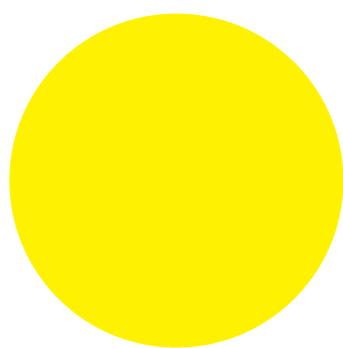


Minab buries remains of 32 children killed in US school carnage



8 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 8171 • Thursday, July 23, 2026 • Mordad 01, 1405 • Safar 08, 1448 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| IranDailyWeb

Armed Forces warn US against ground invasion, strikes on nuclear sites

2 >



Gov't approves measures to ease power restrictions on industries

3 >



Asian Age Group Aquatics Championships: Iranian swimmers impress with nine medals

6 >



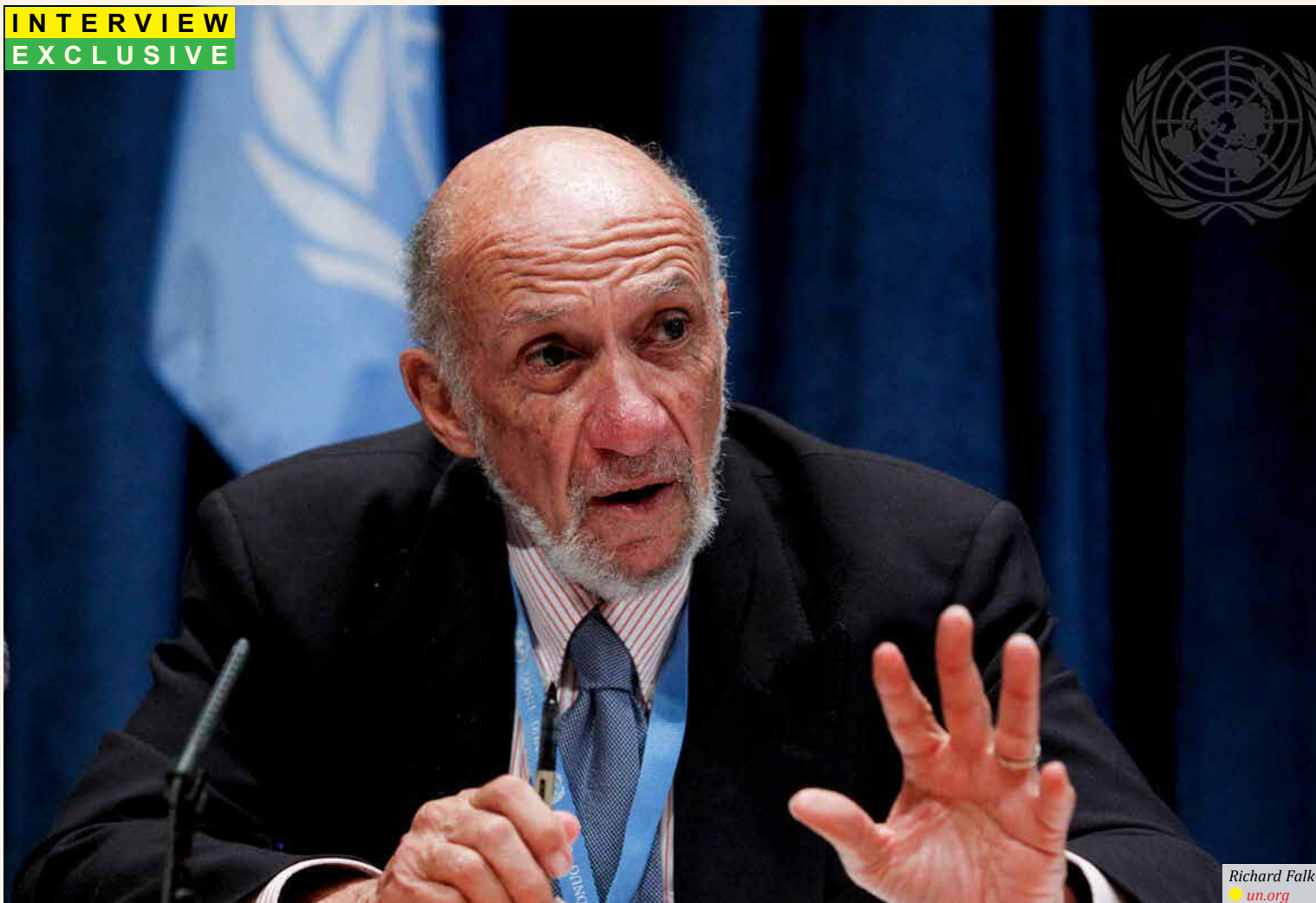
Hormozgan's women preserve a centuries-old embroidery art

7 >

Attacks on Iran's civilian infrastructure could be 'crimes against humanity': **Expert**

4 >

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



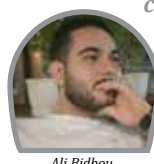
Richard Falk
un.org

Influential Shia figures offer Iran best bet against Kurdish separatists

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

As Iran and the United States exchanged fire over the past week, Iran repeatedly targeted positions belonging to Kurdish separatist groups in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region. Although such actions have a history, their coincidence with the conflict, along with previous reports of US efforts to win the support of some Iranian Kurdish groups during the war, has fueled speculation about a connection between the two developments. Ali Bidbou, an Iraq affairs expert, told Iran Daily that the Kurdistan Region is unwilling to fully and effectively confront such separatist groups. He said Iran's best option for resolving the issue would be to rely on influential Shia figures in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, including



Ali Bidbou

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, and to facilitate negotiations between Iraq's domestic groups and political parties in the Kurdistan Region.

IRAN DAILY: What position has the Kurdistan Region assumed in the current dynamics of the Iran-US conflict? Given the presence of US forces in the region and the activities of armed groups opposed to the Islamic Republic in northern Iraq, can the Kurdistan Region be said to have become one of the key fronts in the indirect war between Tehran and Washington?

BIDBOU: The regional government in Kurdistan is showing a reluctance to take sides in the conflict, but the internal parties do not hold a unified position. A few days ago, Bafel Talabani, the president of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said that the region needed to purchase US air defense systems to counter Iranian attacks. Still, in one way or another, it is trying to get its message across: that, like the Iraqi government, it does not want to become a battleground for the parties to the conflict. In any case, Iraqi Kurds place their eth-

nic identity at the top of their list of interests. It is natural for them to place their Kurdish identity above their Iraqi identity, and they make decisions accordingly.

The main reason the agreement between Iran and Iraq was not implemented may be that the Kurds do not want to lose one of their key sources of leverage against Iran. The same thing has happened with Turkey. Naturally, they try to preserve the threat factor against both Iran and Turkey as much as possible, and they do not completely clamp down on the activities of these separatist groups.

Another issue is that the Kurdistan Region fears that confronting the Kurdish separatist groups based in the mountains of Sulaymaniyah could trigger an internal conflict in the region. At present, the Barzani and Talabani factions — the two ruling parties in Iraq's Kurdistan Region — are both making every effort to prevent an internal conflict from breaking out. Although the situation has come close to that point in recent months.

How significant is the possibility of a ground front emerging along Iran's

western borders?

This is a very serious possibility and it remains on the table. During the December-January unrest in Iran, there were also some efforts to facilitate the ground entry of Kurdish separatists into Iran, and Iranian armed forces confronted the issue at the time.

One point that needs to be taken into account is that many of the people belonging to these Kurdish separatist groups are based in the mountains of northern Iraq. Iran does not always achieve the desired result simply by firing missiles at them and targeting their bases.

In fact, one possible solution could be to rely on influential Shia figures in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, including Fuad Hussein, the Iraqi foreign minister, who is an influential and popular Kurdish Shia figure among Iraqi and Kurdish communities and also an influential figure among both the Barzanis and the Talabanis.

This could perhaps produce a result. Through negotiations between Iraq's domestic groups and the political parties in the Kurdistan Region, an agreement could be reached on the presence of these anti-Iranian separatist groups near Iran's borders.

Does the central Iraqi government have the ability and the will to control developments in the Kurdistan Region? Given Baghdad's commitments regarding the disarmament or relocation of groups opposed to Iran, while US forces and interests remain present in the region, can the Iraqi government prevent its territory from becoming an arena for direct confrontation between Iran and the United States?

Based on the evidence and precedents available to us, as well as the events that have taken place recently in particular, the Baghdad government has no authority or control over the Erbil government unless the decisions made in Baghdad have been approved by Erbil. Regarding the recent arrests connected to corruption cases in Iraq, some individuals had taken refuge in Erbil. Until the Baghdad government received permission from Erbil to arrest them, it could not return those individuals to Baghdad.

Therefore, the central government itself has no authority or control over the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Page 3 >

Armed Forces warn US against ground invasion, strikes on nuclear sites



The screen grab taken from video footage released on July 20, 2026 by Iran's Revolution Guards Corps shows a missile being launched from an undisclosed location towards US targets in the regional countries.
● [sepahnews.com](#)

Armed Forces remain prepared for any act of aggression.

Speaking during a visit to various units of Army Ground Force, Air Defense Force, and Air Force in the central province of Isfahan on Wednesday, Hatami said hostile powers had exhausted every means available against Iran's military personnel but had failed to weaken their resolve.

"The enemy, driven by its hatred and animosity toward the Army's fighters, did everything within its power against them. But the warriors of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran remain standing tall," he stressed, adding that the Armed Forces have continuously strengthened their combat readiness in anticipation of enemy aggression.

Referring to US expectations during its failed mission in southern Isfahan, Hatami said Washington had miscalculated the Ira-

nian people's reaction.

"In the events in southern Isfahan, the Americans imagined that if they set foot on Iran, they would be welcomed. Instead, they were met with widespread hatred and the unparalleled steadfastness of the Iranian nation," he noted.

General Hatami also warned that any foreign military incursion into Iran would be met with nationwide resistance.

"This proved to the enemy that if it sets its filthy foot on Iran's soil, it will face millions of people who will confront it with whatever they have in their hands," the Army's chief emphasized.

Iran's highest military command, the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, also sternly warned the US against acting on its threat of attacking Iran's nuclear facilities.

"The criminal United States has threatened to attack the nuclear facilities and other sensitive sites of the Islamic Republic," the headquarters said in a statement.

"It is hereby declared that, should the aggressor and terrorist military of that country proceed to such a stage, we will consider it an expansion of the war in the region," it added.

"Consequently, all interests of the Unit-

ed States, as well as those of its allies and supporters of that rogue and malign state, will become targets of powerful [retaliatory] attacks by the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic."

The warning came after US President Donald Trump said, during a meeting with Lebanese counterpart Michel Aoun, that the US would target Iran's Pickaxe Mountain nuclear site "pretty soon."

It was not the first time Trump was coming up with such a threat.

"The repeated US attacks and threats against Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities not only constitute a flagrant violation of the core principles of the UN Charter, international law, and the relevant resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors, General Conference, and UN Security Council, but also reveal the United States' deep-rooted enmity toward Iran's scientific progress and technological development," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said in a post on X following Trump's remarks.

"Washington's obsessive focus on Kolang Kouh (Pickaxe Mountain) where no nuclear activity is taking place is nothing more than a fabricated pretext for aggression, destruction, and sabotage," he said.

International Desk

Iran's Army chief warned the United States about any ground invasion while the highest military command cautioned against attacking the country's nuclear facilities, saying that any violation of the Iran's ter-

ritorial integrity would be met with a swift and powerful response.

Major General Amir Hatami warned that any US military incursion would face a crushing military response, saying millions of Iranians would confront invading forces with everything at their disposal while the

China vows support for Iran, calls for peace in West Asia

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

China has invariably opposed "hegemonic aggression, sanctions and coercive pressure," and thrown weight behind Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty, security and national dignity, Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu said Tuesday.

Speaking at a ceremony in Tehran marking the 99th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Cong said history had repeatedly shown that "there are no winners in wars and conflicts" and that peaceful coexistence was the right path. "As Iran's comprehensive strategic partner, China has always upheld a just and fair position," he said.

China supports all efforts conducive to peace and backs Iran in improving relations with Persian Gulf countries and other states in the region, Cong said, adding that Beijing was ready to continue providing assistance in its own way and play a constructive role in restoring peace and tranquility to the West Asian region.

Cong also said Beijing attached great importance to the development of China-Iran relations and was ready to work with Tehran to consolidate politi-



Cong Peiwu
● CHINA EMBASSY IN TEHRAN

cal mutual trust, deepen practical cooperation and expand people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

He said these efforts would help ensure the "steady and sustained growth" of bilateral relations.

Chinese Defense Attaché Hu Xiao, who later addressed the ceremony, recalled witnessing what he described as the "extreme ferocity" of last year's 12-day war and this year's 40-day war while serving at the Chinese Embassy in Tehran. "I witnessed the extreme ferocity of the war and the tenacious resistance of Iran," Hu said. He also said he had seen Iranians gathering every evening and waving national flags in support of their government's resistance against aggression. "It is precisely through these experiences of staying the course during two wars that I have come to appreciate more deeply Iran's remarkable national resilience and its spirit of defiance unto death, as well as the profound sense of duty that a defense attaché must bear," he said.

Hu said the 40-day war "should never

have happened," and that China deeply empathized with the suffering inflicted on the Iranian people by the aggression.

"China has consistently advocated for promoting peace talks and facilitating negotiations, and has called for a comprehensive ceasefire," he said.

"China supports Iran and the United States in resolving their disputes through dialogue, so as to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East."

Hu also pledged to further deepen military cooperation between China and Iran. "In recent years, under the guidance of the leaders from both sides, the strategic partnership between China and Iran has been steadily moving forward," he said.

With the strong support of the Iranian Armed Forces, cooperation in bilateral visits, joint exercises and personnel training had continued to deepen, he added. "We will try our best to strengthen military cooperation between China and Iran to a new level," Hu said. Brigadier General Mohammad Ahadi, deputy for international cooperation at Iran's General Staff of the Armed Forces, also took the podium, praising the Chinese government's efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting global and West Asian security.

He expressed confidence that these efforts would contribute to security at both the global and regional levels.

US regional bases battered by Iran's fresh reprisal volleys

International Desk

New round of Iran's retaliatory attacks against the US targeted its military bases in Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said it launched a new round of missile and drone strikes against US military bases in Jordan, destroying ten MQ-9 drones, damaging two heavy-lift helicopters, and inflicting casualties on American troops in retaliation for continued US attacks on Iran.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the IRGC said the strikes targeted the King Faisal and Prince Hassan bases in Jordan. The elite force also noted that an attack on accommodation facilities for US troops at the bases killed and wounded an unspecified number of American personnel.

The Iranian Army also announced a new wave of retaliatory drone attacks against US military facilities in Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain, saying the operations targeted ammunition depots, logistics infrastructure, and accommodation buildings in response to repeated US attacks on Iranian territory.

The Army said on Wednesday that a large number of suicide drones struck ammunition depots and the logistics facilities of the command center of the US Army's ground forces at Camp Doha in western Kuwait.

The Army described Camp Doha as one of the largest and most important US mili-



tary bases in western Kuwait, serving as a key logistical hub for American forces deployed across West Asia and housing substantial numbers of US Army personnel as well as naval and air force assets.

It also announced that Army's suicide drone fired at the accommodation and welfare buildings and an equipment warehouse used by the US military at Al Azraq Air Base in Jordan and the US military facilities located at Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain.

The Army's statement said the strikes were launched in retaliation for the repeated attacks by the US against Iranian territory.

The US continued its attacks on Iran on Wednesday, targeting several cities including the capital Tehran. Kiar County in the Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province was also targeted by the US military at the early hours of Wednesday. The US army also launched attacks on three cities in southwestern province of Khuzestan and the city of Abadan in Ilam Province.

The US attacks have so far claimed the lives of at least 53 Iranians.

Tehran rejects France's 'baseless' allegations over embassy staff

Iran rejected as "baseless" and "false" a claim by France's foreign minister that two French embassy employees in Tehran had been intimidated, and said France should instead answer for the "interventionist" conduct of its diplomats in Iran.

The exchange followed an incident involving two French diplomatic staff in the Iranian capital. France has said the two diplomats were briefly detained and mistreated while carrying out cultural outreach duties, while Iran says they were found attending a meeting with individuals wanted on security-related charges before being released to the French Embassy, Press TV reported.

Mohammad Tanhaei, head of the Second Western Europe Department at Iran's Foreign Ministry, said reports from the relevant Iranian authorities showed that two French nationals attended a meeting on Sunday evening with several security suspects who were being pursued by Iranian authorities.

According to Tanhaei, the two individuals were questioned for a short time by Ira-



nian security personnel after attending the meeting. He said multiple documents indicating "anti-security activities" were found at the location and that the relevant authorities were examining them. Tanhaei rejected the French foreign minister's "false" allegation that the two individuals had been beaten.

He said that once law enforcement officers learned the pair were affiliated with the French Embassy in Tehran, they transferred them to the diplomatic police headquarters and, after coordinating with the Foreign Ministry and allowing

them to contact the French ambassador, handed them over to the embassy.

He said the conduct of the two French Embassy employees violated the laws of the host state and the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Rather than making a "forward escape," France's foreign minister should answer for the conduct of the two embassy employees, Tanhaei said.

France's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday summoned Iran's charge d'affaires in Paris over the incident.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in a telephone conversation with his French counterpart on Tuesday, protested the "unconventional" conduct of two French diplomats in Tehran, calling their actions unacceptable.

Araghchi said compliance with the laws and regulations of the host country and adherence to recognized diplomatic principles and norms are essential for the continued operation of foreign diplomatic missions, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Gov't approves measures to ease power restrictions on industries

Economy Desk

Iran's government approved seven measures to support industrial production and improve electricity supply for manufacturers after President Masoud Pezeshkian ordered an emergency meeting in response to complaints from business leaders over power restrictions affecting factories. The measures were approved after a three-hour meeting chaired by Pezeshkian and attended by officials from the ministries of industry and energy, along with representatives of industrial and business associations, according to the presidency's website, president.ir.

The meeting was convened hours after manufacturers raised concerns about electricity shortages during Iran's National Industry, Mining and Trade Day ceremony on Tuesday. Pezeshkian said maintaining stable industrial production was one of the government's priorities because of its importance for employment and economic security.

"The wheels of industry must keep turning without interruption," he said.

The president said the government had begun implementing energy-saving measures across state institutions, with all government bodies required to reduce consumption,



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian chairs a meeting with officials from the ministries of industry and energy and representatives of industrial and business associations in Tehran, Iran, July 22, 2026. president.ir

eliminate unnecessary energy use and improve efficiency to help ensure stable electricity supplies for the production sector.

He also urged manufacturers to improve energy efficiency through better management and technology without disrupting production, and said the unauthorized use of industrial electricity for activities such as cryptocurrency mining was "completely unacceptable." He called on industrial associations to monitor electricity use by their members.

Iran is facing electricity shortages, a situation exacerbated by peak summer demand and the ongoing US war, which began in late February and has paused only for several weeks under a ceasefire agreed on April 8. A US-Israeli coalition launched attacks on the country on February 28, particularly targeting civilians and infrastructure.

Under the decisions approved at the Wednesday meeting, electricity supply restrictions for industrial parks will be reduced from two days a week



to one day.

Industrial facilities will also be allowed to operate on Fridays in coordination with the Supreme Labor Council, while petrochemical complexes will be required to purchase green electricity through the Energy Exchange to free up capacity on the national grid for other industries. The measures also call for legal

action against industrial facilities found to have breached electricity consumption regulations, including the revocation of operating licenses by the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade.

Other decisions include requiring large shopping malls and commercial centers to reduce energy consumption, launching a nationwide

public campaign to encourage energy conservation, and allocating newly added electricity generation capacity to industrial units and development projects.

The meeting also agreed to establish a joint task force comprising relevant ministries and government bodies to oversee implementation of the decisions.

Tehran, Beijing discuss joint transport corridor to expand trade



Economy Desk

Iran and China have proposed establishing a joint transport corridor to facilitate trade and strengthen logistics cooperation between the two countries, Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday. The proposal was raised during a meeting between officials from the Tehran Chamber of Commerce and the Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce of China, where the two sides discussed ways to ease cargo transportation and expand the role of the Middle Corridor in bilateral trade.

The two sides also stressed making greater use of the Khorgos dry port in China's Xinjiang region on the border with Kazakhstan to strengthen Iran's role in international transport corridors. Peyman Sanandaji, head of the Tehran Chamber's Transport Commission, proposed four measures, including designing a joint transport model through the Khorgos port, launching a pilot project, exchanging logistics data and creating a joint mechanism to address operational issues. He said practical joint projects in transport and transit were needed.

"The Tehran Chamber has consistently pursued the issue of connecting Iran to regional corridors through Khorgos over the past two years," Sanandaji said. He said he hoped the cooperation would move into the implementation stage because "Khorgos is one of the strategic points in the region's transport and transit network and can play an important role in facilitating trade among Iran, China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe." "Our goal is to move beyond dialogue toward implementing operational projects so that, through joint cooperation, cargo transportation costs are reduced

and transport routes between Iran and the countries along this corridor are expanded," he said.

Sanandaji said the country's existing border infrastructure, logistics centers, customs-supervised warehouses and transport facilities provided the potential for Iran to serve as a distribution hub and help complete regional transport corridors.

He said the proposed mechanisms could help connect Iranian businesses more effectively to markets in Central Asia, Russia and parts of Europe through Khorgos.

He added that the Tehran Chamber would organize specialized meetings and business-to-business events to facilitate direct cooperation between Iranian and Chinese companies.

Ma Fuming, head of the Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce, proposed creating a joint transport corridor to facilitate trade, reduce cargo transportation costs and expand economic cooperation between Iran and China.

Referring to the expansion of transport networks and international corridors under China's Belt and Road Initiative, Ma said China had developed multiple routes linking Central Asia and Europe in recent years and that Iran, because of its geographic location, could play an important role in that network.

"Therefore, a joint corridor can be defined for transport between the two countries, and bilateral cooperation can be expanded within that framework," he said.

Ma welcomed the proposals presented at the meeting and said the Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce was ready to cooperate in implementing them.

The meeting concluded with Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Chairman Mahmoud Najafi Arab and Ma Fuming unveiling the representative office of the Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce at the Tehran Chamber on Wednesday.

Iran-Pakistan rail link seen boosting Central Asia, Europe connectivity: *Momeni*

Economy Desk

A planned rail link between Iran and Pakistan would be a strategic development that strengthens transport connections to Central Asia and Europe while boosting bilateral trade, the Iranian interior minister said on Wednesday.

Speaking during talks with Pakistan's Railways Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi in Islamabad, Eskandar Momeni said launching the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) container train would significantly deepen bilateral relations and regional connectivity. He added that linking Iran's rail network with Pakistan, home to about 250 million people, would increase trade between the neighboring countries, ISNA reported. Following ministerial talks between Iran and Pakistan last year, the two countries agreed to develop a joint railway action plan. The plan forms the basis for the modernization of the Quetta-Taftan railway line, aimed at improving rail safety and efficiency and facilitating the resumption of the ECO Container Train (IT) service on the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul route. Momeni also said construction of the Zahedan-Chabahar rail-



way would be completed soon, while modernization of the Zahedan-Mirjaveh railway line was expected to finish within a month. He said the standard-gauge railway from Mirjaveh to Taftan on Pakistan's border should also be completed to facilitate train services.

"Our relations have developed in a unique way over the past two years, and the expansion of these interactions at the current level has been remarkable," Momeni said.

He said the rail link would support both freight and passenger transport between the neighboring countries, which share longstanding

historical ties, adding that broader cooperation could promote development and prosperity in their border regions.

Abbasi said Pakistan's prime minister attached special importance to railway cooperation with Iran and had instructed the railways ministry to establish a framework for railway projects, including modernization of the Taftan railway line.

Sistan and Baluchestan Governor-General Mansour Bijar also outlined the southeastern province's potential to support joint objectives, including border cooperation, railway connectivity and investment.

Influential Shia figures...

Regarding the issue of weapons, no step will be taken until the Baghdad and Erbil governments reach

Page 1 > the conclusion that this poses a direct threat to their relations with Iran. Nor will any action be taken until the Kurdistan Regional Government comes to understand that removing Iranian Kurdish separatist groups from the territory of the Kurdistan Region will not constitute a threat to the regional government itself.

Therefore, this remains one of the complex issues in relations between Iraq's

Kurdistan Region and Iran, and it has yet to be resolved.

Can Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi's meeting with Donald Trump and his upcoming visit to Iran be linked to these developments?

This could be related to Iraq's mediation efforts. Iraq has always played a mediating role in disputes involving Iran and other countries. If you recall, in the case of Iran and Saudi Arabia and the disputes and severing of relations that had taken place, Iraq had laid much of the ground-

work for resolving the issue, before the two countries decided to go to China to sign an agreement.

In the case of the recent war, Iraq was one of the countries that suffered the greatest impact from the war. Iraq's oil production, which stood at 3 to 4 million barrels per day before the war, had fallen to 1.6 million barrels per day, according to figures cited by Bloomberg. Therefore, the economic threat to Iraq is always present as the war drags on. Everything Iraq is currently trying to do is either to delay the war or to prevent it from continuing.

Attacks on Iran's civilian infrastructure could be 'crimes against humanity': *Expert*



By Asgar Ghahramanpour
Editor-in-chief

INTERVIEW

law, discusses the structural limitations of the UN Security Council, and proposes legal and diplomatic avenues — including systematic evidence collection, international legal mechanisms, and civil society initiatives — to pursue accountability. The interview provides valuable insights into the challenges facing the contemporary international legal order and the legal and diplomatic options available to Iran.

IRAN DAILY: In light of the reported attacks on Iran's civilian infrastructure and public facilities, how should such actions be assessed under international humanitarian law? If substantiated, could these attacks constitute violations of international law?

FALK: Such actions, if deliberate and unambiguous, are criminal violations of international law, and if they are of significant magnitude, they would qualify as Crimes Against Humanity as encoded in the Nuremberg Principles. More specifically, such attacks on civilian infrastructure and public facilities would be both violations of the laws of war and of international humanitarian law. In some situations, such targets could claim legality as matters of "military necessity," but I have seen no evidence of such a contention being made by either the US or Israel.

Given that, according to Iranian officials, official reports, and documented evidence, there is substantial evidence of US and Israeli attacks on Iran's civilian infrastructure and public facilities, why have the United Nations and other international institutions failed to respond effectively or take meaningful action? Does this apparent inaction undermine the credibility and impartiality of the international legal system?

The question is natural, but fails to take account of the design of the UN as giving the winners of World War II a de facto exemption from the obligations of the UN Charter as a result of the right of veto given to the five Permanent Members of the Security Council — the only organ of the UN System with the authority to make decisions that are obligatory. For better and much worse, the management of global security is left to the discretion of these five states. The UN could assert a residual relevance by way of the General Assembly under the so-called Uniting for Peace Resolution if sufficient political will of enough member countries existed. Even if the political will was present in sufficient numbers to produce a binding resolution, it would still be of limited symbolic significance unless implemented by the adoption of coercive mechanisms in the event of non-compliance.

Do you believe that international law is applied selectively in the case of Iran? If so, how do these double standards affect states' confidence in the international legal order?

The differences between the allegations of Iran's violations of international law in the course of defending itself against an unprovoked war of aggression by the United States and Israel contrast with the refusal to condemn Israel for the unlawful criminality of its genocidal assault on Gaza. Such double standards by a leading country undermines the authority of international law that presupposes treating equals equally. It

means that international law is a policy or propaganda instrument to be used against adversaries or rivals and to be ignored or rejected if allegations of international law violations are directed at friends or allies. There is no doubt that such behavior subverts the authority of international law.

Assuming that the available evidence is sufficient to establish the responsibility of the United States and Israel for attacks against Iran's civilian infrastructure and public facilities, what legal responsibilities would these states bear under international law?

This is a difficult question so far as a clear answer is concerned. There is very little legal precedent by way of complicity in various forms of aiding and abetting violation of international law. The issue has been raised in relation to Israel's Gaza genocide and regional warmongering by reference to the diplomatic and material support given by the liberal democracies of the West, but so far it has been raised in public discourse and by civil society initiatives such as the International Gaza Tribunal, the UK Gaza Tribunal on British Complicity in relation to Gaza war crimes, and the Canadian Inquiry into Canada's responsibility for the criminality of Israel's military operations in Gaza.

What legal mechanisms are available to hold them accountable?

As suggested in my previous response, only civil society initiatives have reached out to address complicity issues, and then only with respect to Israel. The role of Persian Gulf countries in allowing their territory to be used for US military bases, especially if involved in any of the aggressions against Iran, would constitute potentially actionable efforts to obtain legal accountability or legal ruling from the International Criminal Court against individuals in the complicit governments or from the International Court of Justice with respect to state responsibility. In the meantime, commentary by legal experts in civil society supporting complicity allegations might have a positive effect on international public opinion, and add to the support of Iran by populist protests or action by some governments in expressions of solidarity with Iran's victimization under international law.

From your perspective, what legal avenues are available to the Islamic Republic of Iran to pursue accountability for alleged US attacks on its civilian infrastructure before the International Court of Justice, the UN Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly, and other international bodies?

This is a difficult question that requires detailed inquiry and interpretation because of the paucity of helpful experience. The UN Human

Professor Richard Falk is one of the world's leading scholars of international law, Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, and former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Over several decades, his scholarship and public engagement have significantly shaped debates on international law, armed conflict, human rights, and global governance, establishing him as one of the most influential voices in the field.

In this exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Professor Falk examines the legal implications of the reported attacks on Iran's civilian infrastructure and assesses the capacity of the international legal system to respond to such incidents. He offers a critical assessment of double standards in the application of international

Richard Anderson Falk



A section of a bridge in Hormozgan Province, southern Iran, has been destroyed on July 17, 2026, after an American missile strike hit this civilian infrastructure.
● IRNA

Rights Council has the authority to establish a commission to consider what legal remedies might be available to Iran, and issue reports that address allegations of the violations of legal rights. The General Assembly can adopt resolutions that could include policy recommendations to other entities to establish an ad hoc tribunal on war crimes as it did with respect to Rwanda and Bosnia. It could also seek an Advisory Opinion from the ICJ as to Iran's legal grievances and remedies. The ICJ could not exercise jurisdiction in response to Iran's submission of its legal grievances unless the US or Israel were formally willing to participate in a judicial resolution of any legal disputes, including a judicial pronouncement as to whether the attacks on February 28 and subsequent attacks constituted aggression, entitling Iran to act in accord with its inherent right of self-defense.

Given the political influence of major powers within the UN Security Council, do you believe Iran can realistically obtain justice through existing international legal mechanisms, or should it pursue alternative legal and diplomatic strategies?

Again, an important question difficult to answer briefly. It is evident that the UNSC, as paralyzed by the



The UN could assert a residual relevance by way of the General Assembly under the so-called Uniting for Peace Resolution if sufficient political will of enough member countries existed. Even if the political will was present in sufficient numbers to produce a binding resolution, it would still be of limited symbolic significance unless implemented by the adoption of coercive mechanisms in the event of non-compliance.

veto, will not be an available venue beyond the utterance of Iran's legal grievances and appeals for a response, reinforced by an array of humanitarian considerations. As the UN now functions, it could not render "justice" in response to Iran's appeals, and no formal mechanism within the UN System or in international society is available.

It may be worthwhile for Iran to encourage the formation of a civil society tribunal of the sort that has brought some Palestinian grievances recently to light in a manner that motivates societal activism and solidarity initiatives. The Permanent Peoples Tribunal in Rome has frequently organized tribunals that address a wide variety of international law issues.

What types of evidence and documentation should Iran collect and preserve to strengthen its legal case concerning attacks on its civilian infrastructure before international judicial and quasi-judicial bodies?

Iran should establish an archive of evidence that consists of survivor testimony and the formally transcribed views of international law experts, including non-Iranian respected specialists. Consultation with the secretariat of the International Gaza Tribunal in Istanbul, which has gone to major efforts to establish an archive documenting crimes against Gaza, might be helpful.



This railway bridge in Iran's northern Golestan Province has been damaged in a US air strike on July 8, 2026.
● TASNIM



Many observers argue that international law lacks effective enforcement mechanisms when powerful states are involved. Does Iran's experience illustrate this structural weakness? What reforms would you propose to strengthen the enforcement of international law? The simple answer would be to abolish the veto in the Security Council, which would require the support of the existing five Permanent Members, and is not even a remote possibility for the foreseeable future. Slightly more feasible, although also risking conflict, would be for a coalition of countries from the Global South to establish an enforcement capability, possibly as an extension of the BRICS or in coordination with China. Yes, the Iran experience of targeted aggression clearly reveals the structural weakness of the normative framework that misleadingly contends that it supports "a rule-governed world". The more accurate descriptive language would acknowledge that Iran is subject to the malevolent management of global security by way of militarist geopolitics that is subject to neither legal constraints nor procedures of accountability.

Even if Iran is unable to obtain legally binding judgments against the United States or Israel, can sustained legal and diplomatic efforts still produce significant political, diplomatic, or historical outcomes, including strengthening international accountability?

It is important for Iran to put forward well-evidenced arguments in support of the severe encroachments on its legal and territorial rights as a sovereign state. The attacks of its civilian infrastructure and public facilities in the course of the enactment of the aggressive war scenario of the US and Israel should be rendered as illegitimate as possible even if it cannot be pronounced unlawful by international procedures and institutions.

If you were serving as a legal adviser to the government of Iran today, what legal and diplomatic roadmap would you recommend for pursuing accountability regarding the attacks on Iran's civilian infrastructure and public facilities?

To aid in this process of delegitimizing the attack, I would recommend establishing an international commission of jurists with a mandate to report on the international law dimensions of the Iran War.

A second option would be to encourage the formation, in Iran or elsewhere, of a civil society tribunal named the International Tribunal on the Iran War. Its compilation of evidence and testimony has the potential to give the peoples of the world a comprehensive account that will shape perception of legitimacy and illegitimacy, and indirectly clarify a convincing interpretation of the relevance of international law.

With new attack on ICC

US expands its assault on rule of law



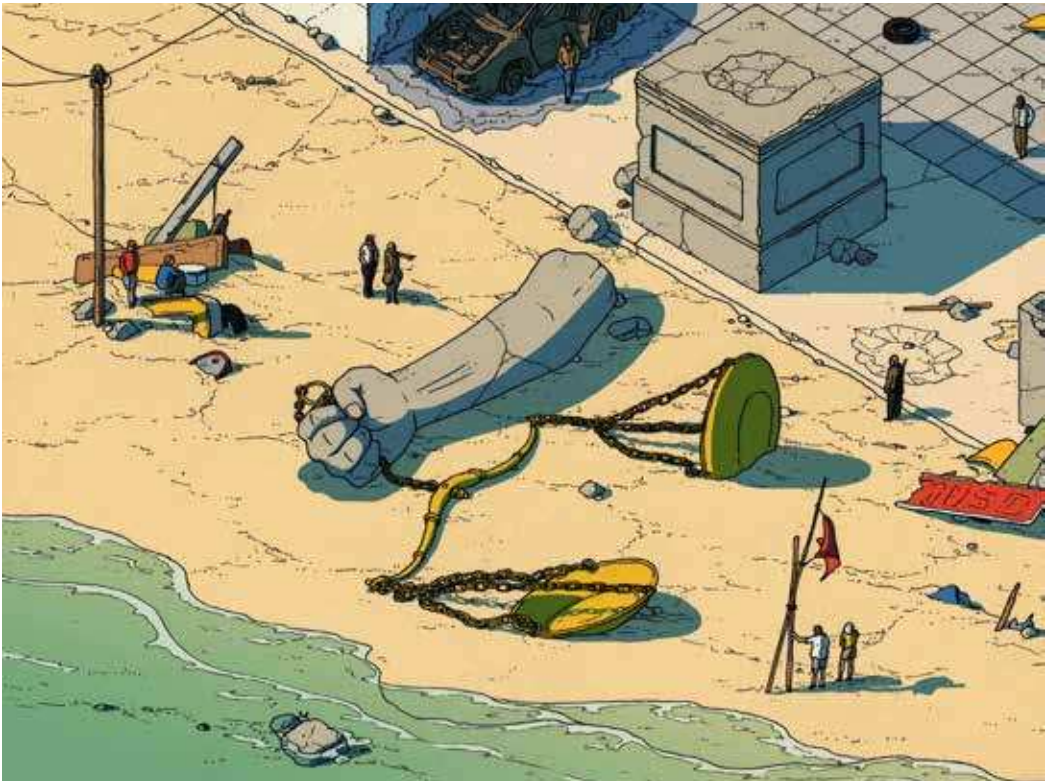
By Craig Mokhiber
Former senior UN official

OPINION

On July 13, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced the administration's latest brazen attack on international law and the institutions mandated to uphold it. Declaring "a sweeping campaign to dismantle the threat posed by the International Criminal Court," Rubio promised a "whole-of-government response to systematically disable the ICC's ability to operate". In language that would make Orwell blush, Rubio's lawless statement claims that his campaign of intimidation and obstruction against the Court is meant to "disable the threat posed by the ICC to Americans". In essence, an administration that has been on a global rampage, perpetrating gross violations of human rights at home and abroad, is now seeking to claim that the international institutions set up to protect human rights (like the ICC), rather than the US itself, are the real threats to human rights. To achieve the administration's nefarious ends, Rubio has promised pressure on states to withdraw from the ICC. That includes the intimidation ("increased scrutiny") of states receiving US aid that refuse to reject the ICC's authority, visa revocations and travel bans for ICC personnel, and increased (unlawful) sanctions against the ICC and affiliated organizations. In other words, the Trump administration, acting to protect another oppressive foreign regime engaged in genocide and apartheid, has publicly announced an illegal campaign to obstruct justice and, to that end, to persecute judges, court personnel, and cooperating witnesses and experts.

'Sovereignty' canard

Rubio's announcement, as has become common with such Trump policies, seeks to frame the "campaign" as a defense of "US sovereignty". But few will be deceived by this transparent ruse. First, duly constituted international tribunals, as institutions of international law, are not a threat to any state's sovereignty. To the contrary, they are expressions of sovereignty, as international law is formulated by states as an act of sovereignty. States negotiate treaties, join international organizations, and consent to be bound by international law in order to benefit from inclusion in the international community of states, and to ensure a safer and more stable international legal order. Nowhere is this clearer than in matters of the prohibition of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and aggression — which represent the entire remit of the ICC. And the Court only acts in the wake of such atrocities when there is a jurisdictional basis to do so, and when relevant states are unable or unwilling to act. Seeking to be excluded from accountability for the highest crimes in international law, or to exclude others from it, is not



● OWEN POMERY/THE GUARDIAN

the behavior of a state worried about the technicalities of sovereignty. Rather, it is the act of a rogue state seeking to advance the cause of impunity for itself and its co-perpetrators. Secondly, the ICC does not prosecute states, and cannot therefore directly challenge their sovereignty, as such. It is rather a court of individual criminal responsibility for perpetrators from state parties (who have given consent to the ICC), or who have committed crimes on the territory of a state party. And states have an opportunity to investigate and prosecute such crimes on their own and, indeed, are already obliged to do so under international law whether they are parties to the ICC (Rome Statute) or not. Under Article 17 of its Statute, the ICC's jurisdiction only activates where states fail to do so (so-called "complementarity").

Buttressing Israeli impunity

Third, as a series of previous US actions and statements have made clear (and while the US certainly has some reason to fear prosecution of US perpetrators of war crimes in places like Afghanistan and Iraq) this assault on the Court is principally just the latest attempt by the US to buttress the impunity of the Israeli regime at a moment when global calls for the regime's accountability have reached a fever pitch. The ICC's indictments against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, both of them fugitives from justice, for crimes against humanity, sent the Israeli regime's US sponsors into a fury. Threats were quickly followed by official sanctions against judges, prosecutors, and cooperating witnesses. Indeed, even before the warrants were requested, a dozen US Senators sent a threatening letter to the ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan, declaring, in the style of delinquent schoolyard bullies, "Target Israel and we will target you.... You have been warned." The Trump administration, in defense of Israeli impunity, has already withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council, attacked UN agencies like UNRWA, and imposed several rounds of unlawful sanctions on the ICC

Prosecutor, its Judges, the UN's human rights rapporteur on Palestine, and the most prominent Palestinian human rights organizations. Under a previous administration, the US has even gone so far as to adopt legislation allowing for US military action against the seat of the ICC in the Netherlands, with the objective of springing indicted war criminals from the US or its ally nations. The legislation was nicknamed "The Hague Invasion Act".

Assault on international law

The latest outrage from the Secretary of State is part of a larger effort by the US-Israel axis to dismantle the post-WWII system of international law and, thereby, to remove all constraints on their exercise of raw power. This effort has included a series of broad-daylight violations of the highest rules of international law, including serial aggression across Western Asia, the Mediterranean, Latin America, and the Caribbean, live-streamed war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, assault and murder on the high seas, murder and assassinations on foreign territories, and the kidnapping of foreign leaders. It has included a war against international organizations, variously attacking, campaigning against, or withdrawing from organizations like UNRWA, the World Health Organization, and the UN Human Rights Council. It has included spying, smearing, and sanctioning international officials and judges, from the ICC to the UN human rights rapporteurs. It has included attempts to replace the United Nations with dictatorial imperial bodies like the Trump-headed "Board of Peace". And it has included the abduction, torture, and murder of hundreds of UN staff and the destruction of their facilities, especially in Palestine. Of course, the latest US action announced by Rubio against the ICC is not only morally outrageous but also patently unlawful, like many of the acts cataloged here. Nevertheless, as with a series of shocking US violations of inter-



In language that would make Orwell blush, Rubio's lawless statement claims that his campaign of intimidation and obstruction against the Court is meant to "disable the threat posed by the ICC to Americans". In essence, an administration that has been on a global rampage, perpetrating gross violations of human rights at home and abroad, is now seeking to claim that the international institutions set up to protect human rights (like the ICC), rather than the US itself, are the real threats to human rights.

national law in recent years, the failure of other states to mount a principled response may well mean that the US will get away with it. If that happens, yet another hard-fought — and still nascent — building block of international law will fall. And its restoration in our time will be unlikely.

Will the world fight back?

But international law is not without tools to resist the expanding US assault. The Rome Statute of the ICC itself, under Article 70, provides for criminal prosecution for "impeding, intimidating or corruptly influencing an official of the Court," as well as for "retaliating against an official of the Court on account of duties performed by that or another official". And there is no language in Art. 70 that would limit its application to perpetrators from member states, meaning the Court could, in principle, charge US (and Israeli) persons with such offenses. Indeed, a case in point is the ICC Prosecutor's recent Art. 70 warning to Israel and others in May 2024, which came in response to efforts by the Israeli regime and Western powers to intimidate the Court. Upon announcing his request for arrest warrants for the Israeli perpetrators, Khan stated that "all attempts to impede, intimidate or improperly influence the officials of this Court must cease immediately." He added that his office would not hesitate to "act pursuant to article 70 of the Rome Statute if such conduct continues". If convicted under Article 70, perpetrators can face five years in prison. And beyond Article 70, the ICC is itself an international organization with legal personality (meaning that it has rights and can bring claims on its own behalf). Customary international law allows for such organizations to take countermeasures when attacked. What's more, the Court is located in the Netherlands, a UN member state that has also ratified the Rome Statute and is obliged to provide security for the Court. As such, any violation by the US on or directed at the ICC in the territory of the Netherlands would not only constitute the supreme international crime of aggression, but would also solve the jurisdictional question, should the Court wish to act against US persons seeking to intimidate or obstruct ICC proceedings. Of course, it is highly unlikely that US officials could ever be arrested for these crimes, and the US is heavily armed, violent, and often lawless in its actions abroad, as Rubio's most recent action shows. It's true that the ICC (or its state parties) have no power to impose decisions on the US by force. But with sufficient political backing from state parties to protect ICC judges and prosecutors, US perpetrators could find themselves marked as fugitives from justice and unable to travel through a significant number of countries. There would also be political and diplomatic costs, resulting in the US's even further isolation on the world stage. A total of 125 ICC state parties,

including many of the US's closest Western allies, are already legally obliged to oppose the US attacks on the Court. So, while the ICC may never be able to arrest US perpetrators — though any of its 125 members could — it can mark them as permanent fugitives, alongside their Israeli co-perpetrators. In addition, states could act, individually and collectively, to block US sanctions against the ICC and its personnel. The European Union, for example, has sanctions blocking legislation that could be activated to protect those targeted by the US. Its failure so far to initiate such action to protect ICC personnel, UN rapporteur Francesca Albanese, and targeted human rights organizations is an ongoing scandal of complicity. Member states of the UN could also convene an emergency session of the General Assembly under the Uniting for Peace mechanism to circumvent a US veto in the Security Council and adopt measures to push back against this assault on international law and protect its victims. So far, of course, there is little sign of willingness from governments around the world to confront the US-Israeli Axis on these matters. To the contrary, the level of complicity, especially by Western states and Arab governments, has been shocking given the stakes. But if they do not find the courage and principle to act soon, it is highly unlikely that the postwar legal system will survive.

Taking the assault on the judiciary global

Viewed through a historical lens, the Rubio game plan is nothing new. Fascism loves "law and order," but it despises the rule of law. Short of popular revolution and armed resistance, an independent judiciary is often the ultimate check on abusive power. That's why, beginning in 1925, Mussolini's fascist regime purged the courts of any judges that might seek to constrain fascist power, replaced them with loyalists, and established political courts to punish opponents and ensure the will of the regime. Eight years later in 1933, the Nazi regime began its consolidation of power in Germany by purging the courts of independent judges and replacing them with loyal Nazis. Four years after that, beginning in 1937, the fascist regime of Francisco Franco in Spain instituted a plan to systematically purge the Spanish judiciary of independent judges and replace them with military tribunals and political courts loyal to the regime. Since then, efforts to intimidate, corrupt, subjugate, or dismantle judicial bodies have been constant hallmarks of authoritarian regimes and of mafia syndicates everywhere. The Trump administration, as the latest announcement from Rubio makes clear, is no exception. The only difference is that Trump and Rubio have now taken their assault on the rule of law global. And that is a threat to everyone.

The article first appeared on Mondoweiss.

Iran freestyle wrestlers face stern test at Asian Games

Sports Desk

Iran's freestyle wrestling team will face a formidable challenge in its bid to cement its status as the continent's dominant force when the wrestling competition at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games gets underway in Japan on Sept. 30.

With the wrestling event in Nagoya and the World Championships, which begin on Oct. 24 in Astana, Kazakhstan, separated by less than 30 days, the Iran Wrestling Federation and the national coaching staff have opted to field different lineups for the two competitions. Even so, Iran's six-man freestyle squad for the Asian Games will still feature a star-studded cast.

Reigning two-time world champion and Olympic silver medalist Amirhossein Zare will headline the Iranian roster as he bids to win his second consecutive Asian Games gold medal in the 125kg division.

Joining Zare in the Iranian

freestyle squad are world silver medalist Amirali Azarpira (97kg), as well as Younes Emami (74kg) and Mohammad Nokhodi (86kg), who have won seven senior world medals between them. The lineup is completed by former U23 world bronze medalists Ali Mo'meni (57kg) and Abbas Ebrahimzadeh (65kg).

The Iranian freestyle team enjoyed an impressive campaign in Hangzhou in 2022, claiming three gold and two silver medals. Wrestling remains Iran's most successful sport in Asian Games history, accounting for 74 of the country's 192 gold medals since its debut at the 1951 Games in New Delhi.

However, the task is expected to be considerably tougher this time as host Japan, along with India, Uzbekistan, North Korea, Mongolia, and Bahrain, is set to field world-class contenders across the six weight classes.

At 57kg, Mo'meni is likely to face stiff opposition from wrestlers represent-



Iranian freestyle wrestlers are pictured during a training session in Tehran, Iran, on July 18, 2026.

● FARSHAD BANDANI/LAWFIR

tougher.

At 97kg, a second showdown in less than six months could be on the cards between Azarpira and Japan's Arash Yoshida after the Iranian suffered a surprise 4-0 defeat in the final of the Asian Championships in April.

While every Iranian representative is expected to face formidable opposition, Zare appears to be the country's strongest gold medal prospect, entering the Games as the wrestler to beat in the heavyweight division.

With the level of competition continuing to rise across Asia, Iran's freestyle wrestlers will need to overcome a host of established international stars if they are to match their medal haul from the previous Games and return home with multiple gold medals.

ing Japan, North Korea, India, and Mongolia, while the 65kg category could largely depend on Japan's final selection. If Olympic champion Kotaro Kiyooka is not included in the host

nation's lineup, Kaiji Ogino will still be regarded as one of the leading gold medal contenders, presenting a major obstacle for Ebrahimzadeh, who lost to the Japanese wrestler in the

semifinals of the 2024 U23 World Championships. The 74kg division also promises to be highly competitive, with Uzbekistan's reigning Olympic champion Razambek Jamalov and

Japan's Daichi Takatani – who lost to Jamalov in the Paris 2024 Olympic final – among the favorites should they compete in Nagoya, making Emami's path to the podium considerably



Asian Age Group Aquatics Championships: Iranian swimmers impress with nine medals

Sports Desk

Iran's six-man swimming squad enjoyed a prolific campaign at the Asian Age Group Aquatics Championships in Bangkok, Thailand, collecting nine medals, including two golds, across

Iranian swimmer won the gold medal in the men's 100m butterfly event at the Asian Age Group Aquatics Championships.

● IR IRAN AQUATICS

multiple events.

Alireza Arab and Mohammad-Mahdi Gholami headlined the country's medal haul by claiming gold in their respective disciplines. Arab clocked 28.22 seconds in the final to win the men's 50m breaststroke title, while Gholami topped the podium in the men's 100m butterfly after producing a winning time of 55.46 seconds.

There was further success for the two Iranians in the relay events.

Gholami teamed up with Kiararam Kiani, Amirali Sabeti, and Danial Jahangiri to win silver in the men's 4×100m freestyle relay, adding to his impressive list of achievements after claiming two gold medals at the Asian Youth Games and a bronze at last year's Islamic Solidarity Games.

Arab, meanwhile, joined Gholami, Jahangiri, and Parsa Shahshahani in the Iranian quartet that finished runner-up in the men's

4×100m medley relay.

Iran's other relay medal came in the men's 4×200m freestyle, where Kiani, Gholami, Sabeti, and Jahangiri claimed bronze.

Coached by Meisam Sa'adati, the Iranian squad also secured four bronze medals in the individual events through Jahangiri in the men's 100m and 200m freestyle, Shahshahani in the men's 200m backstroke, and Sabeti in the men's 50m freestyle.

Persian Gulf Premier League to kick off on Aug. 14

Sports Desk

The 2026-27 Persian Gulf Premier League (PGPL) season will kick off on Aug. 14, the League Organization of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) announced.

The full fixture list for the upcoming campaign will be unveiled during a draw ceremony at Tehran's Olympic Hotel on Tuesday.

The new season will feature 18 teams, an expansion of two clubs from the previous edition. The decision was made after last season was declared null and void with seven rounds of matches remaining because of a military conflict between Iran and a U.S.-Israeli coalition, which began on Feb. 28. As a result, no teams were relegated, offering a lifeline to Zob Ahan and Mes Rafsanjan, both of which were in the relegation zone when the season was abandoned. Nassaji Mazandaran won the Azadegan League title

last week to return to the top flight after spending one season in the second tier. Mes Shahr-e Babak, meanwhile, finished runner-up to Nassaji to secure promotion and will make its Persian Gulf Premier League debut this season.

Esteghlal and Tractor occupied the top two places in the standings when the league was halted and will represent Iran in the new AFC Champions League Elite.

Esteghlal is expected to receive a direct place in the league phase of Asia's pre-

mier club competition, while Tractor will have to secure its berth through the qualifying playoffs.

For only the second time in the league's 26-season history, every top-flight club will begin the campaign with an Iranian head coach.

The only previous instance came during the pandemic-affected 2020-21 season. The preceding campaign had begun with seven foreign managers across the league's 16 clubs, but COVID-19, travel restrictions, and mounting financial problems triggered a mass exodus.



CAFA U20 Women's Championship:

Iran fights back to beat Tajikistan in opener

Sports Desk

Iran got off to a winning start to the CAFA U20 Women's Championship in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, rallying from behind to beat the host 3-2 on Tuesday.

Mehrsa Barari, Yasna Ja'farnia, and Maryam Khalilifar, who went on to pick up the Player of the Match prize, were on target as Iran pulled off a sensational comeback in the second half to overcome a two-goal halftime deficit.

Iran head coach Maryam Jahannejati praised her team's fighting spirit, saying the tournament is part of the federation's long-term plan to develop the next generation of national team players.

"I would first like to congratulate the Tajikistan team on its performance. They have made significant progress and played a very good match," Jahannejati said after the victory.

"We came to this tournament with a squad made up of around 70 percent under-17 players and also

promoted even younger players to this age group. Our goal is to start building for the future of national team by giving new players valuable international experience." Iran endured a difficult start, conceding twice through individual errors in the third and 10th minutes before mounting a second-half comeback.

"We spoke to the players at halftime and tried to prepare them

mentally to return to the game with greater focus," Jahannejati said.

"Players at this age are naturally more vulnerable psychologically, and the early goals affected them. But they gradually settled into the match, grew in confidence, and eventually completed the comeback."

Jahannejati believes the final outcome reflected her players' mental strength.

"Fortunately, the players produced an excellent second-half performance. They overturned the deficit by scoring three goals, and the comeback showed they have strong character and the determination to fight back in difficult situations," she said.



Hormozgan's women preserve a centuries-old embroidery art

Iranica Desk

Hormozgan Province, with its long history of seafaring and trade with the lands surrounding the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, has always been a meeting point of diverse cultures and artistic traditions. This cultural exchange, combined with the creativity and talent of local women, has given rise to a collection of unique handicrafts, among which traditional embroidery holds a prominent place. Among these arts, Khos Bafi and Shak Bafi (also known as Khos Duzi and Shak Duzi) occupy a special position; crafts that, despite changes in lifestyle, have remained alive in many parts of Hormozgan and continue to be an inseparable part of the region's traditional women's clothing.

In fact, in corners of old houses across Hormozgan, the gentle sound of spools of thread and the shimmer of silver and gold ribbons still tell the story of an art that has survived for generations in the hands of the women of this land. An art shaped not by machines, but by memory, experience, patience, and creativity, it is now recognized as one of the most valuable forms of traditional embroidery in southern Iran.



Khos Bafi and Shak Bafi are not merely methods of decorating garments; they are part of the cultural memory and identity of women along the shores of the Persian Gulf. Woven into every strand of these crafts are traces of history, maritime trade, local aesthetics, and women's artistry. "Khos" refers to thin, delicate, and shiny metallic strips, usually produced in gold, silver, and sometimes other colors. These strips form the main element in creating dazzling patterns on fabric and give local garments a distinctive appearance. What makes this craft valuable is not only the material itself, but also

the embroiderer's skill in transforming simple strips into orderly, delicate, and eye-catching designs. Although the terms Khos Bafi and Shak Bafi are sometimes used interchangeably in everyday speech, they are in fact two different techniques with distinct applications. In Khos Bafi, the final product is a very fine and narrow strip, mainly used to decorate Bandari trousers and parts of women's garments. Shak Bafi, on the other hand, produces wider, denser, and more durable strips that are used to decorate trouser edges, collars, cuffs, and other sections of clothing. This

structural difference has given each of these two arts a special place in the traditional dress of southern Iran.

One of the unique features of these crafts is the simplicity of their tools alongside the complexity of the skills required to create them. Unlike many contemporary arts that depend on industrial equipment, Khos Bafi and Shak Bafi are carried out using only a few traditional tools, which have been passed down from one generation to the next with little fundamental change. Yet, more important than the tools is the skill preserved in the mind and hands of the artist. Unlike many weaving techniques, Khos Bafi does not rely on paper designs or printed patterns. The motifs are created from a memory developed through years of learning passed down orally from one generation to another. Before beginning the work, the artist visualizes the design in her mind and then creates it on the fabric through the precise movement of threads and spools.

In the past, the use of these arts was largely limited to traditional women's clothing in Hormozgan. Bandari trousers, local dresses, and ceremonial garments were

the main areas where Khos and Shak were used. The shine of these strips, alongside the vibrant colors of southern clothing, gave women's attire in the region a distinctive beauty and helped shape an important part of Hormozgan's visual cultural identity.

In recent years, however, these crafts have moved beyond the boundaries of traditional clothing. Fashion designers and handicraft artists have adopted new approaches, using Khos and Shak strips in the design of elegant coats, formal dresses, handbags, shoes, belts, jewelry, and modern accessories. This combination of traditional art and contemporary design has created new opportunities for introducing Hormozgan's handicrafts to wider markets.

The presence of these arts in interior decoration is also expanding. Today, Shak strips are used to decorate cushions, table-

cloths, curtains, textile artworks, and decorative products. These modern applications show that an authentic traditional craft can maintain its identity while gaining a meaningful presence in contemporary life through adaptation to today's needs.

Khos Bafi and Shak Bafi are more than the weaving of threads and strips; they are a living narrative of the history and daily life of women living along the Persian Gulf coast. Every knot is a memory of generations of artists who, without books or written patterns and relying only on their knowledge and memory, passed on a remarkable skill to their children. These crafts represent the connection between tradition and beauty, labor and creativity, and identity and life — a heritage that continues to shine in the warmth of the south, preserved by the artistic hands of Hormozgan's women.



● chn.ir

Abr Forest where clouds meet wilderness

Iranica Desk

The Abr (Cloud) Forest of Shahrud, in Semnan Province, is one of Iran's most mysterious natural landscapes. Situated on the boundary between the country's arid desert climate and the humid climate of the north, it is a place where two contrasting ecosystems meet. This unique climatic transition has created scenery unlike anywhere else in Iran, where desert and forest stand face to face.

The forest forms part of the ancient Hyrcanian Forests, a natural ecosystem dating back more than 40 million years and inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Valuable tree species such as hornbeam, oak, willow, and maple thrive here, reflecting the remarkable resilience of Iran's natural heritage through the ages.

With the arrival of spring, light rainfall, cool temperatures, and rapid plant growth transform the landscape. The forest's ever-present mist becomes thinner and more transparent, while the songs of migratory birds returning for the season fill the woodlands. At this time of year, every step through the forest seems to carry the scent of new life.

Most visitors reach the area via Shahrud and Bastam. The road is paved until the outskirts of the forest, but the final few kilometers are unpaved and winding. Spring rains can make the route slippery, so a four-wheel-drive vehicle or the assistance of a local guide



is strongly recommended. Abr village marks the point where the dramatic climatic transition begins. Within minutes, travelers leave behind a dry plain and enter a lush, humid landscape shrouded in clouds. The village's modest houses, small orchards, and mist creeping into residential courtyards all contribute to its distinctive charm.

On spring evenings, as temperatures begin to fall, clouds descend from the northern mountain peaks into the valleys below. This spectacular phenomenon is the reason the forest is known as the Cloud Forest. During these moments, the landscape appears to float between earth and sky. Broadleaf trees such as hornbeam, alder, and maple dominate the forest canopy, while hawthorn, blackberry, and wild rose flourish beneath them in spring, filling the undergrowth with blossoms and color. Walking beneath branches still wet with morning dew offers an



● IRNA

immersive experience of Iran's pristine natural beauty. Water is one of the defining features of the forest. Numerous springs flow through the area, nourishing its rich vegetation. Although the water appears crystal clear, visitors are advised to drink bottled water or use a portable water filter to avoid possible contamination. On the lower slopes of the forest, visitors may encounter nomads



and local villagers grazing their livestock. Respectful interaction with local communities and purchasing regional products — such as dairy goods or handicrafts from Abr village — helps support the area's sustainable economy.

Best time to visit

Although the Abr Forest is beautiful throughout the year, the period from early spring

to mid-summer offers the finest conditions. During these months, temperatures are mild, rainfall is generally light, and the cloud formations are more consistent. In autumn and winter, heavier fog and slippery roads can make travel more challenging.

The best times to explore the forest in spring are early morning and shortly before sunset. Soft light filtering through delicate layers of mist creates an almost dreamlike atmosphere, making these hours especially popular among photographers. Sunlight streaming through the drifting clouds lends an ethereal quality to the landscape. Those who spend the night at one of the forest's authorized campsites are rewarded with the unforgettable sight of clouds rising from the valleys at dawn. Sunset is equally captivating, as silence settles over the forest and the mist gradually returns, creating the impression that time itself has slowed.

Accommodation and equipment

Several eco-lodges and locally operated guesthouses are located around Abr village. As they are often fully booked during spring, advance reservations are recommended. Some tour operators also offer safe camping opportunities near the forest.

For first-time visitors, joining a guided group tour is the safest option. The trails are winding, sometimes confusing, and in certain areas lack clear signage. More experienced hikers, however, can also enjoy independent exploration with careful planning and proper equipment. Essential gear includes non-slip hiking boots, layered clothing, a waterproof jacket, and a reliable trail map, particularly in spring when temperatures can change rapidly. Carrying spare batteries, a flashlight, and a fully charged mobile phone with a backup power source is also advisable, as mobile network coverage is unavailable in parts of the forest. Spring is both the forest's most vibrant and its most fragile season. Leaving designated trails, lighting fires, or discarding litter can have lasting impacts on this delicate ecosystem. Sustainable tourism means enjoying nature while ensuring it remains unharmed for future generations. The Abr Forest is more than a tourist destination — it is a living and fragile natural heritage. If every visitor leaves nothing behind but memories, its sea of blue-green mist will continue to enchant generations to come.



Minab buries remains of 32 children killed in US school carnage

More than 62 body fragments belonging to 32 students martyred in a US airstrike on an Iranian elementary school have been identified through DNA testing and buried, nearly five months after the attack that killed 168 people, most of them children. The remains, recovered during weeks of search operations at the Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab and surrounding areas, were carried through the streets of Hormozgan Province in a funeral procession Wednesday before burial at the city's martyrs' cemetery, Press TV reported. Grieving parents and other citizens gathered earlier at the site where coffins were prepared to bid a final farewell to what remained of their children. Mojtaba Qahramani, head of Hormozgan's judiciary, said that despite multiple specialized search operations at the school and its environs, no trace has been found of seven-year-old Makan Nasiri, a first-grader who remains the only victim whose body has never been recovered.

Qahramani told the Fars news agency that the US missile struck directly at the location where Makan was standing at the moment of impact. An empty grave has been prepared for Makan, while his personal belongings including a bloodstained sweater and a single sneaker are preserved in a glass display case at a nearby mosque. His parents have spent months searching for any sign of their son. "Where am I supposed to look for my son?" his father asked in an interview earlier this year, his eyes filled with tears. The February 28 strike on the Shajareh Tayyebah School occurred on the first day of the US-Israeli military aggression against Iran and is considered the terrorist war's deadliest attack on civilians. Iranian officials put the death toll at 168, including 120 students and 26 teachers. More than 110 people were wounded. Investigations indicate three precision-strike Tomahawk missiles hit the school. The school



was struck three separate times. The attack has drawn condemnation from the United Nations and human rights groups. "The families of the little girls who were killed are entitled to the truth of how this happened," Ravina Shamdassani, a UN Human Rights Office spokesperson, said. The 62 fragments buried Wednesday were identified as

belonging to 32 students, according to Minab Governor Mohammad Radmehr. Among them were remains of Amirali Kamali, identified after five months of searching. The recovered fragments had been awaiting DNA identification for weeks before the funeral ceremony. Minab's prosecutor said 73 boys and 47 girls were among the



People carry coffins containing the DNA-identified remains of 32 children killed in a US airstrike on Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School during a funeral procession in Minab, southern Iran, on July 22, 2026, nearly five months after the attack on February 28, 2026. ● ISNA

students killed. The dead also included seven parents who had rushed to the school to retrieve their children after hearing reports of airstrikes on Tehran. The school is set to be registered as a national site in Iran, recognizing its significance as a symbol of sacrifice and resilience. Months after the strike, the Pentagon has refused to complete a standard intelligence review that would establish exactly what happened, according to multiple US officials and media reports. The military completed the first two stages of its assessment within days of the strike, confirming terrorist US forces hit the school. But the final intelligence review, standard pro-

cedure for incidents involving mass civilian casualties, was never ordered. Senior US military commanders reportedly bypassed warnings in critical targeting databases that intelligence on Iranian targets was severely outdated. The decision to ignore the warnings was made for "expediency," as commanders rushed to finalize target lists at the outset of the war. President Donald Trump, in a Fox News interview, said the findings may never be made public. "I don't think anybody is ever going to be able to say what happened there," he said. When pressed on satellite imagery showing fragments of a US Tomahawk missile at the site, Trump suggested the images could be "AI generated." More than two dozen Democratic senators demanded answers, writing that "there is no justification for withholding an unclassified accounting of what happened, what went wrong, and what the Department is doing to prevent recurrence".

UNESCO reaffirms concern over damage to Golestan Palace



Arts & Culture Desk

UNESCO renewed its concern over damage to Tehran's UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace during the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, reaffirming that protecting cultural heritage during armed conflict is a binding international obligation, Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said on Wednesday. The discussion brought renewed international attention to the Qajar-era palace, months after UNESCO first reported that blast waves and falling debris had damaged parts of the World Heritage site during military strikes on Iran. While the Busan meeting did not adopt a new resolution on the palace, the organization reiterated its longstanding call for all states to uphold international conventions safeguarding cultural property. "Protecting cultural heritage during armed conflict is a binding obligation under the 1954 Hague Con-

vention and other international legal instruments," UNESCO said, urging all parties to refrain from actions that could endanger sites of outstanding universal value. UNESCO previously reported that blast waves damaged sections of Golestan Palace, including historic stained-glass windows, ornate Orsi lattice windows, mirrorwork, carved wooden doors and parts of several ceremonial halls. Inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2013, Golestan Palace is one of Iran's best-preserved Qajar royal complexes and a landmark that reflects the evolution of Persian architecture and decorative arts during the 19th century. UNESCO said it will continue monitoring the condition of cultural heritage sites in Iran and elsewhere in the region through its international protection mechanisms, underscoring that preserving humanity's shared heritage remains a collective responsibility even in times of conflict.

Minister calls Persian foundation of Iran's national identity

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture Minister Abbas Salehi called on state institutions to treat the preservation of the Persian language as a cultural mission rather than a bureaucratic obligation, saying that Persian remains the cornerstone of Iran's national identity and one of the country's most powerful instruments of cultural influence. Salehi, speaking during the first coordination meeting of the Persian Language Preservation Council on Tuesday, said safeguarding Persian required "a greater sense of responsibility" as the language faced mounting pressures from digital technologies, social media and artificial intelligence, while stressing that protecting it was a shared national duty extending beyond the Ministry of Culture, CHTN reported. "We should not regard this responsibility merely as an administrative or legal obligation. It must be seen as a cultural mission," he said. Describing Persian as "the main pillar of our national identity," Salehi said the language had bound together generations of



Iranians for more than a millennium, allowing modern readers to engage directly with masterpieces such as Ferdowsi's 'Shahnameh'. That continuity, he said, has helped preserve Iran's historical memory and strengthen national cohesion among the country's diverse ethnic communities. He also portrayed Persian as a major component of Iran's soft power, saying the language continues to shape cultural ties across Central Asia, Anatolia and

the Indian subcontinent. Recalling his recent visit to Kyrgyzstan for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization culture ministers' meeting, Salehi said he found a striking reminder of that legacy at the Chingiz Aitmatov House Museum, where the celebrated Kyrgyz writer's family genealogy had been written in Persian. "Many countries know Iran through the Persian language before they know it through its natural resources," Salehi said. "One



Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi (c) speaks during the first coordination meeting of the Persian Language Preservation Council on July 21, 2026. ● farhang.gov.ir

of Iran's greatest assets in global cultural engagement is the Persian language." The minister also announced that the Ministry of Culture has established a dedicated Office of Persian Literature and Language within its Cultural Affairs Department to strengthen policy coordination and executive work on language preservation. He said the office was created after officials concluded that the ministry lacked an independent structure devoted exclusively to Persian, although its launch was delayed by the Ramadan War. Salehi said the new office, headed by prominent poet Gholamreza Tariqi, would work alongside the Persian Language Preservation Council to reinforce both preventive measures and positive initiatives aimed at promoting the language across Iranian society.

Iran cinema sets four-month attendance record with 116,000 in one day

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cinemas drew a record 116,095 moviegoers nationwide on July 21, setting the highest single-day attendance of the Iranian year that began on March 21, according to official box office data, as the country's theatrical market extended its post-conflict recovery and sustained a strong upward trend. The new milestone surpassed the previ-

ous 2026 record of 106,000 admissions set on June 2, indicating growing public enthusiasm for theatrical releases and reinforcing the rebound of Iran's cinema industry after the disruption caused by the imposed war, ILNA reported. Online ticketing platform Cinematicket accounted for 81% of all online ticket sales, highlighting the continued shift toward digital ticket purchases. The latest figures marked the busiest

cinema day of the first four months of the current Iranian year, reflecting what industry officials described as broad public welcome for domestic screenings and a strengthening box office performance. Several Iranian productions are currently driving admissions, including 'The Pool', 'The Death Bath', and 'The Underwear', alongside other titles showing across theaters nationwide.

