

ICJ's Myanmar finding shifts dial on grounds for guilty verdict in genocide case

OPINION 4

Iran Daily

Vol. 8275 ● Thursday, November 26, 2026 ● Azar 05, 1405 ● Jumada al-Thani 16, 1448 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

Iran warns against weaponization of Artificial Intelligence

2



VP says surge in cargo clearance shows no concern over naval blockade

3



AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup:

Iran hits six past Saudis to march into semis

6



Sivandi language preserves traces of ancient Iran

7

Pezeshkian says Ferdowsi's legacy can strengthen national unity

8



President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in the holy city of Mashhad in northeastern Iran, on November 25, 2026.
president.ir

Iran attacks highlight need for new IAEA mechanisms

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

As a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran has maintained close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, US-Israeli attacks on its nuclear facilities have complicated matters, with Tehran making an end to hostilities, the removal of military threats and credible guarantees preconditions for full cooperation. Speaking to Iran Daily, international affairs expert Hanif Ghafari said the attacks had underscored the need for the IAEA to develop supplementary mechanisms for responding swiftly to attacks, conducting independent safety assessments, protecting nuclear materials and personnel, and ensuring that inspection data is not used for future threats or targeting.



Hanif Ghafari

IRAN DAILY: What approach couldv be adopted to manage the current dispute in a way that both safeguards Iran's nuclear rights and prevents the emergence of a new consensus against the country at the IAEA Board of Governors or the UN Security Council?

GHAFARI: First, I must stress that since Rafael Grossi took office as director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, he has turned this ostensibly international organization into a platform for completing the puzzle of the United States' maximum pressure strategy against Iran. Under these circumstances, Iran's cooperation with the agency beyond its safeguards obligations has been suspended, given the IAEA's politicized conduct, the recent war and the agency's complementary role in aligning itself with the United States.

Clearly, the continuation of safeguards cooperation also requires compliance with protocols tailored to the emergency and security conditions prevailing in our country. In other words, the agency cannot expect Iran to behave like an ordinary member under normal, peacetime conditions. We should not forget that the involvement of the IAEA director general and the Board of Governors in the security crisis created against our country leaves no room for the agency to make one-sided demands.

Iran has not withdrawn from the NPT. However, because of the current state of neither war nor peace, which has yet to come to an end, as well as its concerns over the IAEA's negative and politicized conduct toward the country, Iran has imposed certain restrictions on its relations with the agency, particularly regarding access.

The way to manage differences over safeguards cooperation is for the IAEA to take into account the extraordinary and wartime context. Such efforts must be shaped in line with Iran's security considerations. Iran is a member of the NPT and pursues its safeguards commitments within that framework. However, the current circumstances cannot be considered normal. When a country's nuclear facilities have come under attack and the possibility of further military threats remains, the way cooperation is carried out must also take this state of emergency into account.

As a first step, a clear distinction can be drawn between safeguards obligations and cooperation beyond those obligations. Beyond-safeguards cooperation, including access that goes beyond legally binding commitments, should remain suspended under the current circumstances. However, regarding safeguards obligations, there is room for discussions on special technical and safety arrangements.

In this regard, it is also necessary to ensure that safeguards confidentiality is upheld for our country. Such cooperation must take place within a reciprocal framework and should not be interpreted as acceptance of normal conditions or disregard for existing security threats.

What legal, political and security implications would Iran face if it agreed to the IAEA's request to resume inspections and access to nuclear facilities, as opposed to withholding such access?

Unfortunately, the political conduct of Grossi and the Board of Governors has led Iran to conclude that even if safeguards cooperation takes place, it will not be reflected in the IAEA director general's quarterly reports or help prevent the Board of Governors from pursuing decisions that are entirely devoid of a legal basis.

Continued monitoring of nuclear materials and activities covered by the safeguards agreement could prevent further uncertainty about their status. However, agreeing to limited access as part of broader cooperation should not be taken to mean that security conditions and the risks arising from the recent attacks can be ignored.

Protecting sensitive information and preventing inspection data from being exploited for security purposes are of fundamental importance to Iran. From a legal standpoint, too, a distinction must be made between suspending cooperation beyond safeguards obligations and restricting the implementation of safeguards commitments. The legal consequences of these two are not the same, and not every restriction can automatically be considered a breach of obligations.

Page 3

Iran warns against weaponization of Artificial Intelligence

International Desk

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations warned against the weaponization of artificial intelligence (AI) and its use to fuel aggression, citing its deployment during the two US-Israeli wars of aggression against Iran in June 2025 and February 2026.

Speaking at a UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday, Gholamhossein Darzi said rapid technological advances are changing the nature of warfare while increasing the risks of escalation, miscalculation and civilian casualties.

"Technology must serve humanity and be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, not aggression, domination or violations of state sovereignty," he said.

Darzi warned that the use of AI as an instrument of aggression and conflict escalation raises serious concerns, particularly in light of reports detailing the deployment of advanced AI systems during the US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

He said reports reveal that the United States used advanced systems, including Palantir's Maven and Anthropic's Claude, during its February 28 aggression against Iran to analyze intelligence, identify and prioritize targets, and provide strike coordinates.

On March 11, 2026, the commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM) publicly confirmed the use of advanced AI tools during the aggression against Iran, Darzi added.

He further referred to a June 15, 2026 Pentagon court filing that acknowledged the use of AI during the US aggression.

According to the Iranian envoy, the filing confirmed that Grok, through the Pentagon's Maven Smart Systems, enabled US forces to deploy more than 2,000 munitions against 2,000 separate targets within 96 hours.

Darzi said these acknowledgements must be viewed alongside explicit threats made by US officials, which provide serious grounds for concern over the intention to commit war crimes.

He particularly cited the US secretary of defense's March 13 declaration that there would be "no mercy, no quarter for Iranians," as well as the attack on the Minab school, where scores of children and teachers were killed.

"The human cost of the US-Israeli aggression is devastating," he said, putting the death toll at more than 5,000 Iranians, including at least 254 children and 251 women, with another 34,000 injured.

The Iranian envoy stressed that neither advanced technology nor the involvement of private companies can shield Washington or the Israeli regime from accountability for violations of international law.

Turning to the international governance of artificial intelligence, he said the security and military dimensions of the technology must be addressed within the UN framework through intergovernmental processes involving all states.

Darzi also stressed that any international framework governing AI must balance security considerations with developing countries' legitimate right to access and benefit from these technologies on equal terms, free from discrimination, politicization and double standards.



The photo shows remains of the Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab, Iran, on March 31.
GETTY IMAGES

Enemies facing major standstill, strategic uncertainty: *IRGC chief*



Ahmad Vahidi
defapress.ir

International Desk

IRGC Chief Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi said Iran's enemies are facing a major standstill and strategic uncertainty due to the resistance of the Iranian nation and Armed Forces.

Speaking during a visit to an exhibition on Wednesday, Vahidi stressed that Iran's enemies are already experiencing the consequences of their actions and are forced to take the Islamic Republic's retaliatory operations into account whenever considering further moves.

"The enemy today feels defeat in every fiber of its being", he added.

Vahidi underlined that Iran's Armed Forces are stronger and better prepared than ever to confront any renewed aggression, declaring their readiness to push the enemy back by a considerable distance.

He said the enemy is facing internal divisions while the Iranian nation and its Armed Forces remained firmly in the field.

The IRGC commander said Iran's enemies are facing one of their most critical periods despite their extensive efforts to undermine the nation's resolve.

"However, the will of the Iranian nation is now stronger and more determined than ever," he said, describing the country's Armed Forces as united and powerful.

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Hamidreza Haji-Babaei also warned Washington and the Israeli regime against attempting to reignite the war, saying any new aggression would trigger a prolonged and stronger response.

Speaking at an open parliamentary session on Wednesday, Haji-Babaei said Iran neither fears war nor remains indifferent to people's problems, and will not sacrifice its national dignity at the negotiating table.

He said US and Israeli leaders are once again beating the drums of war in an attempt to escape their unresolved domestic crises and electoral challenges.

"However, they are mistaken. Our enemies are once again caught in a cycle of miscalculation," he said.

Haji-Babaei noted that the balance of preparedness has changed, with Iran better prepared and its enemies more vulnerable and confused than before.

Iran calls Israel greatest threat to Lebanon's independence, stability

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday condemned Israeli air and artillery strikes on southern Lebanon and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, saying Israel's escalating actions posed the greatest threat to the country's independence, territorial integrity, security and stability.

In a statement, the ministry stressed Lebanon's inherent right to defend its territorial integrity and national sovereignty, saying the escalation of Israeli aggression during celebrations marking Lebanon's independence laid bare the threat posed by Israel.

"These escalating acts of aggression by the Zionist regime against Lebanon, coinciding with the country's independence celebrations, constitute a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and the November 2024 ceasefire agreement," the statement said.

It added that the developments showed that "the Zionist enemy is the greatest threat to Lebanon's independence, territorial integrity, security and stability."

The ministry said Israel's actions, including serious international crimes such as genocide and grave violations of international law in Gaza, the occupied West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and other countries in the region, warranted a firm response from the United Nations and the international community.

It accused the United States, which it described as Israel's biggest supporter and accomplice, of blocking any effective international action.

The ministry said the UN Security Council's inaction over Israel's occupation of large areas of Lebanon and its continued attacks, which it said were carried out with the backing and support of the United States and some other Western countries, had undermined the credibility of the international body and encouraged further violations of international law and serious crimes by Israel.

Iran also condemned Washington's "destabilizing interference" in Lebanon's internal affairs, warning against US efforts to establish mechanisms in the country that lack national consensus.

The ministry said the proposed mechanisms were intended to pave the way for Israel to advance its expansionist objectives and would neither safeguard Lebanon's national rights and interests nor prevent Israeli occupation, expansionism, aggression and terrorism.

Araghchi raps US for 'crippling' chemical weapons watchdog



AFP

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Tuesday accused the United States of undermining the global chemical weapons watchdog, warning that the organization could be forced to suspend operations and scale back key programs as it faces a budget crisis.

In a post on X, Araghchi said Washington was weakening the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which oversees the implementation of the international ban on chemical weapons.

"The US is so concerned about chemical arms that it's crippling the world's chemical weapons watchdog," Araghchi wrote.

He said the United States was "deliberately putting global peace and security at risk" by obstructing the organization's mandate, describing its conduct as "shameful."

The remarks came a day after Reuters reported that the OPCW was facing a budget crisis, largely due to missing payments from the United States, its largest contributor.

The agency has warned that it may have to suspend some operational activities and reduce programs if the funding shortfall is not addressed.

Washington has not paid its full 2026 contribution to the organization, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The US administration has cut funding to some United Nations bodies and left other financial commitments unpaid, arguing that international organizations need to improve efficiency and demonstrate greater effectiveness.

The United States has said it supports the OPCW's mission and expects the organization to manage its budget efficiently.

The OPCW, based in The Hague, oversees compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



VP says surge in cargo clearance shows no concern over naval blockade

Economy Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref said on Wednesday that a sharp increase in the unloading and clearance of essential goods through the country's non-southern borders showed that Iran was not concerned about an enemy naval blockade.

Speaking at a meeting of the government's Market Regulation Headquarters, Aref stressed the need to remove administrative obstacles and speed up the clearance of goods at the country's ports and customs offices, his website, fvpresident.ir reported.

Since late February, when a US-Israeli coalition launched a 40-day war, Iran has faced wartime conditions and a maritime blockade imposed by Washington to halt its oil exports and deplete government revenues, alongside decades of Western sanctions over its nuclear activities.

Iran is seeking to diversify its logistics corridors to counter growing restrictions on its trade routes. The country shares land borders with several neighbors and has maritime borders to the north, providing opportunities to diversify its foreign trade routes. Turkey, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan are among the countries that could play a role in expanding Iran's land-based trade and transit.

A report presented at Wednesday's meeting showed a significant increase in the volume of essential goods unloaded at northern Iranian ports compared with the same period last year.

Aref did not cite specific figures. However, according to figures released by the head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization on Nov. 5, 2026, five million metric tons of essential goods had been unloaded at northern ports since the start of the current Iranian year on March 21, up 78% from the same period a year earlier.

Turning to domestic supplies and prices, Aref said the country's reserves of essential and strategic goods were in very good shape and that supplies were abundant in the market.

He stressed the need to protect people's livelihoods and prevent further increases in the prices of essential goods, saying daily or weekly price rises of 2% to 3% had a negative psychological impact on society.

Aref called for a mechanism to prevent increases in essential goods prices for at least three months. He said the proposal was under review by the secretariat of the Market Regulation Headquarters, which was working on a mechanism to prevent daily and weekly price increases.

The Central Bank has recently said that the average annual inflation rate for the 12 months ending in the seventh month of the Iranian calendar year (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) stood at 71.4%, compared with the corresponding period a year earlier.



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref chairs a meeting of the government's Market Regulation Headquarters in Tehran, November 25, 2026.
fvpresident.ir

Iran's consumer price index in urban areas reached 836.8 in the month, up 4.6% from the previous month, the Central Bank said.

The figures also showed that year-on-year inflation, which had been rising in previous months, declined in the sixth and seventh months of the current Iranian year, reaching 83.8% and 83.5%, respectively.

The rial has fallen to record lows amid mounting economic pressure, trading at more than 2.9 million rials per US dollar on the open market in recent months.

Iran could boost east-west data transit through Azerbaijan corridor: *Minister*

Economy Desk

Iran's communications minister said on Tuesday that a communications corridor with Azerbaijan is 40% complete and could increase Iran's capacity to carry communications traffic between the world's east and west.

Minister of Information and Communications Technology Sattar Hashemi, speaking at a meeting with private-sector and digital-economy activists in Ardabil Province, said the project aims to activate the northwestern province's capacity as part of a regional digital corridor. He pointed to a plan to complete the project by the end of next year (March 21, 2027).

He said Iran has suitable capacity to transfer communications traffic from east to west, citing communications cooperation with Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and China and Iran's geographic position in the south.

Hashemi also said Iran's communications traffic transit has increased to 6.5 terabits per second from 2.5 Tbps since the current government took office in August, 2024.

Stressing the importance of expanding regional cooperation, he said the ministry has taken effective steps in engaging neighboring countries, including Iraq and Armenia, and is ready to expand technology cooperation with Azerbaijan.



Minister of Information and Communications Technology Sattar Hashemi (C) speaks at a meeting with private-sector and digital-economy activists in Ardabil Province, November 25, 2026.
IRNA

He said the government's approach is not to act as an operator but to facilitate cooperation by introducing the capacities of Iran's private sector and economic actors to foreign counterparts, paving the way for joint partnerships.

On digital infrastructure, Hashemi pointed to a plan to create a "government cloud" under the Seventh Development Plan. Reviews show that some data centers run by government agencies do not meet existing needs because of non-compliance with technical standards, energy supply problems and security considerations, he said.

The plan aims to standardize data centers and enable integrated connection and use of their capacity, according to the minister.

Turning to artificial intelligence, he said the spread of AI is changing network consumption patterns, making upload speed and data transmission capacity increasingly important alongside download speed.

He also announced the Communications Ministry's readiness to invest in a digital economy growth and development center in Ardabil province based on submitted proposals.

Tehran drafts 20-article decree to expand financial exchanges with Baghdad, official says

Economy Desk

Iran has drafted a 20-article cabinet decree to expand financial exchanges with Iraq and submitted it to the cabinet, with finalization awaiting the Central Bank of Iran's written opinion, the secretary-general of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said, according to Mehr news agency.

Jahanbakhsh Sanjabi, a board member and secretary-general of the joint chamber, said the chamber and the Headquarters for the Development of Iran-Iraq Economic Relations presented a proposed package of five executive programs to First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref aimed at preserving and stabilizing economic ties. One focus of the package is using Iraq's capacity to facilitate financial exchanges, he said.

Sanjabi said the package's general outlines were approved by the government's economic subcommittee, and its details were to be reviewed with the participation of the CBI, the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, the economic relations headquarters, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance and the Trade Promotion Organization.

The draft cabinet decree was prepared in 20 articles and submitted, and its finalization is awaiting the Central Bank's written opinion, he said.

Iraq versus UAE

Asked whether Iraq could replace the United Arab Emirates in Iran's financial transactions, Sanjabi said the answer was "both positive and negative." Iraq has considerable capacity for Iran because of its trade volume and neighboring location, but its banking and financial infrastructure is not comparable to that of the UAE, he said.

Iran has in recent years conducted a significant portion of its imports and transit trade through UAE ports, particularly Jebel Ali. However, following the US-Israeli war against Iran and recent developments in trade flows, regional ports in Pakistan, India and Oman have emerged as alternatives.

Sanjabi pointed to restrictions on transferring money through Iraqi exchange houses. From the Iraqi central bank's perspective, part of financial transfers with Iran faces legal restrictions, he said. He added that the gap between the official exchange rate and the free-market rate is another challenge to financial activity in Iraq.

$51 billion in exports

On export figures, Sanjabi said official reports show the value of Iran's exports to Iraq over a five-year period exceeded $51 billion, but less than $34 billion of that amount had been settled under foreign-exchange commitments. As a result, about $17 billion in export earnings remains unresolved in foreign-exchange commitment statistics, he said.

Expert reviews show that returning resources from Iran's exports through Iraqi exchange houses may take between four and 12 months, Sanjabi said. He said a mechanism must be designed that returns trade resources to the country's economic cycle while also managing intermediary costs and benefits.

Iran attacks highlight ...

In a joint statement at the IAEA Board of Governors, Iran, China and Russia made the full resumption of the agency's verification activities conditional on an end to hostilities, the removal of threats of renewed aggression and the provision of credible guarantees against further attacks. How will Beijing and Moscow's alignment with Tehran's position affect the political balance at the Board of Governors and the West's approach to Iran's nuclear case?

Page 1

China and Russia's alignment with Iran's position takes the political atmosphere at the Board of Governors out of a state of one-sided confrontation and demonstrates that the Western interpretation of the current situation is not the only narrative being presented at the body.

This alignment is particularly important because Tehran can frame the issue of inspections in connection with military attacks and the security of nuclear facilities, rather than treating it solely as a technical dispute over access. Beijing and Moscow's support can also raise the political cost of any hasty action against Iran and prompt undecided countries to give greater consideration to the consequences of escalating pressure.

Therefore, the common position of China and Russia at the Board of Governors prevents the formation of a broad consensus against Iran.

If the issue is referred to the Security Council, the positions of Beijing and Moscow could influence the decision-making process. However, their political support should not be seen as a substitute for Iran's active diplomacy.

An effective strategy would be for Tehran to use this alignment to establish the principle that verification and monitoring must go hand in hand with the security of nuclear facilities and accountability for military attacks. This would both increase the political cost of unilateral pressure and improve the prospects of retaining support from other countries.

In light of the experience of military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, are the current safeguards framework and the IAEA's monitoring mechanisms adequate for situations in which a member state comes under military attack?

Unfortunately, the current safeguards framework has been designed primarily to account for and verify nuclear materials and activities, and its mechanisms do not provide sufficiently clear or comprehensive answers to situations in which a member state's facilities come under military attack.

A military attack can alter the physical condition of facilities, the safety of materials, inspectors' ability to gain access and the confidentiality of information. Under such circumstances, inspections cannot simply proceed on the basis of routine procedures without assessing security and technical risks.

Here, the IAEA director general's interpretation of the law is of considerable importance. Unfortunately, because someone like Rafael Grossi is at the helm of the IAEA, this interpretation is being carried out in a biased manner.

The bare minimum expected of the IAEA is to strike a balance between its technical mandate to conduct verification and the security considerations arising from military attacks. Inspections of damaged facilities must be subject to safety assessments, protective measures for inspectors and personnel, safeguards for information confidentiality, and agreement on the scope and modalities of access.

The experience of attacks such as those carried out by the United States and Israel against Iran has highlighted the need for the IAEA to develop supplementary mechanisms. These should include mechanisms for a rapid response to attacks, independent safety assessments, protection of nuclear materials and personnel, and guarantees that information obtained through inspections will not be turned into a tool for future threats or targeting.

Alongside its calls for compliance with monitoring obligations, the agency must adopt a clear position on attacks against nuclear facilities and their consequences. Without such a balance, expecting inspections to be carried out fully and without interruption under wartime conditions is neither realistic in practical terms nor conducive to building the trust needed for sustainable cooperation.

Unfortunately, the conduct of the IAEA and Grossi himself has been such that no such balance has been established at all.



ICJ's Myanmar finding shifts dial on grounds for guilty verdict in genocide case

> The Court looked at the overall context of the long-standing campaign against the Rohingya — including discrimination, hate speech, the nature of the military operation and other culpable acts systematically targeting this group and affecting its 'foundations' or existence. In broadening this overall context, and relying on the totality of the evidence, rather than just the well attested reports of individual atrocities, the Court was able to assert that the intent to commit genocide was the only reasonable inference that could be drawn.



By Marc Weller
Chair of Int'l Law and Int'l Constitutional Studies in the University of Cambridge

OPINION

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest court in the world, has ruled that Myanmar is guilty of genocide. According to the Court, the 'clearance' campaign by the Myanmar military against its Rohingya minority of 2017 was aimed at the destruction, in whole or in part, of that community. The finding in this case, which was brought before the Court by the Gambia in 2019, will reverberate far beyond Myanmar and its immediate environment.

ICJ's previous genocide cases

The Rohingya are a mainly Muslim ethnic group that has been excluded from Myanmar citizenship and discriminated against for decades. In the wake of attacks by terrorist groups against the military in 2016, some 10,000 Rohingya were killed, and over 85 per cent of its population of around 850,000 were displaced from Myanmar over the following year in a campaign of killings, rape and the burning of villages.

The ICJ has established a very high bar for confirming that genocide has occurred. Several cases, including those brought by Croatia against Serbia and Sudan against the UAE, have been unsuccessful.

Others are still ongoing, addressing the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and Gaza.

Only once before, in relation to the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of 8,000 men and boys in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has the ICJ confirmed genocide. But controversially, it failed to attribute the atrocity to its alleged author, the Republic of Serbia (then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) under Slobodan Milosevic.

This new decision of the Court moves the dial ever so slightly, reducing the legal hurdles on the way towards a finding of genocide.

Grounds for a finding of genocide

According to the Genocide Convention of 1948, genocide requires three elements.

First, it must be directed against a protected group, defined by national, ethnic, racial or religious characteristics. Second, there must be prohibited acts directed against members of the group. This includes killings, causing serious bodily or mental harm, inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of the group, or measures intended to prevent births or forcibly transferring children to another group.

But critically, even if a pattern of such practices is clearly evident, this must be carried by the specific intent to destroy the group as such 'in whole or in part' — the third element.

This may seem odd. If the result is the destruction of the group, one might argue that this should suffice to constitute genocide. Such conduct would clearly amount to a crime against humanity and other severe violations of human rights and humanitarian law. However, in defining what is sometimes called 'the crime of crimes,' the Genocide Convention imposes this additional criterion of specific intent.

Of course, that is difficult to prove. States no longer record their decision to commit genocide in a formal document, as Hitler's government did in the famous 1942 Wannsee Protocol, which planned the complete destruction of Europe's Jewish population.

Without such formal documentation, proof of the intent to destroy a group in whole or in part must be inferred from the nature of a systematic campaign of killing and other acts proscribed by the Genocide Convention that are directed at a defined population segment.

Previously, the Court asserted that such an inference can only be made if this pattern cannot be explained by any reason other than the intention to commit genocide.

In its defence, Myanmar offered several alternative grounds to explain the nature of its armed campaign. It referred to the need to mount a counter-terrorism effort following attacks by rebel movements in Rakhine province, where most Rohingya used to reside. However, in view of the Court, this motivation would not explain the pattern of brutal attacks against the civilian population.

The Court also considered whether Myanmar's conduct might simply have been directed at the forcible displacement of the Rohingya, rather than their destruction in whole or in part. This alone would be a serious international crime, but it would not quite amount to genocide.

Judges of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are pictured on November 19, 2026, as the court delivers its judgment in the case accusing Myanmar of genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority in 2017.
MOUNEB TAIM/ANADOLU

However, the Court looked at the overall context of the long-standing campaign against the Rohingya — including discrimination, hate speech, the nature of the military operation and other culpable acts systematically targeting this group and affecting its 'foundations' or existence.

In broadening this overall context, and relying on the totality of the evidence, rather than just the well attested reports of individual atrocities, the Court was able to assert that the intent to commit genocide was the only reasonable inference that could be drawn.

Effect on other cases

This outcome will concern some



A woman walks among debris after fire destroyed shelters at a camp for internally displaced Rohingya Muslims in the western Rakhine State near Sittwe, Myanmar, on May 3, 2016. Similar photos have circulated in recent years from Gazan refugee camps.
SOE ZEYA TUN/REUTERS

governments involved in other ongoing cases regarding genocide.
Ukraine brought a case before the ICJ in 2022, asking the Court to confirm that it had not committed genocide against Russian-speakers on its territory — a central claim made by Russia to justify its full-scale attack on Ukraine that year.
In another case, the DRC is alleging that Rwanda is involved in genocide conducted on its territory. In a further action, Nicaragua is alleging that Germany shares responsibility for the genocide in Gaza due to its supply of arms to Israel.
The Court's Myanmar judgement may impact these cases. But international attention is mainly focused on the case's implications for South Africa's genocide case against Israel.
In an initial, provisional phase of the case, the Court found that there may be a plausible case of genocide in relation to Israel's military campaign in Gaza.
Counsel for Israel and South Africa, along with the over 20 others states that have intervened in that case, will now assess the Court's finding and ask: what would the outcome be if the matrix of factors applied by the ICJ in the Myanmar case were applied to Israel's armed campaign in Gaza? Would this exercise demonstrate that the intent to commit genocide is the only reasonable explanation for the character of that campaign?
The key clauses in the Myanmar judgement were adopted by an unusually divided Court, by a majority of 9 to 6. The ICJ decides according to the applicable law, not the politics involved in a given situation. But its decision will probably be criticized by some as having lowered the threshold for the identification of genocide, perhaps with a view to confirming the relevance of the Court and of the international rule of law. International law has been largely disregarded in many recent conflicts — especially its humanitarian provisions.
On the other hand, those opposing the Court's finding might be accused of trying to prevent a precedent being established when it comes to evaluating the Gaza case.
In addition to political controversy, the case raises another important issue: A third state, The Gambia — which is not involved in Myanmar's conflict — managed to obtain a ruling in favour of a dispossessed and internationally disenfranchised minority group located a continent away.
The Gambia brought the action with the support of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and senior international lawyers, adopting a kind of international public service role in defence of the international public order. It confirmed that all states have a firm legal interest in compliance with that rule by all other states, and that parties to the Genocide Convention can bring a case to the Court in defence of the prohibition of genocide.
The Court even considered that in this case between The Gambia and Myanmar, it has the authority to rule on the entitlement of the Rohingya as the ultimate beneficiaries of the obligation to prevent genocide to restitution and compensation from their own government. In this way, it has reasserted and indeed extended its role of guardian of the international rule of law at a time of challenge to global order.

The article was first published by Chatham House.

Relationship between IHL, genocide in Gambia v. Myanmar case



By Kevin Jon Heller
Former special adviser to the ICC prosecutor on war crimes

OPINION

Much has already been written on the ICJ's landmark judgment in The Gambia v. Myanmar case (GvM), and much more will no doubt be written in the coming days. In this post, I want to focus on how the Court dealt with a specific — and admittedly narrow — issue I recently addressed in an article in the Journal of International Criminal Justice: whether genocide can be committed through acts that comply with IHL, such as killing a combatant who is a member of a protected group.
Neither of the ICJ's two previous genocide decisions, Bosnia v. Serbia and Croatia v. Serbia, specifically resolved that issue. They did, however, suggest that genocide could potentially be committed through IHL-compliant acts. In the Bosnia case, the Court rejected Serbia's argument that it could not be found responsible for genocide because its deportation of the Bosniaks complied with IHL, noting in para. 334 that "no such justification could be accepted in the face of proof of specific intent."
In the Croatia case, the Court did not address the genocide issue directly, but acknowledged in para. 474 that because "a particular act may be perfectly lawful under one body of legal rules and unlawful under another… it cannot be excluded in principle that an act carried out during an armed conflict and lawful under international humanitarian law can at the same time constitute a violation by the State in question of some other international obligation incumbent upon it."
There is no equivocation in GvM. On the contrary, the majority explicitly rejected the idea that that genocide cannot be committed through acts that comply with IHL:
"305. Accordingly, the Court concludes that although compliance with another body of international law, including international humanitarian law, may inform the identification of intent with respect to the actus reus of genocide, as well as genocidal intent, such compliance does not exclude conduct from the scope of the Genocide Convention."
The majority's analysis is extremely brief — barely two paragraphs. The first paragraph (303) simply notes, with regard to the actus reus of genocide, that "[t]he text of Article II of the Convention does not require that the acts enumerated therein be unlawful pursuant to a distinct body of international law." The second paragraph (304), which addresses genocide's mens rea, is a bit more substantive, pointing out that although compliance with IHL is relevant to the existence of specific intent, IHL-compliance and specific intent can nevertheless coexist in the same act:



Myanmar's representative Ko Ko Hlaing sits in the courtroom as hearings for the genocide case begin in The Hague, Netherlands, on January 12, 2026.
PIROSCHKA VAN DE WOUW/REUTERS

"With respect to genocidal intent, the Court likewise has considered that compliance or non-compliance with international humanitarian law, including whether attacks 'caused casualties and damage far in excess of what was justified by military necessity,' may be relevant in inferring the presence or absence of the specific intent to commit genocide. On the other hand, the fact that members of a protected group could be lawfully targeted or incidentally harmed under international humanitarian law does not exclude the possibility that they may be killed or harmed with genocidal intent (citation omitted)."
None of the other opinions and declarations in the case conclude either that an IHL-compliant act cannot satisfy the actus reus of genocide or question the idea that an IHL-compliant act could be committed with specific intent. Indeed, in his partly concurring and partly dissenting separate opinion, Judge ad hoc Kress provided a useful scenario that demonstrates why it would make little sense to exclude IHL-compliant acts from the scope of the Genocide Convention:
"Imagine a case where a State has formed genocidal intent and has begun to realize it through acts of killings against members of the targeted protected group. Now, imagine that members of that group organize themselves militarily and fight back in defence of the group in such a manner that the threshold of a non-international armed conflict is reached. I would find it difficult to accept that, in such a case, the killings of fighters of the newly formed military wing of the protected group cease to qualify as acts within the meaning of Article II (a) of the Genocide Convention merely because these acts do not violate the targeting rules applicable under the law of non-international armed conflict. For this would mean that the State concerned could — to that extent — carry out its genocidal plan without thereby committing genocide, simply because the targeted group succeeded in organizing itself militarily in its defence."
The scenario assumes, of course, that we know the state in question specifically intends to destroy the protected group. There will obviously be situations in which it is unclear whether a state using violence against members of a protected group intends to destroy the group or is acting pursuant to non-genocidal motivations. When that is the case, it may be difficult — perhaps impossible — to infer specific intent from acts that comply with IHL. Indeed, it may even be difficult to infer specific intent from acts that violate IHL. Sometimes a war crime is just a war crime.
The basic point, however, remains: when the specific intent to destroy a group can be proven, there is no reason to consider acts of violence against members of that group to be non-genocidal simply because they complied with IHL. On that point, the majority in GvM and Judge ad hoc Kress are absolutely right.

The article first appeared on Opinio Juris.



Rohingya migrant girl Halima Khatun (6), who arrived in Bangladesh in October, holds a whistle and a razor blade that she uses as toys at the Shamlapur refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, on December 1, 2017.
ED JONES/AFP

> "I would find it difficult to accept that, in such a case, the killings of fighters of the newly formed military wing of the protected group cease to qualify as acts within the meaning of Article II (a) of the Genocide Convention merely because these acts do not violate the targeting rules applicable under the law of non-international armed conflict. For this would mean that the State concerned could — to that extent — carry out its genocidal plan without thereby committing genocide, simply because the targeted group succeeded in organizing itself militarily in its defence."



Iranian players celebrate a goal during a quarterfinal win against Saudi Arabia at the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup in in Phang Nga, Thailand, on November 25, 2026.
AFC

AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup:

Iran hits six past Saudis to march into semis

Sports Desk

Iran strode confidently into the semifinals of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup in Phang Nga, Thailand, with a 6-0 victory over Saudi Arabia on Wednesday.
Chasing a record-extending fifth title in 12 editions, the two-time defending champions, who thoroughly controlled proceedings, will meet either Bahrain or Lebanon in Friday's last-four tie.
Mohammadali Mokhtari put Iran ahead two minutes into the match, connecting with goalkeeper Seyed Mohammad Dastan's long throw to head home confidently from close range past a lunging Hassan Al Eid.
Ali Mirshekari saw his attempt sail over the bar, while Sobhan Faleh's overhead kick was parried by Al Eid before Reza Dayeri rounded off the first period with a first-time effort that flew into the stands, as Ali Naderi's men dominated without breaking a sweat.
Ahmed Al Hamami volleyed wide in the 16th minute as Saudi Arabia attempted to make their presence felt after the restart, before the defender sent his free-kick over the bar two minutes later.
Iran doubled its advantage in the 18th minute through a blistering free-kick from Mirshekari that gave Al Eid little chance to react, and added a third four minutes later when Ali Nazem smashed Dastan's lob into the bottom-left corner with a first-time effort.
Davoud Baghdabadi then forced Al Eid into a diving save with a fierce overhead kick in the 28th minute, while Faleh and Movahed Mohammadpour also saw their efforts saved by Saleh Al Ajami, who had replaced the injured Al Eid.
Al Ajami was beaten in the 33rd minute, however, when Baghdabadi dispossessed Saudi Arabia's Ramzi Dakman and fired into the bottom-right corner.
The goalkeeper was beaten again a minute later when he failed to properly handle Mokhtari's overhead kick.
Faleh then completed the scoring with a free-kick that struck the sand before bouncing beyond Al Ajami to send the four-time champions into the semifinals.
Wednesday's result marked Iran's fourth successive victory at the competition after Naderi's team had comprehensively defeated two-time semifinalists Lebanon 7-2 on Monday to conclude the group stage with a perfect record, having earlier beaten Afghanistan 9-2 and Vietnam 10-2 in Group B.

ITTF World Youth Championships:

Faraji enjoys historic win in U19 doubles quarters

Sports Desk

Iran's Benyamin Faraji made history at the ITTF World Youth Championships in Istanbul by reaching the semifinals of the U19 boys' doubles event, guaranteeing the country its maiden medal in the age group in the competition's 23-edition history.
Ranked No. 11 in the latest ITTF boys' U19 rankings, the Iranian prodigy teamed up with world No. 7 Alan Kurmangaliyev of Kazakhstan to edge out India's Abhinandh Pradhivadhi and Priyanuj Bhattacharyya in Tuesday's quarterfinal, rallying from behind to win 3-2 (11-9, 8-11, 7-11, 18-16, 11-9) in just over 54 minutes.
The emotion of securing a guaranteed medal proved too much for Faraji, who fell to the floor and rolled onto his back after India's Pradhivadhi failed to return his fierce backhand on match point.
"I have the best feeling right now," Faraji said. "I made history for my country, but this path was very hard. The game was very difficult. I am just happy to make my compatriots happy. We will do our best to win the final," added the Iranian, who also won a historic bronze in the U15 category two years ago in Helsingborg, Sweden – the country's first-ever international medal in the sport.
Standing between the pair, coached by Iranian Miad Mokayef, and a place in the final in Wednesday's semifinal are South Korea's Kim Daehwan and Lee Hyeondo.
Faraji and Kurmangaliyev had opened their campaign with a 3-2 victory over Poland's Samuel Michna and Patryk Zyworonek in the round of 16. The South Korean duo, meanwhile, defeated Chinese Taipei's Hung Che-Yen and Lin Chin-Ting 3-1 to reach the semifinals.
Faraji was also part of the Iranian trio that missed out on a semifinal spot in the U19 boys' team event after suffering a 3-0 defeat to China on Sunday.
Mohammad Habibi fell to a straight-game loss (11-8, 11-2, 15-13) against Wen Ruibo, before Faraji was beaten by Li Hechen, who came from behind twice to win 3-2 (9-11, 12-10, 5-11, 11-6, 11-4).
Arshia Lorestani completed Iran's disappointing quarterfinal outing with a 3-0 defeat (11-9, 11-3, 11-6) against Zhou Guanhong. Faraji will chase another singles milestone when he opens his U19 campaign against the host nation's Kenan Kahraman, who was part of the Turkish duo that won silver in the U15 doubles event last year.
Faraji's compatriot Faraz Shakiba, meanwhile, will take on world No. 21 Ukyo Kobayashi of Japan in the U15 boys' round of 32.



Iran's Benyamin Faraji (R) celebrates with Kazakhstan's Alan Kurmangaliyev after their quarterfinal victory in the U19 boys' doubles event at the ITTF World Youth Championships in Istanbul, Turkey, on November 24, 2026.
ITTF

How realistic is Iran's six-quota target for LA28 athletics?

Sports Desk

Iranian Athletics Federation President Ehsan Haddadi has set a target of securing four to six quota places for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games, but the ambitious goal faces a major test given the demanding entry standards and the growing importance of world rankings in the qualification process.
Iranian athletics fell short of its target of 10 medals at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in September, finishing with four, but the country's campaign could hardly be described as a failure.
Despite falling short of initial expectations, Iranian athletes produced several impressive performances and achieved significant milestones.
Zahra Zarei made history when she clocked 52.38 seconds to claim silver in the women's 400m – Iran's first-ever medal in women's athletics at the continental showpiece.
Mohammadreza Tayyebi, meanwhile, spearheaded the medal haul by winning gold in the men's shot put, setting a new Asian Games record of 20.81m in the process. His triumph ended Iran's 52-year wait for an Asian Games medal in the discipline, ensuring that the week-long campaign at Paloma Mizuho Stadium delivered some significant achievements despite falling short of the federation's medal target.
The federation has now shifted its focus from Nagoya to Los Angeles, with Olympic qualification the main priority as the 2028 Games draw closer.
During a recent meeting with the president of the National Olympic Committee, Haddadi, whose silver medal in the men's discus throw at London 2012 remains Iran's sole athletics medal in Olympic history, outlined plans to secure between four and six Olympic quota places. He also expressed hope that at least two Iranian athletes would reach the finals of their respective events at the 2028 Games.
However, achieving that target will be far from straightforward under the new qualification system. World Athletics has announced the entry standards and qualification regulations for the athletics program at LA28, which will feature 23 events each for men and women, as well as the 4x100m and 4x400m mixed relays. A closer look at the requirements highlights the challenges facing Iranian athletes.
Under the new system, approximately 40 percent of the available places will be allocated through direct qualification standards, with the remaining 60 percent awarded based on world rankings. The shift places even greater emphasis on athletes' consistent participation in international competitions and their ability to collect ranking points.



Iran's Mohammadreza Tayyebi competes in the men's shot put event at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in Japan on September 26, 2026.
AINAGOC

Iranian records fall short

A comparison of the entry standards with the current performances of Iranian athletes also highlights the gap that needs to be bridged.
In the men's 100m, for instance, the qualifying standard stands at 9.93 seconds, while the women's mark is 10.96 seconds.
The men's shot put standard has been set at 21.50 meters, some 70 centimeters beyond Tayyebi's record-breaking mark in Nagoya. In the men's discus throw, athletes must reach 67.20m, well beyond the 60.32m achieved by Sadeq Samimi on his way to bronze at the Asian Games.
These figures suggest that Iran cannot rely on its athletes' current performances to secure direct qualification. Significant improvements will be required in the time remaining before the Games.

Demanding road through rankings

The ranking route presents another challenge, as securing a competitive position depends on taking part in high-profile international meetings and accumulating enough points.
Without targeted and well-organized participation in overseas competitions, Iranian athletes will struggle to establish themselves in the world rankings and remain in contention for Olympic places.
To make its four-to-six quota target a realistic prospect, the federation must identify the events in which Iran has the strongest chances and draw up specific preparation plans for the athletes involved.
Providing suitable training conditions, improving performances and ensuring regular participation in international competitions must all be priorities if Iranian athletes are to have enough opportunities to enter the Olympic qualification race.

From Olympic promises to reality

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 demonstrated that Iranian athletics still has the potential to produce significant achievements. However, translating success at the Asian Games into competitive performances on the Olympic stage is a considerably greater challenge.
The question now is whether Haddadi and his federation can turn their ambitious target into tangible results through effective planning and preparation, and send a competitive Iranian team to Los Angeles in 2028.

Sivandi language preserves traces of ancient Iran



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

In southern Iran, in Fars Province, within Marvdasht, lives a community whose language differs considerably from the language commonly spoken in the surrounding region. Sivandi is a distinct language with roots in ancient Iranian linguistic traditions. Like an island in a sea of Persian, it has preserved centuries-old features in its vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Some researchers have associated the origins of Sivandi with Median and the linguistic heritage of the Medes, whose rule in Iran dates back approximately 2,700 years. However, establishing a direct connection with Median remains a matter of scholarly debate, largely because of the scarcity of written records in that ancient language. Its distinctive characteristics have attracted the attention of European linguists. In 1979, French linguist Pierre Lecoq published Le Dialecte de Sivand, based on fieldwork and linguistic research. The book includes narratives in Sivandi, French translations and a glossary.

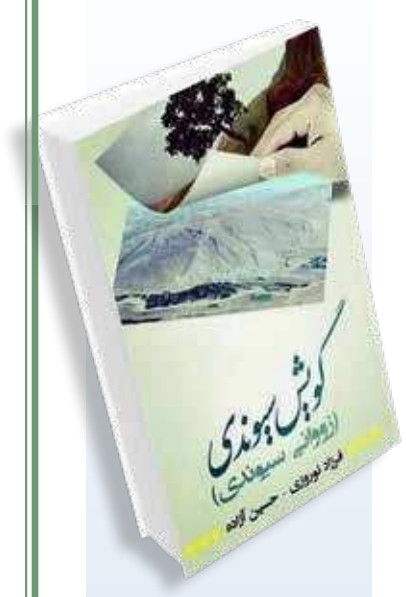
In the years following the Islamic Revolution, Farzad Norouzi, a historian and researcher of Iranian history who was born in Sivand village and is familiar with its language, joined forces with writer Hossein Azadeh to produce a book of more than 450 pages entitled Sivandi Dialect. Drawing on their knowledge of the language from within the community, the authors document vocabulary, sample sentences, verb conjugations and grammatical structures.

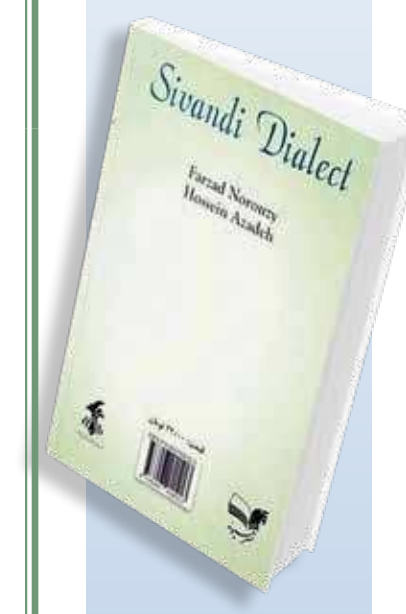
In an interview with Iran Daily, Norouzi discusses the historical roots of Sivandi, its possible connections with Median, the migration of the people of Sivand, the language's distinctive characteristics, and the importance of preserving it from extinction.



Sivand village
● wikipedia.org

Farzad Norouzi





IRAN DAILY: Could you first introduce yourself and explain what inspired you to write a book about Sivandi?

NOROUZI: I hold a PhD in Iranian history, come from Sivand and currently live in Shiraz. Since I speak Sivandi myself and am familiar with its characteristics, I was motivated to document it. I therefore decided to write a book on the subject with my friend, writer Hossein Azadeh.

Other researchers have studied Sivandi before you. One of the best-known is the French linguist Pierre Lecoq. Could you tell us about his research and his book?

Pierre Lecoq was a linguist interested in Iranian languages and the Indo-European language family. Before the Islamic Revolution, he came to Iran to study its languages and dialects, including Sivandi. He was not the only foreign researcher to do so; several other European linguists also conducted studies in this field. In 1979, Lecoq published a book entitled Le Dialecte de Sivand. During his research, he visited Sivand, collected vocabulary and oral narratives from local people, and made audio recordings. He subsequently examined the material from a linguistic perspective, analyzing the language's phonetic and structural characteristics. The book is 216 pages long and contains narratives in Sivandi, their French translations and a glossary. I first encountered the book during my university studies and translated parts of it for my own research.

How does your book differ from Pierre Lecoq's research?

The main difference lies in our perspective. Lecoq approached the language as a linguist, and his work is primarily a specialized linguistic study. We, however, approached it as native speakers.

Some subtle linguistic features and words may be overlooked in general linguistic studies but are familiar to native speakers. We tried to document these details and collect vocabulary that had not appeared in previous studies.

What are the main features of your book, and how many words does it contain?

Our book exceeds 450 pages. In compiling it, Hossein Azadeh and I used the Mo'in Dictionary as one of our principal references. We started at the beginning and worked through it word by word, identifying the equivalent of each entry in Sivandi. This approach helped us recall and document a wide range of vocabulary. The book includes Sivandi-Persian and Persian-Sivandi glossaries, sample sentences and verb conjugations. It is therefore not simply a list of words; we have also tried to introduce the language's structure and usage as comprehensively as possible.

There is some debate over whether Sivandi should be classified as a language or a dialect. You have used the word 'dialect' in your book's title. What is your view?

Whether a particular linguistic variety should be called a language or a dialect is a specialized question that linguists should address. I used the same title chosen by Pierre Lecoq: The Sivandi Dialect.

However, in my opinion, Sivandi has considerable structural differences from Persian. Persian is a widely developed language with extensive terminology for scientific, medical, technical and specialized fields. Dialects, by contrast, generally operate within the framework of a broader language. An important point about Sivandi is that it does not belong to the same linguistic branch as Persian. Persian belongs to the Southwestern Iranian branch, whereas Sivandi is associated with the Northwestern Iranian branch. Its differences from Persian therefore extend beyond pronunciation and accent; they are rooted in a different linguistic history and structure.

What does this distinction between linguistic branches mean, and where does Sivandi stand among Iranian languages?

When we classify Iranian languages, we encounter several different branches. Old Persian, Middle Persian and modern Persian, for example, belong to the Southwestern branch. Languages such as Kurdish, Talysh and Gorani are generally placed in the Northwestern branch.

Sivandi, too, is associated with the Northwestern group in terms of its roots and linguistic characteristics, despite being spoken in southern Iran, in Fars Province. Geographically, it is located in the south, but its linguistic origins are connected to a group whose historical distribution was primarily in western and northwestern Iran. This can be understood by examining similarities between Sivandi and certain languages and dialects spoken elsewhere. For example, the Abyaneh and Ashtiani dialects share some vocabulary and linguistic features with Sivandi. The language of the Hawraman region and Hawrami dialects also have similarities with Sivandi, although differences in pronunciation and phonetics remain.

Given that Sivandi is spoken in southern Iran, what is its relationship with Median and the period of the Medes? Can it be considered a surviving descendant of Median?

We have very little direct written information about Median. One of the works consulted in this field is History of the Medes by Igor Diakonoff, which discusses a number of Median words. For example, words such as Aspakeh, meaning dog, and Asvareh, meaning horse, have been mentioned. Interestingly, some of these words also appear in Sivandi. In my own research, I have also found examples of these words in Tati. This suggests that there are historical and linguistic connections worth investigating between Sivandi and a wider group of Northwestern Iranian languages and dialects.

You have mentioned similarities between Sivandi and Kurdish, Tati, Gilaki and Mazandarani. Could these similarities indicate a common origin?

Yes. These languages and dialects share certain vocabulary and linguistic characteristics. When we speak of the Northwestern Iranian branch, we are referring to a group of languages and dialects with historical and linguistic connections. However, this does not mean that all these languages were identical or that they all developed directly from a single language into their present-day forms. The point is that they share historical roots and connections that need to be identified through careful examination of their vocabulary and linguistic structures.

You have referred to the migration of the people of Sivand from western regions. What historical evidence exists regarding their origins?

We do not have definitive or clear information about the precise origins of their migration. However, one issue that has attracted our attention in historical research is the presence of old gravestones and the titles inscribed on them. For example, the word Qaed appears in some of these inscriptions. During the Safavid period, this term was used for certain military positions and commanders. The presence of such titles may provide clues for investigating the possible connection between the people of Sivand and the military structures of that period.

It is possible that groups of people moved from their original settlements in the west to this region following military and political developments and subsequently settled there. For instance, after the conquest of a region in certain historical periods, military forces or groups affiliated with a ruling government were sometimes stationed there to maintain control and administer the territory. These, however, remain hypotheses that require further historical research and documentary evidence.

What has enabled Sivandi to preserve its distinct characteristics despite being surrounded by Persian-speaking communities?

One important factor is its linguistic difference from the surrounding environment and its relative isolation. Let me give you an example. Imagine someone who has lived abroad for many years and then returns to Iran. When they speak, you may notice that some of their vocabulary and expressions differ from contemporary Persian. This is because their language has undergone fewer changes while developing in a different environment.

Something similar can be said about Sivandi. It is as though certain words and linguistic features have remained on an island, preserving an older form. Had the language existed in an area with closer linguistic and cultural contact with Persian, it would probably have adopted more Persian vocabulary and structures over time, losing some of its older characteristics. Sivandi has also been influenced by other languages throughout its history. Nevertheless, its relative isolation and its differences from the languages of neighboring regions have helped preserve some of its distinctive features.





● vilajar.com

License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency
Publisher: Iran Cultural & Press Institute
Chair of ICPI Board of Directors: Sadegh Hossein Jaberi Ansari
ICPI CEO: Ali Motaghian
Senior Editor-in-chief: Hadi Khosroshahin
Editor-in-chief: Asgar Ghahramanpour

Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 84711560
Address: 208, Khorramshahr Ave., Tehran, Iran
Advertising Dept. Tel/Email: +98 21 88500601/irandaily@iranagahiha.com
Website: www.irandaily.ir/newspaper.irandaily.ir
Email: irandaily@icpi.ir

Iran Daily

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

Vol. 8275 ● Thursday, November 26, 2026 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

Pezeshkian says Ferdowsi's legacy can strengthen national unity

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday that Ferdowsi's epic poetry and Iran's wider literary heritage could help strengthen national unity, promote justice and prevent social divisions.

Shahnameh, the celebrated epic by Persian poet Ferdowsi (c. 935–c. 1020–1026) recounts the history of Persia's kings, from mythical times to the 7th century, drawing on accounts preserved in Pahlavi (Middle Persian).

Speaking to writers, poets and literary figures in Tus, near Mashhad in northeastern Iran, Pezeshkian said the moral and human values in the works of Ferdowsi and other Iranian literary figures could guide society through difficult times.

He pointed to themes of resisting injustice, defending the oppressed, preserving human dignity and standing up for truth in Ferdowsi's poetry, saying they were consistent with the teachings of Imam Ali, a central figure in Shiite Islam.

People attached to power, wealth or official positions might hesitate to speak the truth for fear of losing their status, Pezeshkian said.

Breaking free from such attachments was essential to defending justice without fear or hesitation.

He warned that one of the main hopes of Iran's adversaries was to widen divisions among the population. Minor disagreements, he said, should not be allowed to turn into deeper social rifts. Forgiveness, compassion, mutual respect and respect for knowledge and expertise were essential to social cohesion.

At a separate meeting with faculty members and students at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Pezeshkian urged universities to take a more active role in tackling the country's problems.

Universities should move beyond theoretical teaching and engage in practical efforts to address challenges such as land subsidence, job creation and the development of local economic resources, he said.

Pezeshkian added that the government was ready to grant universities and experts greater authority to identify and implement solutions to regional and national problems.

His remarks at the two meetings highlighted the role of cultural heritage, academic expertise and public solidarity in helping Iran address its challenges.



President Pezeshkian addresses literary figures in Tus, Khorasan Razavi Province, Iran on November 25, 2026.
president.ir

Iran puts tourism recovery on global agenda

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has proposed expanding international cooperation on tourism recovery, seeking to strengthen its tourism sector and promote its attractions abroad following the damages in tourism section caused during 40-day war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran in late February 2026.

Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, Iran's deputy minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts, made the proposal on Tuesday at the 127th session of the UN Tourism Executive Council in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on November 25, 2026.

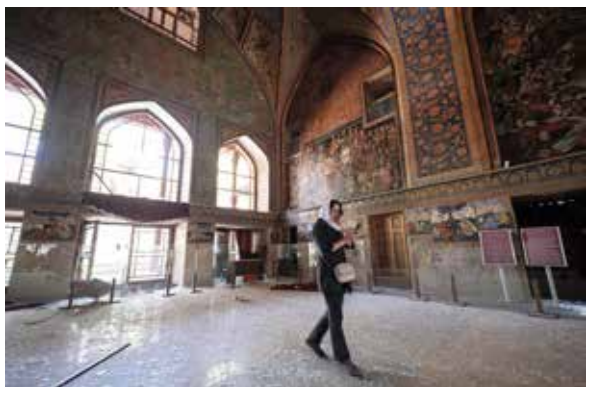
He thanked the UAE for hosting the meeting and praised the UN Tourism secretary-general and secretariat for organizing it.

He also highlighted Iran's potential for tourism development and stronger international cooperation.

"The war had damaged Iran's tourism sector and affected the operations of a considerable number of businesses. many people we, including children, were also killed during the war", he said.

Despite these difficulties, Iran was continuing efforts to revive domestic travel, support tourism businesses and promote its attractions to international visitors, Mohseni Bandpay added.

He said Iran was ready to expand cooperation with UN Tourism and its member states in training and empowering tourism professionals, developing rural tourism and restoring destinations affected by crises.



The historical Chetel Sotoun palace in Isfahan, central Iran, was badly damaged during US Israeli-led bombing on March 11, 2026.
MORTEZA NIKOUBAZL/ NURPHOTO

Mohseni Bandpay cited Iran's diverse attractions, including historic cities and cultural heritage sites listed by UNESCO, as well as deserts, forests and villages where local traditions remain alive.

He also identified health tourism and ecotourism as areas with significant growth potential, saying they could diversify the country's tourism offerings and strengthen its position in international markets.

He described the expansion of eco-lodges and greater participation by local communities as important achievements in community-based tourism.

"Families in many villages have restored traditional houses and converted them into accommodation for visitors," he said.

The initiative has created income opportunities for local guides, handicraft producers and small businesses while helping preserve traditional architecture, local customs and rural economies, he added.

Mohseni Bandpay expressed hope that discussions at the council meeting would produce joint projects and initiatives whose benefits would directly reach local communities.

Tehran and Isfahan accounting for nearly two-thirds of the affected sites damaged during the war that began in late February 2026.

The damage has affected some of Iran's best-known heritage landmarks.

Damage to Tehran's Golestan Palace and historic sites in Isfahan, including Chehel Sotoun Palace and the Jameh Mosque.

Reports have also documented damage to historic architectural features and decorative elements.

Tehran, Jakarta finalize tourism pact, eye direct flights

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Indonesia have finalized a tourism cooperation agreement and are exploring direct flights, joint marketing and halal tourism initiatives to boost travel between the two countries, Iran's tourism deputy minister said on Wednesday.

Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpei said both sides had completed the text of the agreement during a meeting with Indonesian Deputy Tourism Minister Ni Luh Enik Ermawati on the sidelines of the 127th session of the UN Tourism Executive Council in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

The talks focused on improving air links, easing travel and attracting more Indonesian tourists to Iran.

Establishing direct flights was a key issue, alongside joint marketing campaigns to promote tourism attractions and facilities in both countries.

Halal tourism was another major focus. The two sides discussed developing joint tourism products based on their cultural and religious ties and tapping into the growing potential of travel for Muslim visitors.

They also reviewed plans to organize the mausoleum of Imam Mohammad al-Ghazali in Tus, near Mashhad in northeastern Iran.

Ermawati welcomed Iran's efforts to improve the historic site and stressed its role in strengthening the two countries' cultural and historical ties.

The officials also discussed expanding Iran's tourism offerings to Indonesian pilgrims through a program known as "Umrah Plus," which combines religious travel with visits to cultural and historical attractions.

Mohseni-Bandpei proposed inviting Indonesian tour operators, media professionals and travel influencers to Iran for familiarization tours, or FAM trips, to showcase the country's attractions, infrastructure and tourism products.

Ermawati welcomed the proposal, and both sides stressed the need for closer contacts between tourism professionals.

Mohseni-Bandpei said Iran had finalized the agreement and submitted its text to Indonesia for approval. Iranian Tourism Minister Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri has invited his Indonesian counterpart to visit Tehranand attend the Tehran International Tourism Exhibition, where the agreement could be formally signed.

The discussions also covered improving transport links, facilitating travel, strengthening cultural and religious cooperation and setting a framework for expanded tourism ties.

Over 2,000 applicants join Iran-Pakistan vaccine training course

Social Desk

More than 2,000 people from 70 countries have registered for an international vaccine training course launched jointly by Iran and Pakistan, aimed at strengthening research, production capacity and scientific cooperation among members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The six-week program, titled "Vaccinology: From Research and Development to Vaccine Production", opened on November 23, 2026, at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) at the University of Karachi in southern Pakistan.

It is jointly organized by the OIC's Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), Iran's Pasteur Institute and the ICCBS.

Around 100 researchers, students and health professionals are attending in person, while the remaining participants are joining online.

Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, COMSTECH's coordinator general and a recipient of the 2021 Mustafa Prize, inaugurated the course. He said the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need for scientific research, innovation and domestic vaccine production.

OIC member states must train researchers, strengthen research institutions and gain access to modern vaccine technologies to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers, he said.

Choudhary also voiced hope that the program would promote the exchange of expertise, expand cooperation among participating institutions and create more training opportunities for young researchers.

Ehsan Mostafavi, head of Iran's Pasteur Institute, stressed the importance of cooperation among research centers in vaccine development.

"Vaccine research and production required expertise across multiple scientific disciplines and adequate infrastructure," he said.

The curriculum covers immunology, vaccine design and production technologies. The course will end on Dec. 28, 2026, with a final examination.

Choudhary, a Pakistani chemist, received the 2021 Mustafa Prize for his research in bioorganic chemistry and the discovery of natural compounds with potential therapeutic applications.

His research team has identified compounds in medicinal plants that could serve as starting points for developing new medicines.

The initiative reflects efforts to strengthen vaccine research and production capabilities across OIC member states following the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed the importance of domestic manufacturing and international scientific cooperation.