US President Donald Trump plans to rename the Persian Gulf during his visit to Saudi Arabia next week. "Let's hope that the absurd rumors about the PERSIAN Gulf that are going around are no more than a disinformation campaign by 'forever warriors' to anger Iranians all over the world and agitate them," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X Wednesday. The warning came after The Associated Press, citing unnamed US officials, said Trump plans to announce in Saudi Arabia that the United States would now refer to the Persian Gulf as the A-r-a-b-i-a-n Gulf or the Gulf of Arabia. "The president is expected to unveil what he calls a 'historic reorientation' of US nomenclature to better reflect regional alliances," one of the officials said.

While Trump can direct US federal agencies to use a different name, he cannot enforce the change globally. Congressional legislation would be required to make the shift permanent in US law, and a future administration could easily reverse it. It also follows a controversial decision earlier this year to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the “Gulf of America” in US government usage — a move that led to a legal battle with the Associated Press.

“I am confident that Donald Trump is aware that the name PERSIAN Gulf is centuries old and recognized by all cartographers and international bodies and was even used by all leaders of the region in their official communications until as recently as the 1960’s,” Araghchi said.

“While any short-sighted step in this connection will have no validity or legal or geographical effect, it will only bring the wrath of all Iranians from all walks of life and

political persuasion in Iran, the US and across the world,” he added. “Iran has never objected to the use of names such as the Sea of Oman, Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, or Red Sea. The use of these names does not imply ownership by any particular nation, but rather reflects a shared respect for the collective heritage of humanity,” he said. Iran’s Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also reacted to the news, saying, “Maybe shoes and clothes can be bought with dollars and dirhams, but history and geography cannot be bought.” Former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif warned against any attempt to rename the Persian Gulf, saying that such a fabrication would infuriate “every patriotic Iranian.” Zarif wrote on his X account that Iranians will show the world and the residents of the White House that Iranians will not tolerate “this short-sighted adventurism.”



## US-Iran nuclear talks on 'right pathway': *American VP*

## International Desk

US Vice President JD Vance said on Wednesday that talks on Iran's nuclear program are heading in the right direction as the fourth round of talks, initially scheduled for May 3, is reportedly set to be held on Sunday. "We're on the right pathway," Vance told the Munich Leaders Meeting in Washington, describing the talks as "so far, so good." "We don't care if people want nuclear power. We're fine with that, but you can't have the kind of enrichment program that allows you to get to a nuclear weapon, and that's where we draw the line," he said.

Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei on Monday denounced some contradictory remarks by the US officials on a possible nuclear deal with Iran, saying that they are not helpful.

Baqaei made the remarks after Trump and his Secretary of State Marco Rubio called for total dismantlement of Iran's nuclear program while stressing on the path of diplomacy to resolve a decades-long dispute over the issue.

"Such conflicting messages does not affect to our determination to stand by our fundamental positions," Baqaei said.

"If there is sincerity in the claim that the American side's demand is for the Islamic Republic of Iran not to possess a nuclear bomb, then I believe many issues can be worked out, as we have already declared – and demonstrated in practice – that we are not in any way seeking to weaponize our nuclear program," the Iranian official said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also reacted to Trump's remarks.

"If their ultimate goal is, as President Trump has repeatedly said, the only thing they can't have is nuclear weapons, an agreement is achievable, but there is only one way to achieve it: diplomacy, based on mutual respect and mutual interests", Araghchi said on X.

Donald Trump said on Sunday that his goal in discussions with Iran is "total dismantlement" of that nation's nuclear program. He also said that he is willing to listen to arguments for allowing Iran to pursue civilian nuclear energy while ending what he called its nuclear weapons program.

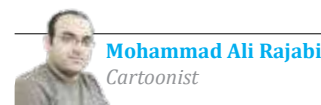
Rubio has also called on Iran to "walk away" from uranium enrichment. In a Thursday interview with Fox News Rubio claimed that "the only countries in the world that enrich uranium are the ones that have nuclear weapons."

Araghchi took to social media on Saturday to declare, "Iran has every right to possess the full nuclear fuel cycle," referencing the country's membership in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Since April 12, the two countries have held three rounds of talks in Oman and Italy, that have been described by the two sides as "positive and constructive".

The latest round of the negotiations was postponed, with mediator Oman citing "logistical reasons" for the delay.

However, Iranian media outlet Nour News said on Tuesday that fourth round of talks is set to be held in Oman on Sunday.



## India, Pakistan trade ...

Pakistan said it reserved the right to respond, raising the specter that the back-and-forth could spiral into all-out conflict. Already, it is the worst confrontation between the rivals since 2019, when they came close to war.

Following the strikes, there was a heavy exchange of fire that officials in each country said left more people dead. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended the armed forces for shooting down five Indian jets, which he said were hit after they fired their missiles but while still in Indian airspace.

Tensions have soared between the neighbors since an April attack in which gunmen killed 26 people, mostly Indian tourists, in India-controlled Kashmir. India accuses Pakistan of being behind the attack, which was claimed by a group calling itself Kashmir Resistance. India has said the group is linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a disbanded Pakistani militant group that New Delhi long accused of being backed by Pakistan. Islamabad has categorically denied involvement in the attack.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety. The two countries have expelled each other's diplomats and nationals, closed their borders and shuttered airspace. India has also suspended a critical wa-

ter-sharing treaty with Pakistan.

## Pakistan's retaliation

Pakistan's prime minister condemned the airstrikes and said his country would retaliate.

"Pakistan has every right to give a robust response to this act of war imposed by India, and a strong response is indeed being given," Sharif said.

The country's National Security Committee said Pakistan reserves the right to respond "in self-defense, at a time, place, and manner of its choosing."

The statement said the strikes were carried out "on the false pretext of the presence of imaginary terrorist camps" and said they killed civilians.

Deadly clashes sparked alarm and calls for restraint from around the world on Wednesday.

## Global reaction

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for maximum restraint because the world could not "afford a military confrontation" between India and Pakistan, according to a statement from spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei in a Wednesday statement expressed deep concern over escalating tensions, urging both sides to exercise restraint.

The Iranian official described the growing tensions between Pakistan and India



as a serious matter of concern for Iran. He expressed hope that both sides would take steps toward de-escalation and prevent further deterioration by exercising restraint. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi traveled to India to meet the country's officials. Before his trip to New Delhi, he paid a two-day visit to the neighboring Pakistan where he emphasized the importance of easing tensions while calling on all parties to exercise restraint and prevent the escalation of the situation. The European Union also called on both countries to act immediately to deescalate. "We do urge both sides to show restraint and take immediate steps towards de-escalation. The EU recalls the need for a negotiated, agreed and lasting, peaceful solution to the conflict," EU foreign affairs spokesman Anouar El Anouni told reporters. Many other countries also reacted to the confrontation.



# Pezeshkian calls power cuts to industrial sector government's last resort

## 11,000 MW surge in electricity demand

### Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addressed energy consumption management strategies, stating, "Power cuts in production sectors and industries are a last resort," and his government would make every effort to avoid disrupting electricity supply to industries. During Wednesday's cabinet meeting, the president emphasized the urgency of accelerating solar panel installation in government offices and ensuring precise public communication on this matter.

Government offices are required to source at least 20% of their electricity from renewable energy. The president has issued a two-month compliance period for government agencies to install solar panels, effective June 21.

Pezeshkian noted, "Cultivating public awareness is a critical and effective measure for managing electricity consumption." The president also stressed the importance of coordinating all provincial and local authorities to combat unauthorized electricity use, particularly in cryptocurrency mining, and urged public participation in such efforts.

Pezeshkian also ordered an immediate investigation into the energy minister's report on power sector challenges and alleged "SMS threats" against efforts to curb illegal mining activities.

Detailing regulatory actions, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said, "Over 258,000 illegal cryptocurrency mining devices have been seized and destroyed this

year. Each device consumed as much electricity as 10 households monthly."

Aliabadi reported that Iran's electricity consumption in the second Iranian month of Ordibehesht (began on April 21 last year was 46,000 megawatts (MW), adding, "This year, demand for the same period has reached 57,000 MW — an 11,000 MW increase compared to last year."

### Power generation growth

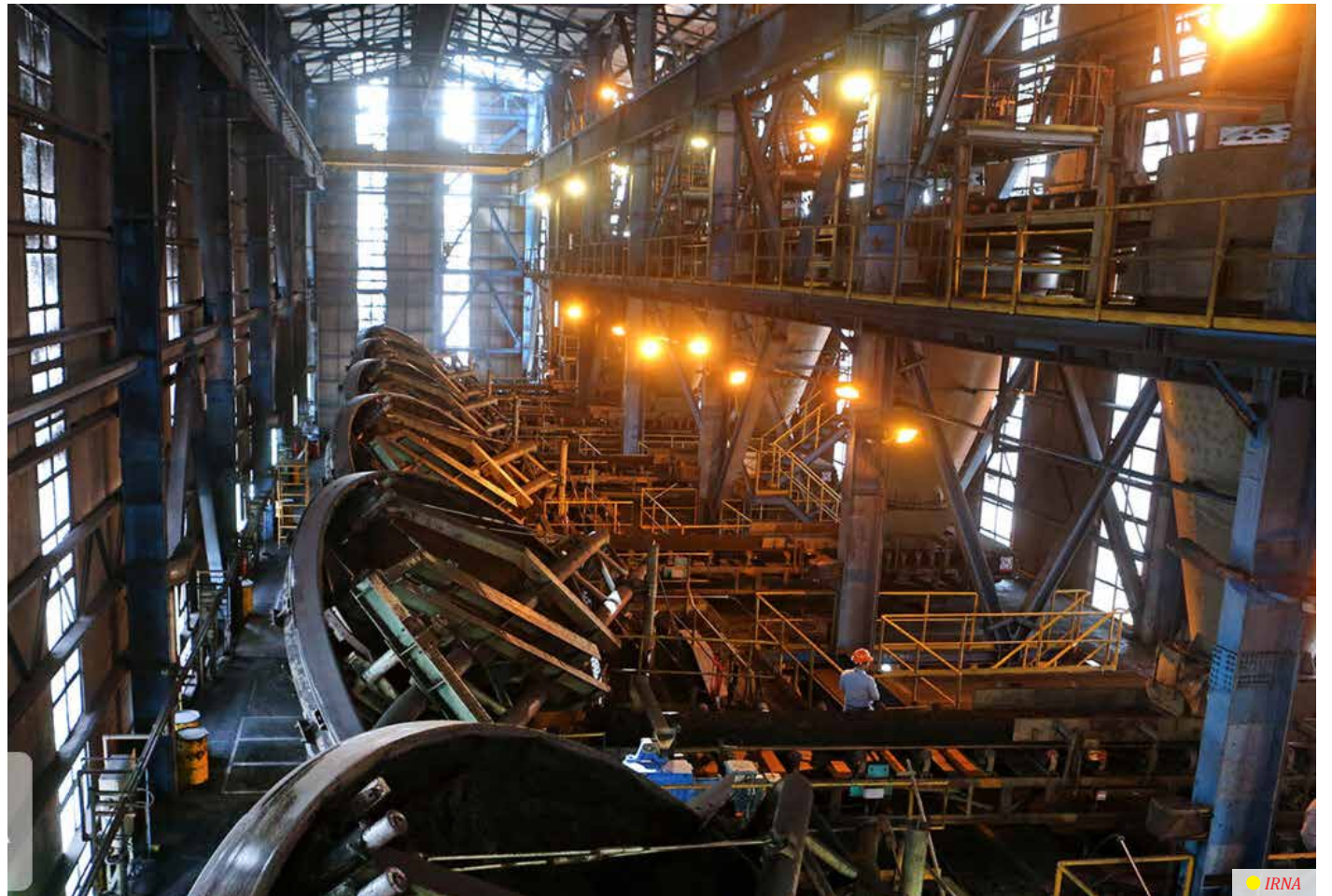
During a Tuesday meeting with Tehran Province's parliamentary representatives at Tehran Regional Electric Company (TREC), Aliabadi outlined significant expansions in Iran's power infrastructure.

He highlighted that thermal power capacity has risen from 40,000 megawatts (MW) last year to over 45,000 MW this year. Renewable energy output, he noted, has more than doubled from 300 MW to 700 MW, while distributed generation systems — small-scale power plants — expanded from 1,000 MW to 1,300 MW over the same period. The minister also highlighted electricity imports from neighboring countries, which climbed from 300 MW last year to 500 MW this year.

On consumption management mechanisms, Aliabadi stated, "Electricity prices will rise incrementally under Parliament's approved law. This stepwise approach aims to incentivize high-consumption users to reduce usage and optimize efficiency."

### Consumption measures

In line with enforcing consumption warnings, Head of Iran Pow-



er Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said Wednesday, "Customers exceeding defined usage patterns will face one-hour power cuts for every 20 minutes of overconsumption." On Tuesday, electricity was cut in 700 major banks for surpassing consumption limits. Meanwhile, Aliabadi said, "These measures, aimed at optimizing consumption and addressing

supply-demand imbalances, will continue. However, maximizing their success requires collaboration with other institutions, particularly the parliament."

On adjusting official working hours during summer, he remarked, "Changing office hours alone is insufficient and may disrupt families. Shifting the national clock could reduce consumption by over 1,000 MW. We hope the parliament cooperates

on this."

According to the Government Spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani, the new working hours for government offices will be "from Saturday, May 10, from 6:00 AM to 1:00 PM."

The government earlier stated that aligning work hours with daylight would help manage energy consumption and reduce grid strain.

A recent urgent bill proposing

state authority to set working hours was rejected by Parliament during expedited review.

Also last week, a member of the Parliament's Civil Construction Commission announced the initiation of Energy Minister Aliabadi's impeachment with 18 signatures.

According to Hamidreza Goodarzi, the number of signatures for impeaching the Energy Minister was "on the rise."

## Import ban lifted on foreign goods with Iranian counterparts



### Economy Desk

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced that the prohibition on importing foreign consumer and durable goods with domestic counterparts had been expired.

The ban — established under Article 16 of the Law on Maximizing the Use of Domestic Production and Service Capacities

and Supporting Iranian Goods (ratified in 2018) and valid until the end of the 6th Five-Year Development Plan — has lapsed, ISNA reported.

With the expiration of the law and the absence of any prohibition clause in the 7th Five-Year Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran, coupled with Article 22 of the Law on Permanent Provisions of National Development Plans, which prohib-

its non-tariff and non-technical import barriers except where required by religious principles, it is proposed that instead of imposing restrictions to protect domestic production, authorities should utilize tariff instruments or technical regulations to manage imports of foreign goods with Iranian equivalents. IRICA said the new approach must also safeguard the acquired rights of importers.

## IRICA: Foreign trade hit \$5.8b last month, gold tops import list

### Economy Desk

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) reported the value of the country's non-oil foreign trade in the first Iranian month of Farvardin (began on March 20, 2025) at \$5.798 billion, stating that gold in raw forms, valued at \$583 million, topped the list of imported goods during this period.

Iran's non-oil foreign trade in Farvardin totaled 10.756 million tons worth \$5.798 billion, reflecting a 12% decline in weight and a 3% drop in value compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

The report added that 8.957 million tons worth \$2.942 billion were allocated to exports, while 1.799 million tons valued at \$2.856 billion were attributed to imports. Non-oil exports in the first month of the current year saw an 8.3% decrease in weight and an 8% decline in value, while imports recorded a 26.4% reduction in weight but a 2.3% rise in value.

The report noted that the average customs value per ton of exported goods in Farvardin this year stood at \$328, marking a 0.47% increase year-on-year. The average customs value per ton of imported goods

reached \$1,587, up 39% compared to the same period last year. Last month, 15% of the weight and 20.6% of the value of Iran's total non-oil exports were attributed to petrochemical products.

### \$1b worth of goods exported to China

China was the top destination for Iranian exports in Farvardin, receiving \$997 million worth of goods, followed by Iraq (\$401 million), United Arab Emirates (\$395 million), Turkey (\$189 million), Afghanistan (\$143 million), Oman (\$140 million), and Pakistan (\$124 million).

IRICA said 80% of the weight and 81% of the value of Iran's total non-oil exports were directed to the aforementioned seven countries.

### UAE as largest import partner

The UAE was Iran's largest import partner during the month, accounting for \$859 million, followed by China (\$768 million), Turkey (\$538 million), Germany (\$87 million), Netherlands (\$75 million), India (\$69 million), and Pakistan (\$43 million).

According to IRICA, 83% of the weight and 85% of the value of Iran's total imports during the period originated from the seven countries.





# US actions in Yemen fuel regional instability

By Zhang Yuan  
& Mohammad Hossein Vahedi\*

## OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The Red Sea is a vital corridor for international trade and energy commerce. Its security and stability are also crucial components of peace and stability in the Middle East. The Red Sea crisis is one of the spillover effects of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. At the heart of the unresolved Palestinian issue lies the absence of international justice. What the US air strikes on Yemen have truly damaged is Yemen's local infrastructure — paid for with the lives, health, and property of its people. America's military actions against Yemen have escalated tensions in the Middle East, and the intensifying armed clashes between the US and the Ansarullah (Houthis) reflect Washington's attempt to suppress Iran's regional influence. However, the US and its allies' military operations against the Houthis in Yemen are unlikely to achieve their stated objectives unless the root causes of the Middle East's security dilemma are resolved. The best approach to addressing the Yemen issue is to insist on political dialogue and consulta-



A ship fires missiles at an undisclosed location, after US President Donald Trump launched military strikes against Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthis) over the group's attacks against Red Sea shipping, in this screengrab obtained from a handout video released on March 15, 2025.

● REUTERS

tion. All stakeholders should enhance diplomatic efforts rather than resorting to military sabotage. China emphasizes the importance of upholding the right to freedom of navigation for all countries in the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in accordance with international

law. China has consistently supported the UN-led Yemeni peace process and urged all parties to adhere to the UN Charter and international law. China's proposed solution to the Yemen crisis is for all parties to work together under international law to ensure the safety

of shipping routes in the Red Sea while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of coastal states. Moreover, full implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions should be promoted to secure an immediate cease-fire and end the war.

The Red Sea remains a critical passage for global trade. Recently, US President Donald Trump has called for the Suez Canal to be "free for America," which could signal another move against Yemen's Houthis. From the outset, the slogan of the Houthis has been resistance

against American and Israeli imperialism — a stance that gained greater traction after October 7, when they vowed to reduce maritime exports to Israel to zero. Their actions took a new turn when they launched attacks on US and British warships. Upon returning to power, Trump swiftly moved to eliminate them, even ordering heavy air strikes on Saada, the Houthis' stronghold. Yet, despite these efforts, the Houthis remain undefeated, having successfully destroyed 20 US drones and preserved key missile sites. The US has already spent \$3 billion, but the Houthi movement continues to operate.

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\* Mohammad Hossein Vahedi is a senior political science analyst.

## Ansarullah's bold air siege sends shockwaves through Israel

### PERSPECTIVE

May 4, 2025, was anything but a routine day in Tel Aviv. The moment the sound of missiles broke out, panic swept through the city, and as a missile struck its target — sending thick smoke billowing into the sky and images circulating worldwide — Israelis were left on edge. This incident, carried out by Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthis), serves as a wake-up call: seeing such plumes of smoke in the heart of the occupied territories is no longer a rare sight, especially near airports, which could force international airlines to call off flights to Israel. In this vein, Ansarullah has threatened to impose a full air blockade on the occupying regime.

### Advanced defense systems knocked out

For the first time, a missile from the Yemeni resistance group got through and hit home inside Israel, laying bare the failure of Israel's advanced defense systems to intercept the attack. Experts on Israeli affairs believe Ansarullah's success in breaking through Israeli air defenses and threatening Ben Gurion Airport marks a game-changer in the rules of engagement. Israel now finds itself facing unprecedented threats from Yemen. The power of Ansarullah's offensive — and Israel's inability to fend off these missiles and protect its critical infrastructure — has raised eyebrows and fueled concerns over the shortcomings of advanced defense systems like

Israel's Arrow 3 and the US-made THAAD.

Following the attack, Ansarullah announced that Ben Gurion Airport and other targets in southern and central Israel had been hit, with missile ranges stretching as far as Eilat, the Negev, and the Red Sea.

### Ripple effects of Yemeni strike

Hebrew media, quoting official sources, reported that the Ansarullah missile left eight people injured, including two who were making for shelters. The attack also brought air traffic to a standstill and prompted several international airlines to scrap flights to Tel Aviv. Crucially, data analysis has brought to light over 40 disruptions to international flights at Ben Gurion Airport since Israel resumed its brutal offensive on Gaza on March 18, 2023. General Yahya Saree, Ansarullah's spokesperson, declared after the airport attack that the Yemeni resistance group would keep up its strikes on airports



— especially Ben Gurion — in a bid to tighten the screws on Israel. He urged all international airlines to pull out of Israeli airports to guarantee the safety of their aircraft. Ansarullah's declaration of a comprehensive air blockade — by targeting airports — brings with it several consequences:

- Airports will be singled out as primary targets, not just Ben Gurion.
- International flights could grind to a halt for an extended period.
- Undoubtedly, Ansarullah's at-

tack on Ben Gurion Airport raises security red flags and exposes Israel's vulnerability in protecting its vital facilities.

- This is not just another episode in the Yemen-Israel standoff; it signals an escalation in threats from the Yemeni front.
- The strike raises pressing questions about the effectiveness of Israeli and American defense systems if tensions flare up and new fronts open up. In fact, the attack served as a reality check for Israelis, and

Israeli security forces inspect the site where the Israeli military said a projectile fired by Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthis) landed in the area of Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv, on May 4, 2025.

● OHAD ZWIGENBERG/AP

failure to weather this storm could heap social and political pressure on their cabinet.

The full article first appeared in Persian on Rahbord-e Moaser.



Passengers stand around waiting at Ben Gurion Airport, near Tel Aviv, on May 4, 2025, after a missile strike by Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthis) disrupted flights.

● CHAIM GOLDBERG/FLASH90



# US aggression in Yemen cloaked by ‘self-defense’ lie

By Craig Mokhiber  
Former head of  
New York OHCHR  
**O P I N I O N**

The US (like the Israeli regime with which it collaborates so closely) is fond of the “magic word defense”. When operating outside the bounds of international law and human morality, they simply spout terms like “terrorist” or “self-defense,” as if these incantations provide an impermeable shield against legal accountability for their actions. Needless to say, they do not. And yet you would not know this from the ways that Western media corporations dutifully parrot these narratives. It thus bears repeating that neither law nor morality is on the side of the US government in its armed assaults on Yemen. The US is attacking Yemen because the Yemenis dared to impose a blockade on shipping destined to resupply the Israeli regime and its unlawful occupation and genocide in Palestine. Thus, while the Yemeni maritime blockade on the Israeli regime is fully justified (in its opposition to the unlawful Israeli occupation, siege, and genocide in Palestine), the US attacks on Yemen are entirely unjustifiable and unlawful under international law. Indeed, in its attacks on Yemen, the US is violating both its own laws (requiring Congressional authorization), as well as international law on three levels: by committing the crime of aggression, by acting in complicity with the genocide in Palestine, and by violating the international humanitarian law rules of necessity, proportionality, and distinction. This is not a questionable case. The UN Charter, a binding treaty imposing legal obligations on all countries, only allows the use of armed force by a state in two cases: (1) when the use of force is explicitly authorized by the UN Security Council or (2) temporarily, as an act of self-defense, if an armed attack occurs against a UN member state, until the Security Council can act. So, when, in January of 2024, the US (and the UK) failed to get Security Council authorization to use armed force against Yemen in support of the Israeli regime’s genocide in Palestine, they adopted two tactics: lie about the resolution and claim self-defense. But those tactics cannot conceal the unavoidable conclusion that their attacks on Yemen are as unlawful as they are morally reprehensible.

**No Security Council authorization**

To be clear, despite US and UK efforts, the resolution invoked by the US and its allies to justify their attacks, Resolution 2722, adopted by the Security Council on January 10, 2024, provides no authorization for the use of force. None. The Security Council had already imposed sanctions on the Ansarullah (Houthis) of Yemen (in connection with the civil war), and later condemned the Red Sea blockade, but it never authorized the use of military force by member states. But having failed to include force authorizing language, the US and its allies worked to include ob-



scuring language in the resolution to provide cover for their false narrative. The muddled negotiated text that resulted was, in a word, embarrassing for the Council. While it correctly denies any authorization for the use of force, it also distorts international law and gives cover to the US and its allies for acts of aggression against Yemen. Its distortion of international law is evident in its purported placement of the norm of freedom of navigation above the jus cogens [peremptory norm] and erga omnes [towards all] rules of genocide prevention, self-determination, and third state obligations not to aid the acquisition of territory by force. I say “purported” because, as a matter of law, UNSC resolutions cannot trump jus cogens and erga omnes rules of international law. The Council simply does not have that authority. Any such assertion by the Council would be null and void. Indeed, the Security Council derives its mandate and any powers it has from the UN Charter. And the Charter is a treaty that is part of international law. It does not stand above international law. And the obligations to prevent genocide, apartheid, and unlawful occupation all predate the adoption of the UNSC resolution and bind all UN member states in all circumstances. These obligations are clearly codified in the UN Charter, in treaties like the Genocide Convention and the Geneva Conventions, and in customary international law. But to make matters even clearer, just two weeks after the adoption of resolution 2722 (on January 26, 2024), the ICJ found Israel to be plausibly committing genocide in Palestine and put all third states on notice of their obligation to cease supplying the regime’s crimes. And just a few months after that (on July 19, 2024), the ICJ explicitly notified states of their obligation to cut off all aid to the Israeli occupation regime. This leaves no room for doubt. Israel’s occupation, apartheid, and genocide violate the highest-level rules of international law, imposing on all countries obligations to do all in their power to stop these crimes. Yemen’s blockade of Israel was therefore justified in international law. Attacking Yemen was not.

But this has not stopped the US and its allies from trying to invoke the UNSC resolution from January 2024 as a justification for armed attacks on Yemen, even after the various findings of the ICJ on Israel’s offenses in Palestine since the resolution was adopted. They have shamelessly sought to claim that the resolution authorizes the use of force against Yemen, when it does not such thing. Indeed, despite US efforts, the resolution definitively does not include any Chapter VII authorization for the use of force. Rather, it merely “takes note” of the right of states to defend their vessels from attacks. This is, in itself, legally dubious language and does more to obscure than to provide clarity. But it is definitively not, as a matter of both international law and Security Council practice, an authorization for an armed attack on a country. And not only does the resolution not authorize an armed attack, but it actually discourages such action by urging “caution and restraint to avoid further escalation” and encouraging “enhanced diplomatic efforts by all parties to that end”. Additionally, the resolution only defends the navigational rights and freedoms of vessels “in accordance with international law”. Ships seeking to resupply the Israeli regime during its genocide, siege, and unlawful occupation of Palestine are not acting “in accordance with international law,” as the International Court of Justice has made clear. What is more, the resolution reaffirms that international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (which, by the way, Yemen has ratified but the US has not), sets out the legal framework applicable to activities in the oceans, including “countering illicit activities at sea”. And that is indeed a statement of the law. But it begs the question of what activity at sea could be more illicit than using shipping to resupply a genocide and an illegal occupation, in breach of third state treaty obligations, and after the ICJ has already pronounced on the subject. Every ship that attempts to break the blockade in order to resupply the Israeli regime as it conducts genocide and unlawfully occupies Palestinian territory is in breach of international law. Any seafaring activities to this end are by definition illicit. There is no right in international law to use force to defend

such illicit activities.

**No legitimate claim to self-defense**

Thus, the US and its allies cannot legitimately invoke Resolution 2722 as a justification to attack Yemen. No doubt aware of this, they have padded their case with a claim of “self-defense” under the UN Charter. This, too, is a false claim. To be clear, states with the capacity to intervene to stop the resupply of the Israeli regime are duty-bound to do so. That is precisely what Yemen is doing. Attacking Yemen to support the Israeli regime is an act of aggression. This is precisely what the US is doing. First, a country cannot invoke self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter in order to justify unlawful acts, such as facilitating unlawful occupation or genocide. If a state seeks to do so, and someone steps up to stop them, the state cannot claim self-defense as a basis for attacking them, and, even less, they cannot claim a right to make war on a country in the name of self-defense. Secondly, the US has not been subjected to an “armed attack” within the meaning of international law. Indeed, the merchant ships engaged by the Yemenis were not American ships and were not sailing under the US flag. And even if they were, this would still not constitute an armed attack on the state (as defined in international law) and thus would not justify self-defense. As for US military ships, these were only fired at in self-defense by the Yemenis after the Americans traveled to the region and participated in ongoing attacks on Yemen. No US claim to self-defense can flow from such circumstances. Simply put, traveling around the globe to attack another country and then claiming self-defense when they strike back is not a legitimate claim under international law. Third, the US (and other complicit Western governments) are seeking to claim a cross-border right of self-defense against an entity that they do not recognize as a state. Neither the US nor the UK rec-

ognizes the Ansarullah (Houthi) government in Sanaa. Instead, they maintain relations with the UN-recognized Presidential Leadership Council that controls territory in the south of the country. And they do not claim that the entity that they recognize is in any way responsible for the Houthi actions. Generally, invoking self-defense requires that the armed attack to which a state is responding must be imputable to a foreign state. While there is debate on whether and in what (exceptional) circumstances Article 51 self-defense can be asserted against a non-state actor, it is indisputably a more difficult case to make. And using such a claim to actually wage war on the territory of a state (as the US is doing in Yemen) is even more dubious. Fourth, the right of States to defend their individual vessels from attack is not the same as the right to make war on the country of the attacker. As correctly articulated by the Swiss representative to the Security Council, lawful force is “strictly limited to military measures to intercept attacks against merchant vessels and warships to protect said vessels and the persons on board. In this context, any military operation that goes beyond this immediate protection need would be disproportionate.” Fifth, the law of self-defense also requires respect for the principles of necessity and proportionality, and international humanitarian law requires strict application of the principle of distinction. The US has violated all three. The US attacks are manifestly unnecessary because the US has not been attacked, and, in any event, it has other avenues of redress for its complaints about Red Sea shipping. It could, first of all, respect the humanitarian blockade and its international legal obligations to refrain from supporting the Israeli regime while it is engaged in unlawful occupation, siege, and genocide. It could withdraw its military ships and planes from the region and cease its threats and use of force. Beyond that, it could seek diplomatic solutions. It could encourage ships to respect the blockade, thus obviating the perceived need for conflict. Knowing that there are alternative sea routes to the Mediterranean, it could encourage ships to take those routes. And, in any case, claims of necessity only apply to the use of force necessary to repel an armed attack. They are not allowed for the purpose of protecting a state’s purported economic or security interests. And, in all cases, once an armed attack has ceased, the necessity ends. For the same reason, the US attacks violate the principle of proportionality. The wholesale bombing of Yemen, including of Yemeni cities, civilians, and civilian infrastructure, for the stated purpose of facilitating the breaking of the blockade by merchant vessels, cannot be defended as within the bounds of proportionality. Finally, the US strikes have violated the principle of distinction, deploying massive weaponry and disproportionately killing and wounding Yemeni civilians, now in their hundreds, many of them children and women.

When, in January of 2024, the US (and the UK) failed to get Security Council authorization to use armed force against Yemen in support of the Israeli regime’s genocide in Palestine, they adopted two tactics: lie about the resolution and claim self-defense. But those tactics cannot conceal the unavoidable conclusion that their attacks on Yemen are as unlawful as they are morally reprehensible.

On July 19, 2024, the ICJ explicitly notified states of their obligation to cut off all aid to the Israeli occupation regime. This leaves no room for doubt. Israel’s occupation, apartheid, and genocide violate the highest-level rules of international law, imposing on all countries obligations to do all in their power to stop these crimes.

The full article first appeared on Mondoweiss.



## AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup:

Iran edge Philippines  
in unconvincing opener

## Sports Desk

AFC – A late goal from the Islamic Republic of Iran secured a 1-0 victory in their opening match of the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup in China as they saw off the Philippines on Wednesday morning.

Making their tournament debut, the Philippines came within a whisker of pulling off one of the biggest upsets in the competition's history against the defending champions, who won every one of their 10 matches en-route to claiming the title in both previous editions in 2015 and 2018.

In the end, IR Iran found a way through in the dying stages as Maral Torkaman broke Philippines' hearts to take all three points in the Group B encounter at the Hohhot Sports Centre.

Far from being overawed, the Philippines took the game to their opponents from the start and Isabella Bandoja nearly gave them the lead in the third minute as Farzaneh Tavasoli denied her in a one-on-one situation before the rebound was chipped just over by Isabella Flanigan.

Iran then found their stride and saw efforts from Mahtab Banaei, Nasimeh



Iran's Maral Torkaman (14) celebrates after scoring the winner during a 1-0 victory over the Philippines in Hohhot, China, on May 7, 2025.

● AFC

Gholami and Torkaman saved by Samantha Hughes, while Elham Anafjeh and Fereshteh Karimi put their chances wide.

That sort of profligacy characterised the Central Asians' first-half showing as Karimi and Torkaman blasted the ball over from good positions, while Hughes - the youngest player at this tournament who turns 17 in two weeks' time - stymied Iran's other shots, in particular pulling off an outstanding double save on Torkaman and Banaei.

It was Tavasoli's turn to shine shortly after the break as she somehow clawed away Dionesa Tolentin's point-blank shot before then repelling another fierce strike from the same player.

The teams continued to trade blows but Iran, ranked ninth by FIFA - 46 places above the Philippines - struggled to find the breakthrough thanks to tenacious defending and strong goalkeeping.



But just when it looked like the match would end in only the second-ever goalless result, Torkaman came up with

the goods for Iran.

Having spurned several chances already, Torkaman made no mistake with

three minutes left after being set up by Sara Shirbeigi to sidefoot into an empty net and seal a hard-fought win.

## 'Incredible feeling': Inter's Taremi says after reaching UCL final



## Sports Desk

Inter striker Mahdi Taremi reveled in the "incredible feeling" of securing a place in the UEFA Champions League final after his side claimed a dramatic 4-3 extra-time victory over Barcelona at home on Tuesday, winning the last-

four tie 7-6 on aggregate.

Introduced as a second-half substitute for Argentine skipper Lautaro Martinez, Taremi teed up Davide Frattesi in the box for the all-important winner in the ninth minute of extra time as the Nerazzurri progressed to the final showpiece of the European



Inter striker Mahdi Taremi (99) is seen in action during a 4-3 victory over Barcelona in the UEFA Champions League semifinal second leg at San Siro, Milan, Italy, on May 6, 2025.

● X

elite clubs' competition for the second time in three seasons, looking to lift the trophy in Munich's Allianz Arena on May 31.

"It's an incredible feeling. Our approach was good, and we played very well. We have great respect for Barcelona, which is an amazing club," Taremi, who will be the second Iranian to be part of the Champions League final following legendary striker Ali Daei, told Inter TV.

Daei was an unused substitute for Bayern Munich in the classic 1999 final in Camp Nou, where the Bavarians conceded two stoppage-time goals to lose 2-1 to Manchester United.

"It was wonderful because every player dreams of playing in a Champions League semifinal, especially in a game

of this magnitude. When I arrived, I immediately saw a strong and united group, a great family. Our goal has always been to reach the Champions League final," added Taremi, who joined Inter as a free agent from Porto last summer.

Following a breathtaking first leg in Barcelona that had everything from early drama, late chaos, and dazzling moments from 17-year-old Lamine Yamal, the return encounter in Milan was even more dramatic, a roller-coaster ride that will live long in the memory.

It was a tale of two halves as Inter dominated the first 45 minutes and opened a two-goal lead thanks to a Martinez goal on the counter in the 21st minute before Hakan Calhanoglu extended their advantage with a penalty right before the break. However, Barca woke up in the second half with Eric Garcia and Dani Olmo netting within six minutes to level the scoring and, even though Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer worked

his magic to help keep the host alive, the Catalans thought they had scored the winner through Raphinha, who struck from close range in the 87th minute.

But as Inter made a desperate run for an equalizer, Denzel Dumfries found 37-year-old Francesco Acerbi inside the box and he fired a first-time effort into the net in third minute of added time to take the game to extra time.

"It took a super Inter, applause for these guys, two monstrous performances were put on the pitch. I'm happy to be their coach, they gave me everything they had. It is only right that they enjoy the success in this stadium," Inter boss Simone Inzaghi told Sky Sport.

"We had some problems, but with our hearts we went beyond every obstacle," added the Italian.

"We tried to play for it, with the weapons and the qualities we have. After the first leg we had the match plan in mind, but without sacrifice and help all together you can't do it."

## Curry injured in Warriors win as Pacers stun Cavs

BBC – The Golden State Warriors' win against the Minnesota Timberwolves in the second round of the NBA play-offs was soured by a hamstring injury to Stephen Curry.

The 37-year-old came off before half-time in game one of the series after pulling up during the Warriors' 99-88 win in Minneapolis. The two-time MVP clutched the back of his left leg after a defensive play and initially tried to carry on before signalling to the bench that he needed to be replaced.

Buddy Hield, Jimmy Butler and Draymond Green shared the scoring burden in Curry's absence, hitting 62 points between them.

Curry is likely to miss Friday's game two at least, as the Warriors wait on

the results of the scan.

"We're definitely game-planning for him to not be available for game two but we don't know yet," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr.

"With a hamstring, it's hard to imagine that he would play.

"I talked to him at half-time, he's obviously crushed. The guys picked him up and played a great game but we're all concerned about Steph.

"It's part of the game. Guys get hurt, you move on."

Elsewhere, Tyrese Haliburton hit a game-winning three-pointer as the Indiana Pacers shocked top seeds the Cleveland Cavaliers in game two of their second-round play-off.

The Pacers had been trailing throughout the match until a sensa-



Warriors' Stephen Curry (30) shoots during a victory over the Timberwolves in Minneapolis, MN, US, on May 6, 2025.

● DAVID BERDING/GETTY IMAGES

tional fourth quarter, when they out-scored the Cavaliers 36-21.

The Cavaliers, winners of the Eastern Conference, had a 20-point lead at one stage.

But, after a spirited fightback in the final minutes, Haliburton produced a stunning step-back three-pointer to give his side a 2-0 lead in the series. Aaron Nesmith and Myles Turner both top scored for the Pacers with 23 points each while Haliburton produced 20 of his own.





# Restoration of Zahhak Castle in Hashtrud bridges past and future

Iranica Desk

Amid the varied landscapes of East Azarbaijan Province, atop a solitary mountain in the southern part of Hashtrud, stands a fortress built from stone, woven into the fabric of ancient legends. Not only does this site serve as a historic stronghold, but it also symbolizes resilience, wisdom, and the rich stories embedded in Iranian cultural memory. Known as Zahhak Castle, an enigmatic structure with a history exceeding three thousand years, it now occupies a strategic intersection of history, mythology, and regional cultural-tourism development. Reexamining this site is not merely an archaeological task but a key element of our collective identity for today and the future.

Constructed with sophisticated engineering, Zahhak Castle rests on a bed of reddish rocks, its strategic location reflecting a wise choice for military fortifications in antiquity. Its elevation above sea level, challenging surrounding terrains, comprehensive oversight of nearby plains, and access to water resources all contribute to its distinction as a unique fortress in Iran's history, chtn.ir wrote.

Architecturally and functionally, Zahhak Castle displays evidence from the Median, Parthian, Sassanid, and early Islamic periods. Sassanid arches, colonnaded halls, deep water basins, remnants of temples, and defensive structures demonstrate that the site was not only a military base but also a religious, political, and educational hub.

Deputy Head of the East Azarbaijan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization Vahid Navadvad, emphasized the importance of safeguarding this valuable site. He stated: "Zahhak Castle is one of the most significant examples of rocky architecture and ancient engineering in northwest Iran. Unfortunately, over recent decades, this crucial historical fortress has not played as prominent a role in



the province's cultural tourism as it should. However, we are now committed to introducing, documenting, and developing the relevant infrastructure of this historic site with full dedication."

He added: "Based on stratigraphic studies and historical records, restoration work is currently underway at the main entrance and eastern side of the castle. Protecting this fortress is akin to preserving a part of the

region's historical memory and cultural identity. Our approach is minimal intervention — respecting the authenticity of the materials and the original form of the structure — and avoiding incompatible constructions." On the other hand, Zahhak Castle's unparalleled tourism potential can today become a pillar of sustainable regional development — if accompanied by a cultural perspective and careful planning.

Alireza Bayramzadeh, deputy head of East Azarbaijan Province's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization for Tourism Affairs, expressed: "Zahhak Castle is not just a sightseeing spot; it's an embodied experience — a blend of history, nature, myth, and architecture. Our plan includes improving access routes, installing multilingual informational signs, and developing basic infrastructure to promote

cultural tourism." He continued: "We are developing eco-tourism initiatives with local community participation, aiming to boost the local economy and facilitate transmission of cultural values. Additionally, specialized mythological and historical tours can attract an educated audience — a practice now common in many civilizations with a rich cultural heritage." In terms of strategic develop-

ment, Ahmad Hamzehzadeh, director general of the East Azerbaijan Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization, emphasized the need for coordination among the sectors of cultural heritage, tourism, and investment. He said: "In our new approach, preserving historic monuments is more than a heritage duty; it's part of a comprehensive regional cultural and economic development strategy. We see Zahhak Castle not only as a historic site but as a living asset for re-establishing regional identity." He added: "In this regard, negotiations are underway to attract cultural investors for creating museum sites, launching night-time tourism programs, and developing access routes. These initiatives, while preserving the site's authenticity, can serve as drivers of economic growth for Hashtrud and surrounding areas."

Zahhak Castle is not merely an ancient structure nestled high in Hashtrud's mountains; it embodies the enduring connection between history, wisdom, and cultural identity — standing against oblivion through centuries. While today it appears silent, worn by time and passing years, within this magnificent monument lies the potential to be revitalized within a vibrant cultural ecosystem — if perspectives extend beyond mere figures and budgets to explore the deeper meanings, authenticity, and wisdom woven into its layers of history.

In the current era, when sustainable development hinges on the cultural and indigenous assets we cherish, Zahhak Castle can serve as a model for innovative utilization of historical capacities in fostering economic and cultural growth.

If cultural heritage is wisely directed toward responsible tourism, public engagement, and targeted investment, it will not only be preserved but also become a dynamic, living asset in society. With its millennia-old history, Zahhak Castle deserves to shine within such a progressive paradigm.

## Delfard village; an ecological oasis with waterfalls, mountains, rich flora

Delfard village is situated along the road connecting Jiroft to Baft and Kerman, approximately 45 kilometers northwest of Jiroft and about 25 kilometers from the ancient Iranian urban settlement of "Aratta" in Kerman Province. The valley, stretching over 40 kilometers, is surrounded by Hezar Mountain to the northwest and the village of Abgarmu

to the southeast, located on the heights of Sarbijan. The village lies at an elevation of nearly 1,378 meters above sea level. The Delfard River flows through the village and the valley, which is also the source of the Shour River. Delfard is divided into two main parts: the upper, mountainous Delfard and the lower, more desert-like and tropical Del-

fard. The houses are primarily constructed from stone, iron, brick, and cement blocks, and are mostly single-story. Several medicinal pools are found in Delfard, offering potential for water therapy. Key features of Delfard include an abundance of waterfalls and rivers that flow in all seasons, natural ice houses, qanats (underground channels), water springs,

and the unique coexistence of both tropical and cold climates.

**Climate and nature**

Delfard enjoys a diverse climate characterized by both subtropical warmth and cold mountain air, creating a remarkable microclimate. Summers are generally mild to hot, especially in the lower, tropical parts, while winter brings cold tempera-

tures and snowfall in the mountainous regions. The area's rich natural beauty includes lush greenery, diverse forests, and a vibrant array of flora and fauna, making it a haven for nature lovers and eco-tourists.

**Agriculture and local flora**

Agricultural products are highly valued in Delfard, with notable

crops including walnuts, dates, grapes, cherries, pomegranates, apricots, oranges, as well as wheat, barley, peas, beans, and other summer crops. Local flora includes White poplar, Acer monspessulanum, Pistacia atlantica, hawthorns, raspberries, and medicinal herbs such as Teucrium polium, thyme, viper's-bugloss, licorice, yarrow, and milkvetch.







## Leader highlights seminaries' role in building Islamic civilization



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday emphasized the "clear propagation" of Islamic principles as the foremost duty of seminaries, urging their active role in designing societal systems based on Islam and shaping a modern Islamic civilization.

In a message to the international conference marking 100 years since the reestablishment of the Qom Seminary, the Leader described the institution as "a center enriched by the vast intellectual capital of Shia scholarship," and as a dynamic force in education, culture, and politics, IRNA reported.

He stated that the seminary must be "innovative, thriving, up-to-date, responsive to emerging issues," and capable of addressing the needs of contemporary society while maintaining its moral and revolutionary identity.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the main objective is to "outline the primary and secondary frameworks" of a new Islamic civilization and integrate them into public life.

He urged seminaries to train "morally refined and efficient" individuals able to convey Islamic teachings with precision and impact.

Reflecting on its history, the Leader highlighted the role of prominent cleric Ayatollah Abdolkarim Haeri in establishing the seminary in the early 20th century, and pointed to the emergence of Imam Khomeini from Qom as a source of pride.

The Leader said the seminary's spiritual and social influence led to the overthrow of the US-backed Pahlavi monarchy and the establishment of Islam in a position of political authority.

Ayatollah Khamenei warned against reducing the Hawza to an academic institute alone, calling it a "comprehensive entity" that must actively respond to questions on governance, justice, the role of the people, and the stance against global arrogance.

He said every religious ruling must reflect a "comprehensive perspective" rooted in Islamic principles.

Calling for a proactive approach to religious propagation, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized the importance of "education and refinement," saying seminaries must educate students to communicate effectively in modern public and media spheres.

He called for greater engagement between seminaries and the public, increased cooperation with universities, and deeper familiarity with global scientific progress.

The Leader described Islamic civilization as "the opposite of the current materialist system," and said its goal is to place knowledge, power, and resources in the service of "social justice, public welfare, and spiritual development."

Ayatollah Khamenei urged seminary leadership to ensure the institution remains a "living and active" force in the Islamic Republic, stressing the importance of hope, discipline, and visionary scholarship in facing modern challenges.

## Tehran International Book Fair opens

# *Salehi:* Books are Iran's 'super-culture of power'

## Iraqi minister says West still learning from Eastern classics

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran inaugurated the 36th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) on May 7 with calls to embrace books as a foundation for unity, resilience, and cross-cultural understanding.

The event, held at Imam Khomeini Mosalla, will run through May 17 and has drawn thousands of publishers and intellectuals from Iran and abroad, IRNA reported.

This year's fair, themed "Read for Iran," showcases 2,363 domestic publishers—up from last year—and nearly 80 international guests. Iraq participates as the guest of honor, signaling what organizers describe as a deepening of "cultural diplomacy" between the two neighbors.

At the opening ceremony, Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, described books as "the super-culture of Iranian power."

He argued that lasting civilizations—from ancient Greece to India—were built on deep, structured thought transmitted through literature.

"If we seek Iran's future, its progress, and the failure of its enemies, we must think more and more about books," Salehi said. "Without coherent thinking, no civilization survives. Fast food thought may be consumed quickly, but it offers no strength."

He emphasized that Iran's own heritage—from classical Persian epics to Islamic scholarship—was shaped by its relationship to reading and writing. Referring to the national epic 'Shahnameh,' Salehi remarked that without it, "the Persian language might not have endured."

The fair includes more than 400 panels, readings, and cultural exchanges. It also marks the launch of the Tehran Publishing Fellowship Program, a new initiative to promote the translation and international publication of Iranian books—especially in children's and young adult literature.

On the sidelines of the fair, Salehi met with Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani, to discuss bilateral cultural cooperation. The two ministers highlighted shared heritage as a powerful foundation for expanding dialogue and exchange.

"We have significant opportunities for cultural diplomacy based on our deep historical ties with Iraq," Salehi said. "These links help smooth the path for stronger state and people-to-people relations." Badrani, speaking at the opening, praised the fair's scope and message. "Writers do not die," he said. "They are the awakened conscience of humanity." He stressed that authors throughout history have



Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi (L), and Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani (C), look at bookshelves at the opening ceremony of the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, on May 7, 2025.  
● IRNA

taught people "how to live in peace," and argued that modern society still benefits from the moral and intellectual legacies preserved in books.

He urged audiences to look beyond the physical object of a book and toward the minds behind it. "In a book fair, we should focus not only on the books but on the thought of the writers. Through their words, we speak with them."

Badrani noted that texts by Eastern scholars such as Avicenna and Rumi continue to be taught in Western universities, underscoring the global significance of the region's literary contributions. "The world still reads us," he said.

Speaker of Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also

addressed the gathering, underscoring the strategic importance of books to Iranian society. "The core index of progress is culture," Qalibaf stated. "Even in areas like energy and economy, it is cultural behavior—production, consumption, responsibility—that determines success."

Qalibaf, who has long emphasized the role of social cohesion, said book reading must be seen as a pillar of national development, especially in shaping the next generation. "In Islamic thought, books are the distilled essence of human knowledge. They elevate individuals and societies," he said.

He also tied the event to the broader national agenda, noting that although Iran's

leadership has stressed economic reform in recent years, cultural growth remains essential. "Even the best economic plans fail without a cultural foundation," he said.

Iranian organizers reported receiving more than 2,300 applications for events this year and said they had cut operational costs by up to 40 percent while increasing support for publishers facing rising production expenses. The fair is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors before it closes.

"This fair is not just about publishing," Salehi said. "It's a social club—a place to connect, to unify, and to remind ourselves that Iran's strength lies in its collective intellect."

## Fake names can't ...

Iran must respond firmly and appropriately to such provocations, which strike at the very heart of the nation's dignity, history, credibility, and culture. However, under current circumstances, the scope for active countermeasures is somewhat limited. Still, Iran should lodge a formal protest and follow up on the matter through diplomatic channels.

The country ought to release historical documents substantiating the name Persian Gulf, and hold academic and historical seminars to expose how these name-change efforts are intended to cover up an undeniable historical reality. It falls to Iran to win over public opinion globally and to shine a light on the facts through media outreach.

Iran must in no way sit idly by in the face of such statements and events. Instead, it should mount a media campaign vigorous enough to ensure that Trump comes away with nothing on this front politically.

Trump's move is apparently aimed at drawing attention from Arab audiences in the region, by seizing on an issue he believes will strike a chord with his hosts to cozy up to Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. Naturally, members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and other Arab countries are likely to welcome Trump's adoption of the false term "Arabian Gulf."

Yet from a strategic standpoint, this maneuver brings Washington little to no tangible gain. Nor does it do anything to chip away at the Persian Gulf's internationally recognized historical name.

What is needed is a long-term, consistent campaign to remind international bodies of the historical truth and to formally assert the rightful name of the Persian Gulf. This will be no quick fix; it demands patience and persistence. At the end of the day, Washington's use of the

false name "Arabian Gulf" serves them solely as a media ploy; it won't translate into any meaningful strategic leverage. Frankly, this is not a matter Iran ought to blow out of proportion.

There is an old saying: "Falsehood perishes when ignored." Giving undue attention to such empty gestures only risk amplifying them, which is precisely what the other side is aiming for.

Therefore, while Iran must avoid turning a blind eye to such provocations, it must also avoid letting this issue hijack its diplomatic agenda. This naming controversy is clearly meant to curry favor with Persian Gulf Arab states, but in the broader context of ongoing negotiations between Tehran and Washington, it sends a misguided and harmful signal.

Like the sanctions the US continues to pile on Iran even as talks progress, this latest move reflects yet another instance of the recklessness and poor judgment plaguing the current White House leadership.