

National Wrath Against Rioters Iranians stage mass rallies to condemn foreign-backed unrest

Gov't declares three days of mourning



Thousands of Iranians gather in the iconic Enqelab (revolution) Square in Tehran, Iran on January 12, 2026 to denounce days of bloody violence by foreign-backed terrorists and rioters.
FARS

National Desk

Iranian people in their millions flocked to the streets in major cities and towns across the country on Monday to denounce the latest bout of deadly terrorist acts by armed elements hijacking rightful public demands and protests to destroy and set ablaze military and government buildings. The nationwide demonstrations — themed 'The motherland is our redline' — took place after two weeks of US-Israeli backed riots that seized on public protests against livelihood woes stemming from the national currency depreciation.

Instigated by expressions of support on behalf of US President Donald Trump as well as Zion-

ist-relayed instructions, armed groups and individuals in various cities, including the capital Tehran, turned the protests into violent clashes by dispatching firearms and Molotov cocktails to streets, claiming innocent lives and destroying and setting on fire an assortment of economic centers, religious and public sites, busses, and urban amenities. In the Monday rally in Tehran, people converged on Enqelab (Revolution) Square to condemn the violent unrest, armed attacks by rioters, killing of people, acts of vandalism, attacks on military, administrative and medical centers, desecration of mosques, and burning of copies of the Qu'ran. Chanting slogans in denunciation of widespread havoc wreaked by

rioters, the demonstrators voiced their unbridled support for the Islamic Establishment and called on the Judiciary to severely deal with perpetrators of such terrorist acts.

The participants also waved Iranian national flags and called out, "Death to the US", "Death to Israel", and "Down with seditionist instigator."

Apart from Tehran, the biggest of rallies were held in Isfahan, Mashhad, Kerman, Tabriz and Zahedan. In a statement after a cabinet meeting on Sunday night, the government of President Massoud Pezeshkian declared three days of national mourning in honor of those who lost their lives in the resistance against the recent US and Israeli-incited

unrest in the country. The statement said the Iranian nation suffered firsthand experience of Daesh-style criminal and terrorist acts, which resulted in the martyrdom of "our beloved countrymen, including the Basij volunteer forces, police and security personnel."

The statement underlined that such violence and crimes had not seen before, except in the actions of US-sponsored Daesh terrorists. Since December 28, the rioters backing monarchy have vandalized public properties, blocked streets, attacked the administrative buildings and Police stations, and killed or injured a yet-to-be-specified number of ordinary people as well as security and law enforcement forces.

FM holds US, Israel accountable for inciting violence in Iran

Tehran to prosecute terrorists killing police, people in riots: *Araghchi*



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (r) speaks at a meeting with Tehran-based ambassadors in the Foreign Ministry in the capital on January 12, 2026.

● TASnim

International Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Monday held the United States and Israel accountable for promoting violence in Iran.

"There is ample evidence indicating the US and Israel's involvement in acts of violence," Araghchi told a group of Tehran-based ambassadors from a number of countries including Britain, Germany, Russia, India, South Korea, Venezuela and Turkey.

He said Iran would present the evidence to the public and the international community.

Iran has been gripped by street protests since December 28 that turned into deadly riot in the past few days, with authorities blaming foreign-backed terrorists.

The top diplomat cited a post by former CIA chief Mike Pompeo on X in which he congratulated the New Year to the Iranians on the streets and "the Mossad operatives that move by them," saying the comment was an "explicit acknowledgement" that Israeli agents were "directing" the riot.

Trump administration continues to misread Iran's capabilities

INTERVIEW US President Donald Trump took a hostile stance toward

Iran during his both terms in office. In his first term, he scrapped Iran's 2015 nuclear deal and reimposed tough sanctions on Tehran. He later ordered the assassination of Iran's top commander General Qassem Soleimani during a mission in Baghdad. Returning to office in 2025, he reiterated his previous position, vowing to continue his maximum pressure policy. While hypocritically engaging in negotiations with Iran, he arranged and later joined an Israeli aggression against Iran in the middle of talks in June. American-Canadian political analyst, Robert Fantina, said in an exclusive interview with IRNA that Trump's actions against Iran are a serious threat not only to the security of the Middle East, but of the entire world. Yet, he added, it indicates that his administration continues to miscalculate Iran's power and capabilities.

Page 2 >

Page 4 >



Iran confirms receiving US 'ideas' for fresh talks

International Desk

Iran on Monday confirmed that Tehran and Washington "exchanged ideas" to resume negotiations a day after US President claimed that the Islamic Republic was seeking fresh talks with the United States, according to IRNA.

"The American side has put forward some cases and ideas," Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei told reporters

during a weekly presser in Tehran. Trump on Sunday said Tehran had contacted Washington to express willingness to re-commence talks over its nuclear program, US media outlet Axios reported. He also said a meeting was being organized with Iranian authorities, according to Reuters.

Baqaei said a communication channel was open between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Aragh-

chi and US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff. "Messages are exchanged [via this channel] whenever needed," he added. Talks between Iran and the US have been stalled since Israel launched a military aggression against the Islamic Republic on June 13 with a green light from Washington. The strikes, targeting Iranian military and civilian infrastructure, took place as Tehran and Washington

were about to hold a sixth round of negotiations to clinch a deal over the Iranian nuclear program. The US joined the Israeli blitz, which lasted for 12 days, by bombing three Iranian nuclear facilities. Baqaei noted that Iran had always been committed to "meaningful" talks in which "mutual interests and concerns" were accepted. He rejected "one-sided" negotiations that were based on "dictation."



Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei speaks at a weekly press briefing in Tehran on January 12, 2026.

IRNA



UN envoy condemns US-Israeli threats against Iran

The Iranian UN ambassador strongly condemned the illegal and irresponsible measures by the United States in coordination with the Zionist regime for interference in the internal affairs of Iran through threats, intimidation and encouragement of violence and instability, Tasnim news agency reported.

In a letter to the UN Security Council, Saeid Iravani lashed out at the US president and the Israeli prime minister for issu-

ing brazen statements misrepresenting the internal affairs of Iran in such a way that foreign interference is necessary to save the country or impose coercive political results. Decrying the undeniable coordination between the measures of the US and the Israeli regime, the envoy said Washington and Tel Aviv have encouraged violence, supported terrorist groups, provoked social instability, and tried to transform peaceful protests in

Iran into violent riots through provocative remarks, sending political messages and issuing overt threats. The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects the US' destabilizing measures that weaken the UN Charter, violate the fundamental international principles, and threaten the fundamentals of peace and security, Iravani stated.

He warned that the continuation of the US and Israeli actions have created a danger-

ous precedent that will rattle the international order on which the United Nations has been founded. The ambassador also described transforming peaceful protests into violent riots with the purpose of overthrowing the government and vandalizing public properties in Iran as a direct result of the US policies, saying the US government is totally and unequivocally responsible for the consequence of those incidents.

VP: Massive anti-riot turnout to facilitate structural reforms

National Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Monday that a massive anti-riot turnout of people across the country would revive the missed opportunity to improve the status of the country.

Addressing a meeting attended by government officials, Aref said the Islamic Establishment had missed

the opportunity to remedy and redress of the status quo after the 12-day Israeli imposed war in June, IRNA reported.

He expressed hope that the government would appease the public and win people's heart "this time" after they put the end to the recent riots with their mass rallies nationwide.

The comments came on Monday as millions across

the country took to the streets to denounce the latest deadly unrest. Aref also held Israel responsible for acts of violence in the course of street protests, saying, "it was anticipated that the enemies would not involve in the short-run confrontation" with Iran... and would resort to such acts through the terror groups they had created.



FM holds US,...

He said such remarks were aimed at fueling violence and pushing fatalities up to pave the way for the US for interference.

"Those who contributed to the rise in the number of casualties with their statements and those who carried out terrorist operations, killing innocent people in Iran, must be held accountable," Araghchi said.

The minister said terror groups hijacked the peaceful protests on January 8, that began by small businesses and guild

members, in order to turn them into "social violence, bloodshed and mayhem" on the national level.

"Armed operatives shot at the police... and even at ordinary people to increase the number of casualties for which there is ample evidence."

He noted that the goal was for there to be many casualties because US President Donald Trump had threatened that Washington would intervene if people got killed. Araghchi denounced Trump's remarks as "flagrant interference" in the internal

affairs of another country. The minister said the government had video tapes showing guns being distributed among protesters and recordings in which some encouraged to fire at the police from among crowds to kill policemen and even protesters. "What only matters is that the number of casualties increases and more blood is shed," Araghchi said, citing recordings.

Western 'crocodile tears'

Elsewhere in his remarks, the top dip-

lomat took a swipe at certain Western countries who refused to condemn the US-Israeli aggression on Iran in June or the Israeli "genocide" in the Gaza Strip but "now are shedding crocodile tears for terrorists inside Iran, or for protesters who have the right to express their dismay peacefully."

Araghchi once again reiterated that the government "recognizes the right of anyone in Iran who protests" but noted that acts of violence including rioting, arson attacks, shooting at police and people

would not be tolerated by any state. He vowed to seek justice for those killed by terrorists.

"We will prosecute those who devised such terrorist operations in Iranian courts and international tribunals."

The riots and protests peaked on Thursday night in many cities and towns which led to the killing of scores of people and security forces. But subsequent nights saw fewer crowds taking to streets, with only sporadic pockets of unrest happening nationwide.



21% growth in clean energy output

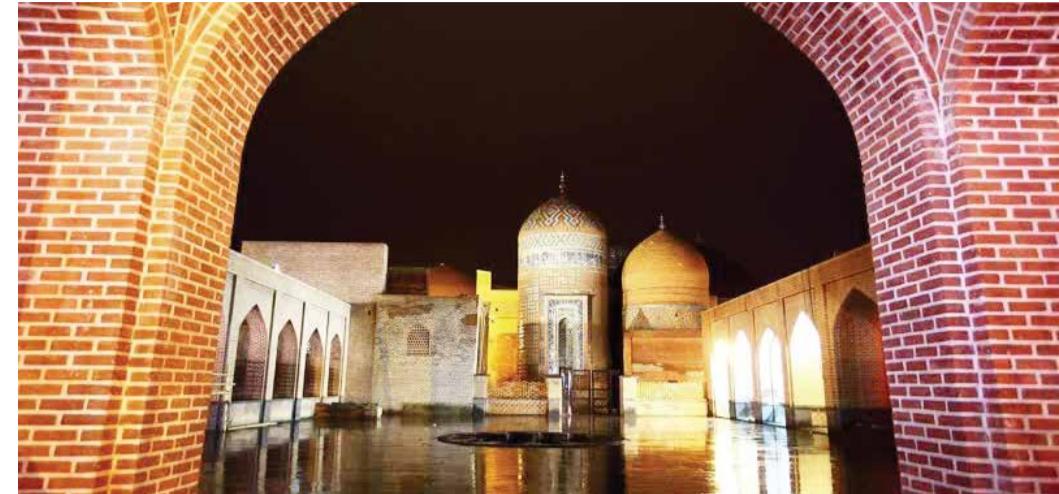
According to the Renewable Energy and Distributed Generation Monitoring Center, Iran's installed clean energy production has reached 2,759 gigawatts/hour during the first nine months of the year, indicating a 21 percent rise in the same period last year. Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) has said that 318 renewable power plants are active in the country's electricity market.

Within the renewable energy mix, solar power with the power generation of 1,658 gigawatts/hour represents

66%, grid-connected distributed generation plants account for 15%, and wind farms with the power production of 869 gigawatts/hour make up 14%. Small hydroelectric plants contribute 4%, while biomass and expansion turbine plants each account for 1%. The report added that, expansion turbine plants have produced 30 gigawatts/hour electricity during the nine months. Despite recent growth, renewables still account for only 3.2% of Iran's total electricity generation capacity of around 97,909 MW. Also, current nuclear power generation capacity stands at around 1,000 megawatts with the Bushehr nuclear power plant in southern Iran.

IRNA

Discover mysteries of Sheikh Safi's shrine in Ardabil



IRNA

Iranica Desk

In the historic fabric of Ardabil, the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili stands as a living testament to Safavid history — a complex where the Jannat Sara, Chellehgah, and Shahidgah each narrate a chapter of spiritual and historical journey. The structure is far more than a historical building; it embodies the spiritual and political identity formation of Safavid Iran. Within the silence of its bricks, turquoise tiles, and exquisitely inscribed calligraphy, centuries of mysticism, authority, rituals, and collective memory are preserved.

Passing through the shrine's entrance is akin to crossing a threshold in time, where the khanqah of Ardabil's great mystic gradually became the center of dynastic legitimacy. Its architecture, symbolic ornamentation, and ceremonial spaces offer a layered view of the intertwined history of Iran-

an mysticism, politics, and art, Mehr News Agency wrote.

Inside the complex rests a 700-year-old ceremonial cloak (Bala-Poosh), gifted by Sheikh Zahed Gilani to Sheikh Safi. Crafted from felt, its size was symbolic rather than practical, signifying spiritual stature rather than physical dimensions. The Shahidgah, or Martyrs' Shrine of the Battle of Chaldiran, lies adjacent to the tomb of Shah Ismail I, founder of the Safavid dynasty. This site was established after the decisive battle between Iran and the Ottoman Empire, when Shah Ismail ordered the collection of the fallen from the Chaldiran plain and their transport to Ardabil. The remains were interred in a formal ceremony attended by the shah himself, and the site has since served as a memorial to those who perished, earning its name Shahidgah.

Mohsen Hosseinpour, a guide at the Sheikh Safi's shrine said that a 500-year-old stone and



marble inscription of Shah Tahmasp I's edicts once adorned the entrance of the Ali Qapu in Ardabil. The inscription lists laws prohibiting theft, gambling, and shaving the beard with a blade. Another section of the complex, the Dar al-Hifaz, was constructed 700 years ago by Sheikh Safi's son as a two-story residence for Qur'anic scholars performing religious duties. The upper halls were historically reserved for

women, and today they remain closed to preserve the building. The decorative elements of this space feature natural pigments, mineral powders, and gold dust applied to plaster, reflecting the intricate artistic sensibilities of the Safavid period.

Hosseinpour further noted that the wallpaper inside the structure is among the oldest in the world, painted with plant-based dyes and over 500 years old.

The last restoration was car-

ried out 25 years ago. The inner coffin is hollow, with the tomb located approximately two meters below; it was gifted by Shah Homayoun five centuries ago. Sheikh Safi himself practiced Chelleh, or spiritual retreat, within the shrine. The complex also displays the Safavid family tree, revealing the lineage and heritage of Sheikh Safi.

The Chinese Hall, perhaps the most famous section of the complex, dates back 400 years. Originally housing 1,200 pieces of Chinese porcelain, only 100 remain today, while the others were distributed to Ardabil, Mashhad, Tabriz, and Isfahan, reflecting the historical circulation of cultural artifacts across Safavid cities.

Among the shrine's ceremonial and architectural spaces, the Jannat Sara stands out as a key element. Historically, it hosted Sama' ceremonies, and meetings of Safavid Sufi disciples. Its open yet symbolic design embodies mystical concepts such

as liberation, spiritual ascent, and the connection between earthly life and the divine. The name Jannat Sara explicitly evokes a heavenly understanding of the space, where collective spiritual experience unfolded within the silence and order of architectural form.

Adjacent to Jannat Sara, the Chellehgah served as a private, contemplative space for ascetics. Deliberately austere, dimly lit, and free of elaborate decoration, it allowed practitioners to focus inward, detach from worldly concerns, and pursue spiritual purification.

The side-by-side placement of Jannat Sara and Chellehgah reflects the Safavid Sufi approach to a staged, comprehensive spiritual journey — a journey in which communal and solitary practices coexist to guide the seeker along the path of mystical ascent, from outward ritual to inward reflection, and from earthly discipline to spiritual transcendence.

Karate One Series A: Iranians excel with eight medals in Tbilisi



Sports Desk

The season-opening event of the Karate One Series A saw Iranians collect eight medals, including six kumite golds, to claim the team title in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Ali-Asghar Asiabari brought the curtain down on a medal-laden campaign for the country by grabbing the ultimate prize in the men's -84kg division on Sunday. Hannaneh Salehi had

Mehrnegar Ahmadi added a third women's gold to Iran's medal haul earlier on Sunday, triumphing in the -61kg category, while Hana Hosseinpour finished her campaign with a consolation bronze in the women's -68kg event.

On Saturday, Fatemeh Zahra-Saeidi captured the gold in the women's -55kg competition, while Mohammad Goudazian claimed the men's -60kg title.

Hannaneh Salehi had

opened Iran's account with a gold medal in the women's +68kg class on Friday, with Mahdi A'ashouri coming out victorious in the men's +84kg showdown.

Iran enjoyed further success in the kata competition as the quartet of Amirhassan Mo'eineddini, Abolfazl Sheikh-Shoaei, Hossein Khaleqi, and Mohammadhassan Mahdizadeh settled for bronze in the men's team event.

Yazdani, Azarpira learn selection process for Wrestling Worlds

Sports Desk

Hassan Yazdani and Amirali Azarpira are set to feature in a highly-anticipated domestic rivalry as the Iranian Wrestling Federation unveiled the freestyle 97kg selection process for October's World Championships in Manama, Bahrain. A winner of a national record 10 major medals, Yazdani will have to compete at the season-opening Ranking Series event – the Zagreb Open – in February to enter the selection cycle, according to the national governing body.

The two wrestlers will then participate at the International Takhti Cup – hosted by Iran – later, where they will have to come out victorious in a best-of-three series, should they go head-to-head in the competition, to secure a place in the world event.

A gold medal at the Takhti Cup, even without facing Yazdani, will be enough for Azarpira to punch his Manama ticket, the Iranian federation confirmed. If Azarpira is knocked out of the Takhti Cup before locking horns with Yazdani, he will be given a second chance against his compatriot in a future event, added the federation.



Hassan Yazdani (l.) and Amirali Azarpira will be the Iranian contenders for a freestyle 97kg spot at October's Wrestling World Championships.

IAWFIR

Freestyle sensation Yazdani made a statement return to action during the final day of the Iranian Wrestling Premier League in December, having been sidelined for 489 days after undergoing surgery on his injured shoulder, which cost him the 86kg final at the Paris 2024 Olympics. Moving up to the 97kg class in a bid to win an elusive second Olympic gold at Los Angeles 2028, Yazdani claimed a superiority win (10-0) over former U20 world champion Abolfazl Babloo, and then defeated 2021 world bronze medalist Mojtaba Goleij 4-0 in the penultimate bout of the final,

though his Esteghlal Juybar team ultimately fell short against Bank Shahr. At 30, Yazdani appeared to be back to his familiar ruthless form, but before thinking of chasing his fourth world title in a star-studded 97kg event – likely to feature Russian great Abdulrashid Sadulaev, American world champion Kyle Snyder, and Olympic gold medalist Akhmed Tazhudinov – in Manama, he will have to see off a domestic threat posed by 23-year-old Azarpira. The two-time U23 world champion marked his Olympic debut with a precious bronze medal

in Paris, thanks to another victory over Snyder in the third-place bout, and then built on that success by winning a silver medal at last September's World Championships in Zagreb. The pinnacle of Azarpira's campaign in the Croatian capital came in the semi-finals, where he defeated Tazhudinov 5-2, making up for his first-round setback against the Bahraini wrestler in Paris. Azarpira was unlucky to miss out on the top podium after a final setback against Snyder, but captured his maiden senior gold at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh a month later.

16th Research & Technology Festival

Minister urges scholars to address Iran's challenges

Social Desk

The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts urged researchers to apply their studies to address the country's main challenges. He added, there are several researches regarding the main challenges, but often remain archived and less applied, which warrants examination, IRNA reported.

Reza Salehi-Amiri, on Monday, January 12, during the closing ceremony of the 16th Research and Technology Festival held at the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI), said that research activities have always been a priority for the organization.

The organization, he said, has a physical structure that provides cultural services, but its soul is research, which ensures its survival.

Salehi-Amiri emphasized that researchers should propose various scenarios in a changing environment and find solutions for gaps, asking scholars to reassess the relationship between research and action.

"We require ideas. For instance, a researcher through scientific inquiry should create ideas and suggest ways to counteract Iranophobia", he said, adding that with over 360 researchers, I have yet to see such a solution.

The minister acknowledged

that the national library's structure was designed basically with women, who are highly dedicated to performing tasks accurately; similarly, 50% of the workforce in the Tourism Ministry are women, who excel in every task assigned, demonstrating their self-belief and capabilities.

The scientific secretary of the festival also said, out of 161 submissions with 21 ideas, 80 works were deemed worthy of evaluation.

Saeed Molaei added, compared to the past four years, the number of submissions for the festival increased from 64 to 102 in the book category, but we observed no significant change in the research section.

He explained, the festival's call for submissions was published on October 15, and works in various formats, including master's theses and books, were submitted to the festival's secretariat and 99 judges evaluated the works within 40 days.

Molaei added in the category of the selection of researchers, 10 participants included one academic and one non-academic member.

The Head of the NLAI Gholamreza Amirkhani said that research in solving social issues has been overlooked, adding that humanities and history play a significant role in solving social problems but have received little attention.



Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri speaks during the closing ceremony of the 16th Research and Technology Festival at National Library and Archives of Iran on January 12, 2026.

IRNA

Dozen Iranian villages shortlisted for global registration

Arts & Culture Desk

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts picked 12 Iranian villages for global registration, Director-General of Domestic Tourism Mostafa Fatemi said.

natural resources in villages. They aim to discourage rural-to-urban migration while promoting sustainable tourism development. However, in Iran, only 130 villages remain with the initial capabilities for global registration assessment.

Mazandaran province, Moeel village in Ardabil province, Bisheh village in Lorestan province, Pamenar village in Khuzestan province, a village in Markazi province, Marin village in Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad province, a village

are among the factors. Environmental Sustainability (including waste segregation and management, and conservation of rare animal species); Economic Sustainability (the extent of local economies' development and the village's benefit from tourism); Tourism Value Chain (establishment of active tourism facilities); Infrastructure and Communication (roads, railways, and internet); Social and Global Communication (the village's global interactions); and Health and Safety (presence of health-care facilities and safety for tourists) are other criteria.

Fatemi emphasized that the final registration files of eight villages will be submitted to the UNWTO by April 2026.

He described the global registration process as multi-stage, including file preparation, assessment, review, and final selection.

Registered villages not only gain international brand and recognition but also receive a certificate and plaque from the UNWTO, acknowledging them as the best villages in the global tourism village list.

Furthermore, these villages gain access to annual training programs and experience-sharing sessions organized by the global network.

Fatemi who is also the editor-in-chief of the global registration files added, the ministry conducted an assessment of 100 selected villages for potential global registration, ultimately choosing 50 as candidates for the title of Best Tourism Villages, ILNA reported.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has been working since 2021 to reduce rural-urban migration, empower local communities, women, and youth, and preserve cultural and

The rest have either become depopulated or have been renovated with incompatible architecture. Even Masouleh, a unique staircase village in Iran, missed out on global recognition after becoming a city, with tourism experts saying that it will never again sit on the UNWTO's global stage.

He named Darak village in Sistan-Baluchestan province, Qaleh Bala village in Semnan Province, Gisoom village in Gilan province, Shaneh Tarash village in

in Khorasan Razavi province, Mers village in Isfahan province, and Afin village in South Khorasan province, as the final candidates for 2026 whose dossiers will be sent to UN Tourism.

Fatemi said that the UNWTO provided nine main criteria for global registration of rural tourism villages. Resources and Attractions; Protection of Resources and Attractions; Social Sustainability (involving community and women's participation and guild formation)

Trump administration continues ...

Analysts argue that President Donald Trump's decision to assassinate Iranian General Qassem Soleimani during his first term and his guidance and involvement in Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities during his second term posed a serious threat to regional stability, security, and the international credibility of the United States. From your perspective, what are the consequences of these actions against Iran?

Trump's actions against Iran in both of his terms are a serious

threat not only to the security of the Middle East, but of the entire world.

Assassinating a military general is a violation of international law, for which no accountability was required. This, in itself, weakens international law. Additionally, every world leader on the planet knows that Trump and the US have no regard for international law, so Trump's threats to annex Canada and Greenland must be taken seriously.

This puts NATO in a very awkward position. And any agreements made with the US are only

as good as the whims of the current president, as indicated by Trump's violation of [Iran's 2015 nuclear deal] the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018.

Iran is a sovereign nation with a large population; despite US actions, it is a developed nation with a powerful military. The US bombed it in June following Israeli aggression against Iran, and Iran's retaliation, which would have wiped Israel from the map had the US not intervened, must be noted by the US. Iran and its government should not be trifled with, and it is hoped that some-

one in Trump's cabinet understands that before it is too late.

From your point of view, what was General Qassem Soleimani's role in shaping regional security and stability, and how did Trump's decision to assassinate him impact the power dynamics in the Middle East?

General Soleimani was a powerful and well-respected military leader, and his assassination by the US only increased hostility throughout the Middle East towards the United States. He had worked with the leaders of neighboring countries to

oppose terrorist activities and had excellent relations with leaders throughout the Middle East.

Donald Trump seemed to believe that the death of General Soleimani would bring about the failure of Iran's military system. As is so often the case, he completely misreads the situation. Although a great leader, General Soleimani was not the only Iranian military leader with the knowledge and wisdom to navigate the dangerous times that Iran and the rest of the Middle East face. Like Trump's grossly mistaken belief that, after the abrogation of the JCPOA, the

Iranian government would quickly seek a new agreement with the US, Trump seemed to believe the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and [its overseas arm] the Quds Force would quickly fall apart without General Soleimani's guidance. This has not happened, and the effectiveness of Iran's military was demonstrated in June when it responded to Israeli bombs. Trump and his international cohorts need to understand that, in dealing with Iran, they are facing a powerful nation with a large population that is strongly supportive of the government.

'Game together'; Iran's theme for Expo 2027

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is attending Expo 2027, an international event centered on game and entertainment, with the theme "game together", according to Mohammad Mehdi Tondgouyan, head of the executive committee for Iran's participation, Fars reported.

The Expo is set to be held in Belgrade, Serbia, May 15 to August 15, 2027 and more than 130 countries are expected to participate.

This edition's theme is "game for humanity; sport and music for all" ad provides an opportunity for countries to introduce their cultural, economic and technological capacities in game, sport and music at global level.

Iran signed the official contract for participation on December 25 and was the third country to finalize its attendance following Slovakia and Russia.

Tondgouyan said Iran will exhibit its cultural, artistic, sport and musical heritage to the world in this event and expect international visitors to connect with Iranian artists and athletes.

Speaking at a meeting to discuss Iran's participation, he explained that the Expo has three secondary themes,

namely 'the power of game', 'game for development' and 'game for all', from which Iran has picked the latter. In the proposal submitted to the expo, Iran has introduced subjects such as athletic heroism and Iranian games such as Chogan, while Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults has been named as an organization purposefully focusing on games and toys, according to Tondgouyan.

By demonstrating game as a human superpower, the event aims to show how

Mohammad Mehdi Tondgouyan (c), head of the executive committee for Iran's participation in Expo 2027, speaks at a preparatory meeting in Tehran on January 12, 2026.

"In Expo 2027, a 320-square-meter space has been allocated to Iran, with the privilege of being located next to the entrance," he said. The host country has allocated a 113-hectare area to the expo with environmentally-friendly structures that can be recycled into the nature after the event's closure, according to Tond-

playing games can help tackle modern-time challenges through unexpected, and yet complicated and delicate methods, he added.

The meeting on Iran's participation in Expo 2027 was one of a series of specialized panels discussions held during the 10th National Toy Festival, which began on January 7.