

Iranian films win top int'l honors; animation heads to Polish festival



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The screengrabs from a partially blurred video released by Fars News Agency on June 8, 2026 show missiles being launched from an undisclosed location in Iran toward Israel.

FM spox Baqaei tells Iran Daily:

### US does not want Iran to compete at World Cup without pressure

By Sina Hosseini  
Staff writer

#### INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

As major international football tournaments draw closer, public and media attention increasingly turns to the way these events are managed and administered. Beyond their sporting and technical dimensions, such competitions involve highly sensitive legal, administrative and even diplomatic considerations. Issues such as visa issuance for national team delegations, coordination among relevant authorities, and the host country's treatment of participating teams become central topics of discussion.



The significance of these issues is heightened by the fact that any disruption or lack of coordination in these processes can call into question the principle of fair and non-discriminatory competition—a principle that international governing bodies, particularly FIFA, have consistently emphasized.

Against this backdrop, and following developments surrounding Iran's participation in the upcoming FIFA World Cup hosted by the United States, Mexico and

Canada, several questions and concerns have emerged regarding compliance with international regulations and the role of responsible institutions in safeguarding the rights of participating teams.

To examine these issues in greater depth, Iran Daily spoke with Esmail Baqaei, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, about the challenges facing Iran's national team and the measures needed to ensure the tournament is conducted in a fair, orderly and professional manner.

**IRAN DAILY: What is your assessment of the US failure to issue visas for several members of Iran's delegation?**

**BAQAEI:** Concerns about obstruction by the host country have prompted different reactions at various stages. The refusal to issue visas to fifteen members of Iran's delegation travelling to the United States may indicate challenges in meeting certain standards and procedures that are expected at the international level. Within this framework, some observers view the situation as an example of insufficient adherence to international principles and regulations.

Under FIFA regulations, the host government is required to issue entry visas to all teams that qualify for the World Cup, including players, coaches, administrative personnel and members of the management

team. Accordingly, there is no legitimate basis for preventing the entry of a team or any part of its delegation on political, ethnic or other non-sporting grounds.

This principle is a binding global obligation under rules approved by the FIFA Congress and applies to all countries that host major international tournaments, including the World Cup. Any government that accepts the responsibility of hosting such competitions is therefore required to fully uphold these commitments. Political disagreements or foreign-policy considerations cannot be used as grounds for denying visas to members of another country's delegation or preventing their lawful participation in the tournament.

In this case, the United States, as host nation, has not issued entry visas to approximately fifteen members of Iran's delegation. These individuals each hold official and legitimate responsibilities within the structure of Iranian football, and their presence alongside the team is considered necessary under FIFA regulations.

The media team accompanying the Iranian football squad has also been denied entry into the United States, despite the fact that FIFA's professional and operational framework regards media personnel as an important component of a team's delegation.

The absence of the media team could disrupt the flow of informa-

tion and the team's official media coverage, limiting public access to news and developments involving the national side.

For these reasons, the situation is viewed as a departure from the standard procedures governing the organization of World Cup competitions and is regarded as an example of non-compliance with FIFA's principles and regulations. Such circumstances risk undermining the professional support structure that is essential for a team competing in a major international tournament.

**What is your overall assessment of the potential consequences of this situation?**

Any restriction that prevents the full participation of official members of sports delegations—particularly in media and administrative capacities—can affect both the quality of tournament organization and the principle of equal opportunity. For that reason, all host countries are expected to fully comply with the obligations and requirements set out in international regulations, especially those established by FIFA.

**What is your take on the delayed issuance of multiple-entry visas and the media campaign directed against Iran's national team?**

The delayed issuance of multiple-entry visas to national team players and members of the coaching staff, coupled with extensive



Football fans cheer as Iran's players leave the Tijuana International Airport on a bus in Tijuana, Mexico on June 7, 2026, ahead of the FIFA 2026 World Cup football tournament. AFP

media coverage in certain American outlets suggesting that the team could face restrictions on its movements within the United States, is viewed as discriminatory conduct that runs counter to internationally accepted principles and regulations. Such actions are regarded as provocative and unacceptable.

It should also be noted that, even before the tournament began, the possibility of denying visas to certain members of Iran's delegation had already been raised in official statements, including remarks made by a senior US diplomatic official. Statements of this nature, when made at an official level, can create the impression that full adherence to international rules and principles is open to question.

At the same time, restrictions have reportedly been imposed on the entry of Iranian fans, journalists, media representatives, and even

some members of the team's technical and operational staff. Such an approach may be seen as introducing political considerations into the realm of sport.

International sporting institutions have consistently emphasized the principle that sport should remain separate from politics. In this case, however, that principle does not appear to have been fully respected, and there seems to be a degree of overlap between political considerations and the sporting environment.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the visa process for players and coaching staff. Various reports point to administrative difficulties, delays in processing applications, the failure to issue visas for certain technical and executive personnel, and restrictions affecting groups such as media representatives and supporters.

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