

UNESCO head condemns Israeli killing of Iranian media workers

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has condemned the killing of two Iranian media workers during Israeli airstrikes on the IRIB headquarters in Tehran last month. On Thursday, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay called for a thorough and transparent investigation into the incident, Press TV reported. She emphasized that the media infrastructure of every country is protected under international humanitarian law, as it is classified as a civilian institution. Azoulay referenced UN Security Council Resolution 2222, which mandates the protection of media workers during armed conflicts. The Israeli strike claimed the lives of Nima Rajabpour, the editor-in-chief of IRIB's news channel, and Masoumeh

Azimi, an administrator. The attack also injured several other media personnel. On June 16, the Israeli regime executed an act of aggression by targeting a building belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) in Tehran. The assault involved at least four bombs, striking the main facility housing IRIB's news department while a live broadcast was in progress. The transmission was briefly interrupted before Hassan Abedini, IRIB's news director and deputy for political affairs, went on air to condemn the attack. At the time of the bombardment, news anchor Sahar Emami was presenting the news. Despite the tremors caused by the initial strike, she remained on air and continued the broadcast. Moments later, another explosion filled

the studio with smoke and dust, compelling her to evacuate. She returned shortly after to join Abedini and recount her harrowing experience. This escalation followed Israel's earlier aggression on June 13, where a series of attacks resulted in the martyrdom of numerous high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians in Iran. A week later, the United States escalated the conflict by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites, violating the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In retaliation, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia. On June 24, Iran, through its success-



ful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the illegal assault.

Deputy minister hails Isfahan's Chahar Bagh as 'living memory' of Iran's cultural identity



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Deputy Minister of Handicrafts Maryam Jalali called Isfahan's Chahar Bagh boulevard a "living memory" of Iran's identity-driven culture and economy during a public ceremony on July 17, in the historic heart of the city. The event, titled "The Narrative of

Love and Art,' drew prominent Iranian artists, artisans, and cultural and religious figures to Chahar Bagh, a 17th-century boulevard once central to Safavid urban planning. Jalali praised the coordinated efforts behind the gathering and described Chahar Bagh not simply as a street but as a "fourfold devotion" reflecting the spiritual and social life of the Iranian people across generations. She said Chahar Bagh had witnessed "sacred scenes" from funerals of fallen soldiers to national celebrations and religious mourning. "This is our historical memory," Jalali told the audience, emphasizing the role of grassroots religious groups in preserving and reviving the cultural heritage of the boulevard. She said such groups work not out

of duty, but with "soul and passion," challenging the view that informal civic groups lack discipline. In a sweeping cultural reflection, Jalali connected the historic architecture of Chahar Bagh—lined with mosques, bathhouses, schools, and bazaars—to a deeper national ethos where worship, cleanliness, trade, and craftsmanship merge. "Our nation is rooted in this structure," she said, adding that Iranian identity is tied to "devotion and skill." She noted that the people of Isfahan were raised on the "tea of mourning ceremonies" and described traditional handicrafts not as luxury goods but as vital "bioskills." "Our economy has always grown side by side with our identity," she said, invoking the spiritual legacy of Imam Hussein and the

formative role of religious ritual in Iranian social cohesion. Jalali described the local artistic tradition as inseparable from daily life, "If they needed a tablecloth, they block-printed one. If they wanted a ceiling, they created mirrorwork and muqarnas." From utensils to avenues, "Isfahan created beauty," she said. She praised the presence of master artisans at the event, saying their calloused hands and white hair were "worthy of a kiss." She called for public remembrance of those who crafted Isfahan's famed decorative arts—engraving, marquetry, plasterwork, and mirror mosaics. The deputy minister stressed that the country's intangible heritage, rituals, stories, and art forms, must form the foundation of a culturally driven

economy. She closed by relaying a message from Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, who supports unity based on "rationality and consensus" across the three sectors. Jalali said the minister believes that hotels should serve not only as lodgings but as guest houses for cultural exchange. "When the name of Hussein is invoked," she said, "we gather—in mosques, schools, parliaments, or bazaars—as one family." Jalali urged that the art booths set up during the event become part of daily life and help shape a global understanding of Iran's "narrative of love and art" through spiritual tourism. "Hand in hand," she concluded, "we will rebuild Iran and the spirit of the Iranian people."

Tehran to build four secure repositories for museum artifacts, city official says

Arts & Culture Desk

Tehran will build four secure storage facilities across the capital to protect valuable historical artifacts in the event of natural disasters or other emergencies, according to Ahmad Alavi, head of the Cultural Heritage Committee of Tehran's City Council. The project, aimed at safeguarding Iran's rich historical legacy, comes as officials ramp up efforts to shield the city's museum collections from risks such as earthquakes or potential attacks. "We've agreed to construct secure repositories in four locations across Tehran to house archaeological and museum objects," Alavi said. The plan is part of a broader national strategy to improve emergency preparedness and protect cultural assets considered vital to Iran's identity. Tehran, which sits near several active fault lines, remains vulnerable to major earthquakes. The secure units are expected to increase the "security coefficient" of the city's antiquities in case of crisis scenarios. Each of the four sites will be strategically located to allow for swift access and



distribution, though exact locations have not yet been disclosed. The move also reflects a shift in policy toward long-term preservation and decentralization of collections currently concentrated in central museums. Iran's cultural authorities have previously warned that the country's heritage sites and artifacts face growing threats from urban development, environmental degradation, and regional instability. The new facilities are expected to be climate-controlled, earthquake-resistant, and designed in consultation with national heritage and emergency response agencies.

Iran to host 2026 global meeting on intangible heritage centers

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Iran will host the 2026 annual gathering of UNESCO's Category 2 Centers focused on intangible cultural heritage, according to the outcome of a virtual summit held under the leadership of Fumiko Ohinata, Secretary of the 2003 Convention, in Paris. The online meeting, chaired by UNESCO, drew over 80 participants, including heads of Category 2 centers from Bulgaria, Algeria, Peru, the UAE, Iran, China, South Korea, and Japan. The session focused on reviewing the past year's activities and setting the agenda for 2025–2026. Iran's regional center in Tehran presented a detailed progress report and unveiled new proposals for its upcoming Action Plan. Iran's renewed bid to host the 2026 edition was confirmed after scheduling conflicts led to the 2025 summit being shifted online. According to Ohinata, overlapping events, including the MONDIACULT World Conference in Spain, necessitated keeping both UNESCO and Tehran's



center staff in sync, prompting a virtual format for the 2025 session. Nonetheless, she said Iran's offer "remains firmly on the table" and is already on the organization's agenda. Representing Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry, Atousa Momeni, Director-General of the Tehran-based center, outlined key achievements. These included educational initiatives, digital outreach tools, regional capacity-building, and on-the-ground collaboration with local communities across 24 countries under its mandate. The Tehran center also introduced its proposed roadmap for 2025–2026, which will be reviewed at the next Governing Board meeting ahead of implementation. The plan lays out regional

training programs, digital archive expansion, and increased grassroots involvement. UNESCO's Deputy for Intangible Cultural Heritage, Susanne Schnuttgen, applauded Tehran's recent women-led initiative aimed at empowering nomadic women through heritage programs. Originally scheduled for June 22–25, 2025, in Tehran, the event was postponed due to what she called an "unforeseen regional crisis." Still, she praised the center's outreach efforts and its plan to hold the program in hybrid form as "a smart move that keeps the dialogue going." Ali Darabi, Iran's Tourism Deputy Minister and Chair of the Regional Center's Governing Board, called the Tehran center "a strategic arm of Iran within UNESCO," underlining its leadership role in delivering on the 2003 Convention's goals across West and Central Asia. He extended gratitude to Ohinata and the UNESCO secretariat for what he described as "keen awareness, sound judgment, and steadfast support."