

Gaza's Blood on America's Hand

America defies the world by vetoing UN resolution on Gaza

TEHRAN - To show Washington's limitless backing for Tel Aviv, the United States on Friday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Israel's carnage in the Gaza Strip.

The United States vetoed the resolution backed by almost all other members of the council. The U.S. move took place as the UN chief has called the situation in Gaza a "humanitarian nightmare."

Thirteen Security Council members voted in favor of a brief draft resolution, put forward by the United Arab Emirates, while the United Kingdom abstained.

The vote came after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made a rare move on Wednesday to formally warn the 15-member council of a threat to global peace and security from the two-month-long war on the Gaza Strip.

In the wake of the U.S. administration's stance regarding the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, Robert Wood, deputy U.S. ambassador to the UN, said, "We do not support calls for an immediate ceasefire. This would only plant the seeds for the next war." ▶ Page 5

Iran warns of 'diminishing effectiveness' of JCPOA

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said Iran would not indefinitely adhere to the stringent conditions of the JCPOA, expressing concerns over its diminishing effectiveness as time goes by.

In a ceremony commemorating Student Day at the University of Tehran, Amir Abdollahian engaged in a question-and-answer session addressing critical issues, including the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the nation's stance on international relations.

Addressing students, he stated, "we will not remain ensnared within the tight tunnels of JCPOA forever."

Iran's foreign minister discussed the JCPOA's flaws and benefits, noting that if it secures Iran's interests, despite its imperfections, the country will utilize it.

Amir Abdollahian underscored a pivotal shift introduced by the JCPOA, which consolidated several resolutions into a single, complex text, diminishing its comprehensiveness.

Highlighting the importance of rationality in shaping domestic and foreign policies while upholding fundamental principles, the minister stated, "In the realm of foreign policy, the enhancement of political relations at the diplomatic level and on other fronts can be achieved by adhering to principles and respecting red lines." ▶ Page 3

Art diplomacy in Tehran: 35 nations illuminate 'Humanity, Solidarity and One Planet'

TEHRAN - The United Nations, in collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran, has launched a prestigious exhibition titled "Humanity, Solidarity and One Planet" at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex.

Ambassadors, diplomats, cultural heritage experts, and art enthusiasts from various countries attended the inauguration ceremony of the event, which serves as a vibrant testament to the cultural richness and artistic diversity of 35 countries worldwide.

Among the highlights are striking photographs revealing the heartfelt gifts contributed by member states and the public to adorn the UN Headquarters in New York, emphasizing the spirit of unity and cooperation among nations.

According to Stefan Priesner, the UN Resident Coordinator for the Islamic Republic, the works of art in this exhibition should serve as a call for people - irrespective of their gender, race, religion, or nationality, to come together and build societies where compassion reigns, where no one is left behind and where the well-being of both people and the planet regain political priority. ▶ Page 6

Social collapse, another tactic of the apartheid regime

By Mohsen Faezi

TEHRAN - With the brutal war on Gaza entering its 65th day, we unfortunately see that the Zionist regime continues to massacre innocent civilians despite repeated calls various countries to limit civilian casualties. The regime claims it has created "safe-zones" to protect the Palestinian people, but in reality, no inch of the besieged Gaza Strip is secure against Israeli bombs.

The million-dollar question is whether Israel, as its officials claim, really have no way of limiting civilian deaths and need to target big crowds of people to kill Hamas fighters, or that it's been targeting civilian sites like schools, hospitals, and homes deliberately and with the aim of killing ordinary citizens? Some European and American media outlets have been pointing to growing international pressure against Israel, arguing that the regime is carrying out its brutal attacks on civilians while being well-aware of the increasing animus against its tactics. With that, they argue, that the high number of civilian casualties during Israeli attacks is an unwitting result of the regime's assaults. ▶ Page 5

MSF calls US veto of Gaza ceasefire resolution "a vote against humanity"

On Friday, December 8, the United Nations Security Council failed to adopt a resolution demanding a ceasefire in Gaza. It was blocked by a veto from the United States.

The resolution was vetoed out as the Security Council held an emergency meeting to discuss the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

The meeting followed a letter from the UN Secretary-General invoking Article 99 to call on the Security Council to prevent further escalation and end the crisis.

In addition to demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the draft resolution tabled by the United Arab Emirates reiterated the Security Council's demand on all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians in Palestine and Israel.

Avril Benoît, executive director of Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) USA gave the following statement: ▶ Page 5

US again proves complicity in Gaza carnage by vetoing ceasefire resolution: Iran

TEHRAN - The U.S. rejection of a UN Security Council resolution demanding an urgent humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip has been sharply denounced by Iran, which said that the action once again demonstrated Washington's leading participation in the genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

"The U.S. government once again proved that it is the main culprit and guilty party in the killing of civilians and Palestinian citizens, especially women and children, and destruction of vital infrastructure in Gaza," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said in a statement on Saturday.

He went on to add that Washington has occasionally shown its affiliation and collaboration with the apartheid system in Israel in perpetrating "war crimes and genocide" against the Palestinian nation since the horrendous onslaught of the child-killing Israeli regime against Gaza commenced in early October.

Kanaani continued his vitriol and opprobrium of U.S. politicians for their false concern for the safety ▶ Page 2

Tehran hosting 9th Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee meeting

TEHRAN - The 9th meeting of the Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee started in Tehran on Saturday aimed at expanding economic cooperation and bolstering the constructive interaction between the two countries' private sectors.

The meeting is co-chaired by Iran's Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehranian and Qatari Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al Abdullah Al Thani, the portal of the Iranian Energy Ministry reported.

In this meeting, which is held annually, new and effective steps are taken for developing and expanding the economic relations between Tehran and Doha. ▶ Page 4



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Iran, Syria ink 6 economic, trade co-op MOUs

TEHRAN - Iran and Syria signed six memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on economic and trade cooperation on Saturday.

The MOUs were inked by Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber and Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous in a ceremony at the end of the meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee in Tehran.

As reported, Iran's ministers of industry, mining and trade, energy, finance and economic affairs, sport and youth, agriculture, oil, and culture, as well as the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) were present in the signing ceremony of the mentioned MOUs. ▶ Page 4

Iran's "Suitcase" wins award at Red Sea film festival

TEHRAN - Iranian short film "Suitcase" co-directed by Ako Zand-Karimi and Saman Hosseinpour won the Silver Yusr for Best Short Film at the 3rd Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

A production of 2023, the film is about a Kurdish refugee who lives in his suitcase far from his own homeland. In it he carries memories of his family. When someone steals the suitcase in the tumult of the foreign city center, he loses his home a second time.

Meysam Damanzeh, Rezvan Khodami, Elena Sahami and Ava Moslem-Khani are in the cast of the short work.

The 15-minute flick won the best script award at the 11th Parma International Music Film Festival in Italy and the Audience Award at Kobani International Film Festival in Germany in September. ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

3 strategic pillars of consultations between Iran and Russia

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in the yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

Hamshahri analyzed the visit of President Raisi to Moscow and said: The short but important trip of the President of Iran to Moscow is important from various aspects, and of course, it was accompanied by significant achievements. The most important achievement is the deepening of relations between Tehran and Moscow, as two influential countries in the region and the world. In this trip, in terms of politics, important issues have been raised to strengthen the Tehran-Moscow proximity in order to deal with the oppressive Western unilateralism and this is considered a very important issue. In addition, the ongoing developments in Gaza and the continuation of crimes by the Zionist regime were among the other topics of consultation between Raisi and Putin, which can lead to the strengthening of regional and global convergence to prevent the genocide of Zionists in the occupied territories. On the other hand, the direct presence of the presidents of the two countries in economic consultations, especially in transit and corridors, shows the mutual determination to complete the existing agreements and will underlie a new chapter in Tehran-Moscow economic relations.

Javan: "October 7" destroyed America's strategy in West Asia

In a note, Javan addressed the failure of American policies in the region. It wrote: Before October 7th, it seemed that the vision of the United States for West Asia was being realized. One of Washington's visions was to reach an implicit understanding with Tehran about the nuclear program. Of course, there were obstacles to these goals. Among other things, the tension between Tehran and Washington was still high. Washington's biggest miscalculation was that it thought it could ignore the Palestinian issue. The United States knew that the tension between Iran and Israel is continuing, but it failed to foresee that it would be linked with the issue of Palestine with a devastating effect. With the existing conditions, Washington should pay attention to the increasing power of Tehran. The United States must reduce its willingness to challenge the regional order, especially as it requires a new deal on Iran's nuclear program. As October 7th showed, Washington's beliefs about West Asia were completely wrong, and yet the United States has not updated its thinking, and its result has been anti-Israel and anti-American anger across the region.

Arman-e-Melli: Israel seeks to drag Iran into war

In an interview with Seyed Jalal Sadatiyan,

the former Iranian ambassador in London, Arman-e-Melli addressed the possibility of the spread of the Gaza war and said: Israel does not have the conditions for a long war. Also, domestically, America is moving towards the election atmosphere and the public opinion inside America is affected by this situation. On the other hand, Israel is imposing conditions to drag Iran into this matter. Today, under the influence of the AIPAC lobby, some American and Israeli officials suggest that Iran should be attacked, but both the U.S. and Israel know that such a situation is not bearable to drag Iran into it. Not only the internal situation in Israel cannot tolerate this situation to continue, but what Israel's move to drag Iran into the war is not practically possible and the Americans also do not want the war to expand. In other words, in the current situation, neither the Americans nor the Europeans want to increase the tension and continue the current situation. Now, whether the war will be stopped or not, depends on the efforts of different countries, including the efforts of Qatar.

Shargh: False claims against Iran and the continuation of inflammation in the region

In a commentary, Shargh discussed the escalation of tension in the region and wrote: Israel's attacks against Gaza are continuing and in parallel regional tensions between armed groups and American forces have practically reached critical points. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell criticizes fellow Kentucky Senator Rand Paul's resolution calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria, calling it "shortsighted". Ahead of the vote, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said "Passage of such a resolution would be a gift to Iran." He added, "Driving American troops from the Middle East is exactly what they'd like to see." The Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly voted down a bill 133-84 that would have required President Joe Biden to withdraw the roughly 900 troops stationed in Syria.

On the other hand, the U.S. secretary of state announced the imposition of new sanctions against individuals and institutions that by selling Iranian goods, were providing financial assistance to the Yemeni forces. This statement, which was published on the website of the U.S. Department of State, repeated the claim that Iran is related to the actions of the Yemeni army and said that Iran's support has caused unprovoked attacks on civilian infrastructure in Israel and commercial ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. This claim has been rejected many times by Iran and has been considered baseless.

US again proves complicity in Gaza carnage by vetoing ceasefire resolution: Iran

From page 1 of civilians and children in Gaza, noting that the same U.S. officials were responsible for last week's 200th delivery of U.S.-made weapons and military equipment to the Israeli military.

The U.S. military, political, intelligence, and media backing for Israel's heinous atrocities against innocent Palestinians in the constrained Gaza Strip and throughout the occupied West Bank has also been blasted by the Iranian diplomat.

"Undoubtedly, the U.S. administration is complicit in the savage killing of nearly 18,000 civilians, of whom some 8,000 are oppressed children. The U.S. and the Zionist regime must be held accountable for the repercussions of the intensification of the Gaza war across the region," Kanaani stressed.

A draft resolution in the UN Security Council that called for an urgent ceasefire in Gaza was blocked on Friday by the U.S., using its right of veto.

The resolution, proposed by the United Arab Emirates, received 13 votes in favor, while the United Kingdom abstained.

The vote came after UN Secretary-Gen-



eral Antonio Guterres publicly warned the 15-member council on Wednesday that the two-month-long war posed a global threat.

The U.S. and Israel are opposed to a ceasefire because they feel it would benefit mainly the Palestinian Hamas resistance group.

Israel initiated the war on Gaza on October 7, following a surprise launch of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in reaction to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and suppression against Palestinians.

So far, Israeli violence has claimed the lives of at least 17,177 Palestinians, the majority of whom are women and children. Over 46,000 individuals have also been injured.

Tehran demands immediate halt to Gaza war, military assistance to Israel

TEHRAN - Iran's deputy permanent representative to the UN has maintained Tehran's demand for an immediate halt to the Israeli murderous attack on Gaza, the termination of all military assistance to the Tel Aviv regime, and an end to hostilities, as stated by its deputy permanent representative to the UN.

Zahra Ershadi made the remarks on Friday at a UN General Assembly meeting in New York titled "Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian and disaster relief assistance, including special economic assistance."

The full text of Zahra Ershadi's speech is as follows:

At the outset, allow me to express my delegation's gratitude to the coordinators and facilitators of the resolutions under consideration of this agenda item for their hard work towards the achievement of consensus among Member States. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports. I align myself with the statement delivered by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the UN Charter and deliver the following in my national capacity.

In our view, all of the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, notably the respect for sovereignty and ter-



ritorial integrity of states, should be strictly observed by all countries, as well as humanitarian aid organizations, when providing humanitarian assistance in other territories. Since States have the primary role and responsibility in response to their humanitarian emergencies, national ownership and leadership in the coordination of humanitarian assistance to ensure its effective delivery must be acknowledged. In the same vein, any humanitarian crises or emergencies, especially those that have been advertently created under a specific and hidden political agenda, must not lead to any foreign intervention, including under the pretext of the responsibility to protect.

The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the importance of humanitarian assistance activities, including

the United Nations humanitarian response system, by upholding its purely humanitarian nature.

We strongly believe those who serve as the main contributors in protracted wars and occupations by their involvement or through the provision of sophisticated weapons should shoulder more of the burden in financing UN humanitarian responses. This also includes those that have historical responsibility in greenhouse gas emissions that lead to rapid climate change and exacerbate disasters.

We also strongly condemn situations wherein the humanitarian needs of populations in dire deprivation are taken hostage as a political means or military tool, including by imposing blockages to starve civilians to death. Furthermore, the United Nations

must assure that all humanitarian aid should be distributed among all populations in need indiscriminately and without any interference by donors.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers unilateral coercive measures as one of the main obstacles that hinder international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, while also serving as one of the main sources of creating humanitarian crises around the world. While our region is prone to a variety of disasters, including earthquakes, droughts, dust and sandstorms, as well as floods that stretch our resources to the absolute brink, the Islamic Republic of Iran has tremendously suffered from the additional weight that unlawful and illegal unilateral sanctions bear.

There are many humanitarian crises around the world that require our swift attention. Regarding the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, as has been our appeal during this time every year in this body and under the consideration of this Agenda item and as the winter approaches and the situation of the Afghan people, especially women, girls and children, continue to deteriorate, the timely provision of humanitarian assistance should in no way be politicized, conditional or ignored due to other emerging humanitarian crises around the world.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Gaza humanitarian situation 'catastrophic,' UN chief says

TEHRAN- The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has been criticized by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as "catastrophic," highlighting the urgent need for a ceasefire and a de-escalation of hostilities in the beleaguered region.

Guterres made the remarks during a phone call on late Friday with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in which the two addressed the current developments in Gaza and the U.S. rejection of a UN resolution.

Nearly every other member of the Security Council as well as several more countries calling for an urgent humanitarian truce in Gaza supported the resolution.

The delicate situation in Gaza and across Palestine, according to Guterres, led to the adoption of Article 99 of the UN Charter, which has not been activated since 1989.

"The aforementioned process has been activated as the need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza is felt more than in the past," he added.

He added, "A humanitarian pause should be made and the spread of tensions in the region should be prevented."

Guterres also emphasized the need of continuing work until Palestinian rights are realized and a Palestinian state is established in accordance with prior United Nations resolutions.

Article 99 of the UN Charter stipulates that the Secretary-General "may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."

In an unprecedented step in decades, Guterres invoked the article on Wednesday to alert the UN Security Council of the Israeli war's threat to world peace and security.

"The use of Article 99 of the United Nations Charter is a brave action on your part to maintain international peace and security, and is supported by the world's public opinion," Amir Abdollahian said in response to Guterres' application of the clause after the Israeli genocidal war in Gaza.

The Iranian foreign minister mentioned the dire and terrible situation in the beleaguered Gaza Strip, as well as the displacement of women and children in the deserts of southern Gaza during the Israeli onslaught.

Amir Abdollahian advocated for accelerating measures to build deterrence against the Israeli regime's crimes in Gaza and increasing assistance for Palestinians through the rapid opening of the Rafah border for humanitarian supplies and the cessation of

forced migration of Gazans.

On October 7, Israel launched its war machine in response to the Hamas surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the colonial entity's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against the Palestinians.

Since then, Israel has killed over 17,400 Palestinians, the most of whom are women and children, and injured over 46,480 more in its continuous air and ground strikes on Gaza.

According to the UN, almost 80% of Gaza's population is displaced, with over 11 million seeking refuge in UN Palestine refugee agency (UNRWA) shelters.

Iran emphasizes Gaza War must end immediately

Amir Abdollahian spoke with Ziad al-Nakhlah, the secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Resistance Movement, over the phone on Friday.

They talked about the most recent actions taken by the Islamic Republic and the Arab and Muslim world to help the Palestinian people.

In order to put an end to the Israeli regime's war crimes in Gaza, the senior Iranian diplomat emphasized the necessity for "immediate and effective" action by the world community and relevant international organizations.

For his part, Nakhlah conveyed appreciation for Iran's and the Muslim-Arab collaboration.

He also gave a report on the most recent developments in the Israeli war on Gaza, reiterating the Palestinian resistance groups' unwavering commitment to repel the savage attacks of the occupying regime and to protect the beleaguered strip.

Iran applauds UN chief decision to apply Article 99 to Gaza

In another telephone conversation with Head of Hamas' Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh on Friday, Amir Abdollahian applauded the UN chief for using Article 99, calling it a unique and significant step toward establishing global peace and security.

Amir Abdollahian elaborated on the latest diplomatic moves and measures by Islamic and Arab states, as well as Iran, in international arenas aimed at supporting the Palestinian people, denouncing the Zionist regime's war crimes, and putting an end to the merciless slaughter of people in Gaza and the West Bank.

He added that the Gaza situation was one of the major topics discussed during Thursday's discussions between Iranian President Ebrahim



Raisi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Haniyeh, for his part, commended Iran for its positions in favor of the Palestinian people as well as Iran's massive diplomatic efforts both inside and outside of the region to put an end to the crimes committed by the Zionist regime against the Palestinian people.

He went on to discuss the current state of affairs in Gaza in light of the continued atrocities and killings of people by the Zionist regime.

The Palestinian leader also declared, "With God's help, the resistance will continue until the crimes of the Zionists stop and the occupation of Palestine is completely over."

Iran, German FMs discuss Gaza, bilateral ties

Amir Abdollahian and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock spoke over the phone on Friday on Tehran-Berlin ties as well as the most recent events in the Gaza Strip.

The senior Iranian diplomat emphasized the continued Israeli slaughter of Palestinian people in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, urging the international community to pay special attention to the human rights crisis.

Amir Abdollahian denounced the Israeli genocide in Gaza and proposed a UN vote among Palestine's original inhabitants, which would include Jews, Muslims, and Christians, as a diplomatic means of resolving the long-running conflict.

"Mutual respect and focus on shared interests are necessary to maintain and strengthen relations in various fields, and within this framework, the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the expansion of relations between Tehran and Berlin," Amir Abdollahian said, highlighting the historical and cultural ties between Iran and Germany.

For her part, Baerbock emphasized the need to stop the humanitarian disaster in Gaza from getting exacerbated.

The German foreign minister underscored the need of keeping the lines of communication open in order to foster bilateral cooperation while pleading on Iran to help ease regional tensions.

Four members of hostage-taking group arrested in northwestern Iran: IRGC commander

TEHRAN- In a statement released on Saturday, the public relations of Hamzeh Seyyed al-Shohada Base of the IRGC Ground Force announced the arrest of four members of a hostage-taking group in Khoj City, northwest Iran.

The group is accused of taking foreign nationals hostage.

General Ali Akbar Pour Jam-

shidian, Commander of Hamzeh Seyyed al-Shohada Base of the IRGC Ground Force, said that four members of this group, dealing with foreign nationals, were arrested in a complex operation by intelligence forces.

He added that these arrested members were involved in smuggling, extorting, and torturing foreign nationals.



"We assure the people of the region that with the help of God, we are protecting their lives and providing security," the commander noted.

In the end, he called on the zealous people of the region to share any news and reports with contact number 114 to help intelligence forces.

Iran warns of 'diminishing effectiveness' of JCPOA

From Page 1 ▶ Regarding the JCPOA, the top Iranian diplomat firmly stated, "We will not compromise on our red lines. There have been instances where the other party overlooked our red lines, and thus far, we have refrained from embarking on the path to sign the JCPOA. The effectiveness of the JCPOA diminishes day by day."

The deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was inked in July 2015 between Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France - along with Germany.

This pact facilitated relief from sanctions for Iran, contingent upon the country voluntarily altering certain aspects of its nuclear activities.

The United States under former president Donald Trump unilaterally walked out of the deal in May 2018, despite Iran's full compliance with the terms of the agreement. Consequently, Washington's European allies, including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, aligned with the sanctions by curtailing their trade activities with Iran.

The "maximum pressure" campaign initiated by Trump,



although falling short of achieving its intended goals, had severe repercussions on ordinary Iranians, especially those grappling with life-threatening illnesses. Even with the change in administration to Joe Biden, the sanctions persisted, constricting financial channels crucial for acquiring basic goods and medicine. This, in turn, disrupted supply chains by limiting the number of suppliers willing to facilitate the sale of humanitarian goods to Iran.

Despite claims by Washington and its Western allies that humanitarian goods were exempted from sanctions, tens of thousands of patients in

Iran have over the years died or developed critical ailments due to the non-availability of essential drugs over the years.

Iran vehemently denounced these sanctions as acts of "economic war," "economic terrorism," and "medical terrorism."

The subsequent Vienna talks, initiated in April 2021 with Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China, aimed at reinstating the JCPOA. Iran, firm in its stance, insisted on the verifiable removal of all U.S. sanctions and sought guarantees against a future abandonment of the agreement by Washington.

However, discussions hit a standstill in August 2022, primarily due to Washington's unwavering position of not lifting all the sanctions imposed on Tehran by the previous U.S. administration. Adding to the complexity, the U.S. and the European Union imposed additional sanctions on Iran in response to nationwide riots in Iran and allegations of Tehran supplying armed drones to Russia for use in the conflict in Ukraine - claims that Tehran vehemently denies.

Amid these diplomatic challenges, Iranian Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian pointedly accused Western allies of instigating riots in the past year, attributing their actions to hindering the ongoing talks.

Recently, in an exclusive interview, Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, expressed skepticism about the readiness of the U.S., France, Germany, and the UK to resume and finalize the Vienna Talks, hinting at a potential prolonged status quo. Ulyanov emphasized Iran's responsible approach in the matter and its readiness to positively conclude the negotiations, even in the face of uncertainties.

It is in Israel's interest to stop committing crimes: top general

TEHRAN - On Saturday, a senior Iranian military official declared that Israel's unceasing atrocities against Palestinians confined in the blockaded Gaza Strip will ultimately backfire on the regime.

"It is in the interest of the Zionist regime to stop committing crimes," Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said during a speech at a military university. Iran's highest-ranking military commander also thanked Palestinian resistance fighters for their unwavering resilience against the regime's occupation forces.

"The Zionist regime, with the crimes that have hastened its decline, will collapse sooner than expected. The righteous front will definitely be victorious according to divine promise. All Palestinians of any religion, sect, or denomination should go to the ballot box to decide how the future

of this land should be managed, as there is no other way for peace and tranquility in this land," the general said, adding that Iran's armed forces will continue to closely monitor regional developments.

Palestinian Resistance Group Hamas carried out a surprise operation dubbed "Al-Aqsa Storm" inside the occupied territories on October 7. The offensive was seen as a significant security, military, and intelligence defeat by Israel which has been priding itself on its "invincible" intelligence and military apparatus.

The regime began a disproportionate response to Operation Al-Aqsa Storm shortly after it happened, leaving behind a carnage of over 17,000 civilians and destroying infrastructure across Gaza. It is meanwhile obstructing access to food, water, electricity, and medication for the 2.3 million people trapped in the densely



populated strip.

The U.S. and other Western states have showed steadfast support for Israel's killing campaign. Washington has so far vetoed two UN Security Council resolutions asking for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. It continues to back Israel in its illegal approach towards Palestinians despite mounting international pressure.

Tehran-Moscow growing strategic ties neutralize sanctions: official

TEHRAN- The chairman of the Iran-Russia parliamentary friendship group, Ebrahim Rezaei, has described the one-day trip of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Moscow as "important and effective," saying the expansion of relations between Tehran and Moscow, both subjected to cruel sanctions, will help them use each other's capacity to

neutralize sanctions.

Rezaei, who accompanied President Raisi on his trip to Russia, shed more light on the Moscow trip, saying Russia and Iran are considered important in both states' foreign policy agenda.

Pointing to Iran and Russia's long history of cooperation, namely in fields such as

security and counterterrorism, he noted that with the Raisi administration, cooperation with Russia has been expanded in fields such as trade, energy, regional and international issues.

Stating that the trip to Moscow was mainly about talks over international issues and the Palestinian question, he said: «Both sides emphasized

bringing a halt to the war in the Gaza Strip, and the opinions of both sides were very close to each other on this issue.»

He also added that both sides called on providing aid to the injured people in the Gaza Strip, helping the oppressed people of Palestine, opening the Rafah border, and bringing an end to the displacement of Palestinians from Gaza.

Kenyan president calls for stronger ties with Iran

TEHRAN - At the ceremony of receiving the credentials of Ali Gholampour, the new Iranian ambassador to Nairobi, the President of Kenya called for the expansion of Iran-Kenya ties.

Gholampour, in the meeting, presented his credentials to Kenyan President William Samui Ruto.

In the meeting, while welcoming the newly appointed ambassador of Iran to Kenya, Samui Ruto called for the expansion and strengthening of relations between the two states in various fields.



The Kenyan president also emphasized the implementation of agreements made during the trip of the Iranian president to Kenya.

While conveying the warm and sincere

greetings of President Raisi to his Kenyan counterpart, Gholampour expressed hope for further development and expansion of bilateral relations, as well as the strengthening of political, economic, and cultural cooperation.

He had already submitted a copy of his credentials in a meeting with an official of the Kenyan government.

In that meeting, Gholampour also expressed hope that with the will of the two states, the relations between the two friendly countries will expand.

a joint military drill between the two nations, as a way of promoting military ties.

"The common borders between the two states further necessitate the continuation of cooperation," the Iranian commander said.

The Saturday meeting came after Iranian President

Ebrahim Raisi's official visit to Turkey was postponed. Raisi was reportedly set to visit the country on November 28, but had to postpone his trip due to unstated reasons.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan visited Iran in October, and held meetings with his Iranian counterpart as well as the president.

Iran envoy meets Turkish defense chief to discuss growing ties

TEHRAN - Iran's envoy to Ankara met with Turkish Defense Minister Yasar Guler on Saturday to discuss bilateral cooperation between Iran and Turkey, as the two countries move towards enhancing ties in different fields.

Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh and the Turkish official stressed the

development of relations, pointing out numerous commonalities and historical ties between Iran and Turkey.

Guler had a phone call with the highest-ranking Iranian commander in June, shortly after being appointed. The Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri proposed

SPORTS

Indonesia to meet Iran in pre-Asian Cup friendly

TEHRAN - Indonesia national football team will meet Iran in a friendly match ahead of the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

The match will be held as part of preparation for the Asian Cup, bolatimes.com reported.

The Indonesian team, who have been drawn in Group D along with Japan, Iraq and Vietnam, will also play Libya in a warm-up match.

Iran football team also are in Group C with the UAE, Palestine, and Hong Kong.

Iran will start the campaign against Palestine on January 14th at the Education City Stadium in Al Rayyan, Qatar.

Iran, headed by Amir Ghalenoei, will attempt to bring an end to their title drought in the competition.

Iran have not won the title since 1976.

Moradi named caretaker of Iran volleyball federation

TEHRAN - Vahid Moradi was officially named as caretaker of the Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) on Saturday.

Moradi has served as vice-president and senior adviser of the federation since years ago.

He has been appointed as acting president of the federation after Mohammadreza Davarzani was forced to step down for reaching retirement age.

Davarzani led Iran volleyball federation about two decades and the National Team qualified for the 2016 and 2020 Olympic Games during his tenure.

Moradi, former president of the Iran Swimming Federation, will have to hold the presidential and the federation's board elections as soon as possible.

Sitting volleyball changed Masoumeh Zarei's life

TEHRAN- To Masoumeh Zarei Barouti, a sitting volleyball athlete from Iran, the sport has been a life-changing experience.

In Hangzhou 2022, the Iranian team captured the silver medal in the women's event, which was won by host China.

On the final competition day, Zarei and her team held a small birthday party for one of their players, and they took selfies with the Games mascot Feifei.

"Before I became an athlete, I isolated myself and I was at home all the time because of my disability," Zarei Barouti told Paralympic.org. "But right after I became an athlete, my whole life changed."

"People's behavior toward me has changed since I became an athlete and people have learned that not everyone with a disability is weak," she said.

"When I started out as a player, I was already 30 years old and of course I faced a lot of difficulties including injuries and increase in my age," the player said. "I've been to two Paralympic Games, which was Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. During these Games, I felt joy and I felt even more affirmation for the sport."

"I will continue to pursue my dream with courage and determination. I will continue to fight to become a champion."

Looking back at how far the sport has taken her, Zarei Barouti, the Iranian captain, hopes that more people with disabilities take up Para sports.

"People should follow their own goals themselves and choose one of the sports for

people with disabilities. They need to follow it and I assure them that in the end, success will await (them)," Zarei Barouti added.

"Our players have really nice teamwork and sympathy toward each other," said head coach Leyla Berynyan Esfanhani, who has led the team for about a year. "The players are like a family and they are like sisters. As the head coach, I consider myself their mother and I love it."

"It's important for me to continue supporting them and be happy together."

"It's really important for me and the players to share the same goal, which is to participate in the Paralympics in Paris," Coach Esfanhani said.

The women's sitting volleyball event was introduced at the Paralympic Games in 2004. The Iranian women's team participated at the Rio 2016 Games, while the men's team, a huge powerhouse, has claimed seven gold medals since the men's tournament was first included in the 1980 Paralympics.

Iran, Syria sign MoU on sports cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran and Syria signed a memorandum of understanding on Saturday in Tehran on cooperation in the field of sport.

Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs Kioumars Hashemi said the MoU will serve as a basis to expand a diverse range of exchanges and relations between the two countries.

Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mohammad Samer al-Khalil and Hashemi signed the MoU.

It aims to exchange experts, consultants, trainers, and specialists in the field of sports, and share experiences related to the protection of sports, the organization of sports events, sports medicine and anti-doping, support and development of Zurkhaneh sports.

The agreement was signed in Tehran, the capital of Iran.

Congo too strong for Iran at President's Cup

TEHRAN - Congo proved to be a too tough of a challenge for Iran and claimed a strong 32-20 win, the second one in a row in the President's Cup Group II on Saturday.

The African team handed Iran their fifth loss in a row at Denmark/Norway/Sweden 2023.

The last round matches will bring the top-of-the-group clash between Chile and Congo, fighting for progressing to the Placement Match 25/26 place game, the final of the President's Cup, while Iran will try to avoid the Placement Match 31/32 in a duel with Kazakhstan.

Iran have previously lost to Poland, Germany, Japan at the 2023 IHF Women's World Championship and Chile at the President's Cup.

Persepolis, Sepahan emerge victorious, Esteghlal held: PGPL

TEHRAN - Persepolis and Sepahan football teams defeated their opponents at the 2023/24 Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) on Saturday, while Esteghlal were held by Foolad in Ahvaz.

In Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Persepolis edged past Havadar 1-0, thanks to a goal from Mehdi Torabi in the 21st minute.

Sepahan also beat Mes 4-1 in Isfahan, while Nassaji edged past struggling Esteghlal Khuzestan in Ghaemshahr.

In Ahvaz, PGPL leaders were held to a goalless draw by Foolad.

Esteghlal are leading the table with 24 points, followed by Sepahan (21), Tractor (21) and Persepolis (20).

Transit of oil products via Iran rises over 48% in 8 months on year



TEHRAN- Transit of oil products through Iran increased by 48.7 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the deputy transport minister announced.

Shahriyar Afandizadeh said that 2,923,937 tons of oil products were transited via the country in the mentioned eight-month period.

According to the official, transit of commodities through Iran increased by 28.2 percent during the first eight months of the current year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

He announced the achievements resulted from promoting transit negotiations, and the foundations of the "Iran-Way" initiative in the growth of the country's transit this year, and said that 9,458,862 tons of commodities were transited via Iran in the first eight months of the present year.

The continuous trend of recent transit records via the country and the increasing interest of governments, traders, and those active in transport sectors from neighboring, regional and extra-regional countries in the transit and logistics situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicate the fruitfulness of the transformational approach of the 13th government to the strategic issue of transit, with emphasis on the development of all-round economic relations with neighbors, the official stressed.

As stated by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, the "Iran Way" initiative made by the current Iranian government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters.

Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the minister has underlined.

As previously announced by Afandizadeh, 10.8 million tons of commodities were transited through the country in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

The official also announced that Iran registered a new record high with the transit of 8.3 million tons of non-oil goods in 1401, adding that 2.5 million tons of oil products were also transited via the country in the previous year.

"Considering the transit of 7.5 million tons of non-oil goods in 1400, we have seen a 10.7-percent growth in the transit of this type of goods in 1401 compared to the previous year", he said.

"In 1401, we witnessed important developments and achievements in the strategic and operational areas of the country's transit, whose definitive effects will be seen gradually and steadily on the growth of transit from the country in 1402 and the coming years", the deputy transport minister further highlighted.

Afandizadeh then explained: "In line with the activation and development of the North-South International Transport Corridor, in a tripartite meeting in last September between the high-ranking officials of our country and the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan in Baku, while aiming to achieve the transit of 15 million tons of goods through this corridor by 2030, agreements were reached in the field of strengthening the cooperation of the three countries in joint investment and financing, the completion and development of key infrastructures and their exploitation, especially the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway line, facilitating cross-border traffic of goods

and increasing the quality and quantity of this traffic", adding that the implementation of these agreements is being followed up.

He went on to say, "One of the most important events last year was Iran's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In a short period of time after the meeting of the heads of Shanghai in September 1401 in Samarkand, the first six-party meeting of the transport ministers of Iran and the countries of Central Asia, in addition to Russia and Azerbaijan was held in Tehran in October 1401 with the goal of achieving 20-million tons of annual transit between Iran and Central Asian countries, as an area with a very high role and importance in east-west and north-south transit, especially after the recent regional and international developments, which was approved by the members."

This year, the issue of transit and playing a role in major programs such as those related to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the main priorities of the Transport Ministry in developing transport relations with regional and extra-regional target countries, the deputy transport minister noted.

After seven years of reduction in the transit of goods from the country, the growth path of transit resumed in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022) and with the passage of 12.65 million tons of goods through Iran, a growth of 68 percent was achieved.

The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world, and the efforts and cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran.

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

Paying attention to upstream documents, especially the country's development plans, and the government's decision to develop transit, paying special attention to infrastructure development, reducing transit time, making it cheaper to cross Iran and making more advantages over competitors, due to the short path for customers, can lead to facilitating the development of transit so that the country can reach the desired growth in this due.

In early June, Afandizadeh announced that the Transport and Urban Development Ministry is preparing a five-year comprehensive plan for increasing transportation and transit relations with Central Asia, as well as the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman countries.

The plan includes the basic strategies and executive roadmap in a step-by-step manner for the next five years and will mark the evolution of the bilateral transport and transit relations with the target countries, including the countries of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Afandizadeh explained.

This year, the issue of transit and playing a role in major programs such as those related to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the main priorities of the Transport Ministry in developing transport relations with regional and extra-regional target countries, the deputy transport minister noted.

Iran, Syria ink 6 economic, trade co-op MOUs

From page 1 ► Addressing the meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, who is the co-chairman of the Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee has announced that the two sides will soon begin establishing joint insurance and banking institutes as well as free trade zones.

The official expressed satisfaction with the implementation of previous agreements between the two nations.

Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mohammad Samer Khalil, who co-chairs the Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee, declared both parties' plans to pursue joint ventures such as setting up free trade zones and joint insurance and banking institutes.

The Syrian official also said the two sides have reached a good consensus regarding the guidelines of the free trade agreement, and the framework of cooperation between central banks, as well as tourism, and transportation sectors.

Iran, Tajikistan discuss ways of expanding economic ties

TEHRAN – In a meeting between Iranian Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Davoud Manzour and Tajikistan's Minister of Finance Fayziddin Qahhorzoda on Friday the two sides discussed ways of boosting economic and trade ties between the two countries, IRNA reported.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the eighth meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian and Pacific Center for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) which was held in the Tajik capital Dushanbe on Friday.

In this meeting, Manzour referred to the upward trend of economic relations between the two countries and underlined the important role of powerful Iranian companies active in various sectors including mining, metal, agriculture, information technology, and knowledge-based industries in the development of cooperation between the two countries.

He noted that President Ebrahim Raisi believes that Tajikistan's progress and security is Iran's progress and security, emphasizing the necessity of mutual use of the capacities of the two friendly and brotherly countries for the development of relations in all areas.

Qahhorzoda for his part expressed his satisfaction with the



Iran's PBO Head Davoud Manzour (C) and Tajikistan's Minister of Finance Fayziddin Qahhorzoda (2nd R) meet in Dushanbe on Friday.

development of relations between the two countries and called for an increase in the role of Iranian companies in the implementation of infrastructure projects in Tajikistan, including the construction of dams and hydroelectric power plants.

Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian has said the trade between Iran and Tajikistan has increased by 10 times over the past two years, Fars News Agency reported.

According to Mehrabian, the value of trade between the two countries which was \$23 million in the Iranian calendar year 1399 (2020-2021) reached \$280 million in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2023).

The trade between the two countries also reached \$150 million in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22) and it is expected to exceed \$300 million by the end of the year (late March 2024).

"During the previous visit of President Raisi to Tajikistan, the two countries had set a \$500 million target for the trade between the two sides and now considering the current trend of relations, a much higher goal can be set," Mehrabian said.

Iran and Tajikistan on November 8 signed a joint statement and 18 cooperation documents and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to deepen bilateral strategic relations.

The joint statement was signed between President Raisi and his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe.

The documents and MOUs were inked by the Iranian and Tajik ministers in the presence of the two presidents.

As reported, the documents and MOUs pertained to a roadmap for the long-term bilateral trade and economic cooperation till 2030, mutual visa-free access, anti-drug trafficking operations, transportation, crisis management and the establishment of joint free economic zones, as well as inter-city cooperation in various fields.

During a meeting earlier in the day, Raisi said Iran and Tajikistan could increase their annual trade transactions to \$500 million in the first step.

Raisi stressed that historical, religious, and cultural commonalities shared by the two countries provide a favorable ground for enhancing bilateral relations in all aspects.

The Tajik president, for his part, highlighted the necessity to develop bilateral ties, particularly in mining, health, science and technology, and agriculture sectors.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Raisi arrived in Dushanbe on November 8. During the day, he also attended a meeting of the two countries' traders and businessmen.

Tehran hosting 9th Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee meeting

From page 1 ► The event is held in the form of four specialized committees including the trade committee (trade, industries and chambers of commerce, banking, customs and insurance), the infrastructure committee (roads and urban development, agriculture and information and communication technology, and work), the social and cultural committee (tourism and crafts, health, science and research, judiciary and law) and the energy committee (water and sewage, electricity, oil, gas and environment).

There are 17 representatives from both sides in the trade committee, six representatives in the infrastructure committee, seven representatives in the energy committee and 11 representatives in the social committee at the level of general managers from all government agencies.

During the three-day event, several memorandums and agreements will be discussed and signed by the two countries and opinions will be exchanged to prepare the necessary grounds to advance the agreements and practical measures.

Also, on the sidelines of the meeting, a specialized exhibition of Iran's achievements and capabilities in the fields of food industries, health, treatment and medicine, agricultural industry, knowledge-based companies and energy is held to introduce Iran's export products.

The 9th Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Cooperation Commission will run through December 11.

As announced by an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the value of trade between Iran and Qatar is estimated to reach \$3 billion by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (begins on March 2025).

Farzad Piltan, the director-general of TPO's Office of West Asian Countries, said such amount of trade will include export, import, joint investment, transit, re-export and joint production.

The governmental officials of the two countries are negotiating and are continuously providing infrastructure to achieve this goal, he added.

In early March, the former head of TPO stressed

the expansion of trade ties with Qatar and cooperation with Qatari traders and businessmen in the field of partnership and joint investment and infrastructure development.

Alireza Peyman-Pak made the remarks on the sidelines of the first day of the Iran-Qatar business forum in Tehran.

Referring to the 13th government's emphasis on developing relations with its neighbors, the official said: "Qatar is one of the countries that, although it has close political relation with Iran, unfortunately in recent years enough attention has not been paid to the use of commercial and economic opportunities of cooperation with this country".

"During the past few months and in the 13th government, we have paid serious attention to the development of business relations with this country", he noted, adding, "In this regard, we have sent commercial attaché to Qatar, established a trade center, held a special exhibition, and sent business delegations".

Govt. approves new regulations for establishing port, marine companies



Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Shahriyar Afandizadeh

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Shahriyar Afandizadeh said the ministry has approved new regulations for the establishment of companies active in port and maritime fields, the ministry's portal reported.

"In line with the general policies of the maritime economy development that were emphasized by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to the heads of the three government branches and the head of the Expediency Council, the regulations for the establishment and operation of port and maritime

companies were approved by the government's Supreme Transport Coordination Council," Afandizadeh said.

According to the official, the new regulations are aimed at developing the country's maritime economy.

After some additional amendments, the regulations should be announced by this council for implementation, he added.

Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has said the organization is going to attract 1.0 quadrillion rials (about \$1.968 billion) of investment in the country's ports to develop maritime economy.

As reported by the portal of the Iranian Transport Ministry, Ali-Akbar Safaei said 470 trillion rials (about \$924 million) of the mentioned figure is going to be invested by the private sector and the rest will be supplied by PMO.

According to the official, private contractors have so far signed deals worth 60 trillion rials (about \$118 million) with PMO to implement development projects in the country's ports.

"In order to realize the general development

policies of the maritime sector, we need an integrated, coordinated and agile management at the highest level," Safaei said.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in the course of five years.

According to the PMO, the capacity of the country's ports has increased from 180 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 250 million tons in 1399 (ended in March 2021).

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 10,050 points (0.46 percent) to

2,160,973 on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week. TSE is one of the four Iranian stock

exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange

(IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

TEDPIX loses 10,000 points on Saturday

Agricultural, fishery, foodstuff exports increase 24%

TEHRAN – The value of Iran's exports of agricultural, fishery and foodstuff products increased by 24 percent in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March

21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported.

As reported, 5.173 million tons of the mentioned

products worth \$3.671 billion were exported from the country in the eight-month period, indicating also 11 percent growth in terms of weight year on year.

Gaza's Blood on America's Hand

America defies the world by vetoing UN resolution on Gaza

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN - To show Washington's limitless backing for Tel Aviv, the United States on Friday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Israel's carnage in the Gaza Strip.

The United States vetoed the resolution backed by almost all other members of the council. The U.S. move took place as the UN chief has called the situation in Gaza a "humanitarian nightmare."

Thirteen Security Council members voted in favor of a brief draft resolution, put forward by the United Arab Emirates, while the United Kingdom abstained.

The vote came after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made a rare move on Wednesday to formally warn the 15-member council of a threat to global peace and security from the two-month-long war on the Gaza Strip.

In the wake of the U.S. administration's stance regarding the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, Robert Wood, deputy U.S. ambassador to the UN, said, "We do not support calls for an immediate ceasefire. This would only plant the seeds for the next war."

The world reacts to U.S. veto

Following the U.S. veto, Israel's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Gilad Menashe Erdan, praised the Biden administration.

In contrast to the Israeli official's appreciation of the veto, the world diplomats criticized the act, expressing concerns over the ongoing condition in the Gaza Strip.

Criticizing the United States, Russia's Deputy Ambassador to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy said, "One can say many beautiful but empty words about democracy, human rights, peace, security, some rules, and order, but today, we learned the true value of these



words as two members of the UN Security Council preferred to remain complicit in Israel's brutal massacre."

In reaction to the veto, China, on Saturday, expressed its deep disappointment with the United States' second veto of a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, criticized Washington's "double standards."

Nicolas de Rivièrè, Permanent Representative of France to the UN, also stated, "Unfortunately, this Council failed again due to a lack of unity or by refusing to genuinely commit to negotiations."

After the vote, Mohamed Abushahab, the UAE Deputy Ambassador to the UN, expressed his deep disappointment with the outcome, saying, "In the face of an untold misery, this Council is unable to demand a ceasefire."

Stressing that the 15-member body is growing isolated and departing from its initial goal, Abushahab asked, "What is the message we are sending the Palestinians if we cannot unite?" However, he noted that this disappointing outcome will not deter his country from continuing to implore Council members to act and bring the violence in Gaza to an end.

Social collapse, another tactic of the apartheid regime

From page 1 ▶ But if we take a look at statements by Israeli spokespeople and officials, and assess the regime's media coverage and ongoing propaganda campaign, it will become clear that though the regime began its onslaughts against Gaza after the October 7 Hamas operation, its main goal wasn't to eliminate Hamas, but to eliminate the entire population of Gaza through forced displacement.

Israel was eventually planning to announce an international zone in Gaza, and then proceed to bring an impotent Palestinian government, like the one in the West Bank, to power. But as the regime has not been able to reach any of its initial objectives, it is now trying to make a complete social collapse unfold in Gaza. That way, Hamas and the people of the territory would have to

spend a significant time to recover and hence have less energy to fight occupation forces. It would take Palestinians several months or perhaps years to recover from such dire circumstances. A social, economic, and humanitarian collapse in Gaza would now be in Israel's best interest, as the regime failed to make the scenario it envisaged during the 1990s come true.

The destruction of Gaza's schools and universities where 45% of the population is under the age of 18, the destruction of mosques which act as a center of gathering, public bonding, and decision making, the destruction of Gaza's coast which has served as an economic hub for the locals, and the destruction of all medical centers are all pieces of a vicious puzzle Israel is trying to put together. Once everything is destroyed

and out of sight, Gaza will enter an era of unmanageable humanitarian crisis and social collapse.

Tel Aviv is seeking to force the Palestinian people in Gaza, despite their resilience, attitude, and identity influenced by resistance and Islamic values, to abandon their path and choose a different path than they have pursued in the past five decades (after the 1967 Six-Day War). With an understanding of this scenario, a more serious and precise policy should be pursued to end the war, reconstruct the Rafah crossing, and ultimately pursue targeted reconstruction of Gaza. If this scenario is overlooked, the end of the war and Israel's withdrawal may be perceived as a great victory, but in the years to come, it may lead Gaza and the resistance to a difficult fate and a never-ending deadlock.

We've Never Experienced This Before!

An Israeli outlet published a report on Saturday explaining the condition of the wounded members of the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF). The article, titled "More than 5000 army members have been wounded so far", is articulated, using quotes from the chief of the center for rehabilitation of the Israeli army. Part of his remarks are also included in the article's title, saying, "We've never experienced something like this!"

The article reveals that more than 60 new wounded IOF soldiers are sent to rehabilitation centers of the army "EVERY DAY". Since the beginning of the war, the article quotes the Israeli official as saying, "More than 2000 new IOF soldiers are identified as new disabled personnel of the army". The official continues to warn about those IOF soldiers who are not physically wounded in the war, but mentally affected, saying, "We still have the trauma tsunami ahead of us!"

The chief of the center for rehabilitation of the Israeli army also explains that "we have

never experienced anything like this before. More than 58% of the wounded soldiers who are transferred from the battlefield, have severe wounds on legs and hands, many of whom have lost one or two hands or legs". Almost 12% of the wounded IOF soldiers are suffering intense internal damage, including to liver, kidney, and so on. Out of the wounded IOF soldiers, 7% have wounds in the eyes and the head.

The Israeli official believes that the number of cases with mental damage is going to be significant and the number is yet to be known, as every IOF soldier who is physically wounded will also be mentally damaged. But sometimes it takes months, if not years, before this specific kind of damage makes its way to the surface.

The chief of the organization for disabled soldiers of the Israeli army has drawn almost an identical picture about the situation in IOF. According to him, quoted in the article, "The



government of Israel is stepping inside an unprecedented event in the global level. We have a mass of wounded soldiers and this is still before the outbreak of the wave of PTSD cases which usually happens one year after the disaster."

To deal with the aftermath of the October 7, based on reports published by Israeli official sources, more than 100,000 IOF soldiers and personnel were sent to the clash areas. If we consider only ten percent of them to be mentally affected by what they were exposed to,

the U.S. has vetoed a resolution, aligning itself with Israel. The U.S. claims a ceasefire would help Hamas to rearm and keep hold of its 138 hostages in the Strip.

On Oct. 18, a day after the bombardment of Al-Ahli hospital in northern Gaza by the Israeli Army, the U.S. alone also blocked a similar resolution calling for a ceasefire presented by Brazil and argued that the text did not mention "Israel's right to self-defense."

The U.S. vetoed the resolution despite the fact that the draft resolution required both parties (Israel and Hamas) to comply with international law. The unconditional release of the captives was another part of the Emirati initiative that Wood turned a blind eye to.

The U.S. stood against the entire world by rebuffing the resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The U.S. even did not heed its allies' call to stop barbaric acts in the coastal enclave. It angered and disappointed its allies, including Persian Gulf Arab countries, France as a permanent member of the council, and Japan as a current member.

The United States has gone to the extreme in backing the criminal regime of Israel that the Medicines Sans Frontiers have described the U.S. move as a "vote against humanity" and that "the U.S. veto makes it complicit in the carnage in Gaza."

After the Friday vote, Human Rights Watch also said the U.S. risked "complicity in war crimes" by continuing to provide Israel with weapons and diplomatic cover.

Put in a nutshell, Washington is sacrificing the reputation of the U.S. more and more by blindly backing a handful of ultra-right extremists in Israel, thereby making itself an accomplice to the ongoing savage acts in Gaza.

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Straight Truth
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WORLD HEADLINES

US 'accomplice to genocide' in Gaza – PA president

The US bears responsibility for the "genocide" perpetrated in Gaza by Israel, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was quoted as saying on Saturday.

The remarks were made in response to Washington vetoing a UN Security Council resolution on Friday calling for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" and the "immediate and unconditional release of hostages" abducted by Hamas.

Thirteen members in the 15-member body voted in favor of the proposal put forward by the United Arab Emirates, The UK, a permanent member of the council, abstained. US representatives explained their decision by insisting that the resolution was "divorced from reality" and would "only plant the seeds for the next war."

The Palestinian WAFA media outlet quoted Abbas as saying that "this American policy makes the US an accomplice to the genocide, ethnic cleansing and war crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem."

The Palestinian Authority president also denounced Washington's stance as "immoral" and running contrary to "all humanitarian norms and principles."

He concluded by warning Washington that its veto at the Security Council "will become a disgrace that will haunt the US for many years."

U.S. Congresswoman condemns Palestinian genocide by Israel

Speaking at a "Doctors for Ceasefire Now" press conference outside the Capitol, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib — the sole Palestinian American member of Congress — denounced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "genocidal bombing campaign" as she highlighted the scenes of mayhem in hospitals in Gaza.

"Thank you so much for your courage in this moment to stand on the right side of history," said Tlaib. "We know that there is a concerted effort to silence those speaking up for peaceful coexistence and the human rights of all people."

She asked, "I once again stand here to ask my colleagues: How many more lives will be enough? How many more innocent civilians and children have to be killed? How many more lives will you accept as "collateral damage"?"

Hamas says it repelled Israeli rescue attempt in Gaza, hostage killed

The armed wing of Hamas said on Friday it had repelled an attempted hostage rescue by Israeli special forces in the Gaza Strip, inflicted several military casualties on invaders, and that a captive also died in the incident.

Israel declined to comment, accusing the Palestinian faction of attempting psychological warfare against it.

In a statement on Telegram, Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades said its fighters had discovered a special forces unit mounting a rescue attempt and attacked it, killing and wounding several soldiers. It did specify the location of the incident.

It said a 25-year-old captive soldier named Sa'ar Baruch was killed.

Of some 240 people taken hostage on Oct. 7, 137 remain in captivity in Gaza after others were recovered during a truce. Some have been declared dead in absentia by Israeli authorities.

"We are not going to comment on psychological warfare that Hamas continues to wage against the people of Israel," Eylon Levy, an Israeli government spokesperson, said in a briefing when asked about the Hamas account of the botched raid.

Zimbabwe by-elections: Polls open in controversial vote

Zimbabwe is holding by-elections in which there have been attempts to exclude the main opposition candidates - as President Emmerson Mnangagwa cements his control.

The vote was triggered after some opposition Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) MPs had their seats declared vacant. This was engineered by someone claiming to be the party's secretary-general. The outcome could give the government an overwhelming majority.

The CCC lost August's general election but won more than 100 of the 280 seats in parliament. This denied the ruling Zanu-PF party a two-thirds majority that would enable it to change the constitution. And there are people who suspect that the party has played a role in forcing these by-elections in constituencies where it recently lost.

But the CCC is plagued by factional conflicts and the current crisis appears to a large extent to be self-inflicted.

Global concern over Sudan crisis as conflict spreads to new areas

The international community has expressed concern over the continued fighting in Sudan as the conflict spreads into new areas.

The Expanded Mechanism for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan issued a joint declaration calling for a ceasefire and inclusive dialogue among all Sudanese stakeholders.

The group also stressed the need for accountability for atrocity crimes and urged safe humanitarian access and protection of civilians.

They commended countries hosting Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers and called for increased international support. The expanded mechanism also emphasized the importance of maintaining neutrality and refraining from providing support to conflicting parties in Sudan.

About 2,000 Israeli soldiers disabled since war started: report

Israeli media are reporting that 2,000 wounded Israeli soldiers have been recognized as disabled by the war ministry. 5,000 soldiers have been wounded since the beginning of the war.

Since October 7, at least 420 soldiers have been killed.

MSF calls US veto of Gaza ceasefire resolution "a vote against humanity"

From page 1 ▶ "As bombs continue to rain down on Palestinian civilians and cause widespread destruction, the US has once again used its power to block an attempt by the UN Security Council to demand a ceasefire in Gaza. By vetoing this resolution, the US stands alone in casting its vote against humanity."

The US veto stands in sharp contrast to the values it professes to uphold. By continuing to provide diplomatic cover for the ongoing atrocities in Gaza, the US is signaling that international humanitarian law can be applied selectively—and that the lives of some people matter less than the lives of others.

Israel has continued to indiscriminately attack civilians and civilian structures, impose a siege that amounts to collective punishment for the entire population of Gaza, force mass displacement, and deny access to vital medical care and humanitarian assistance. The US continues to provide political and financial support to Israel as it prosecutes its military operations regardless of the terrible toll on civilians. For humanitarians to be able to respond to the overwhelming needs, we need a ceasefire now.

The US veto makes it complicit in the carnage in Gaza."

Art diplomacy in Tehran: 35 nations illuminate 'Humanity, Solidarity and One Planet'



From Page 1 ▶ "I wish to thank the participating Embassies, as well as all our national partners. This gratitude is especially towards our colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and the Niavaran Cultural and Historic Complex, which hosted the exhibition," Priesner said.

According to organizers, visitors to the exhibition have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the artistic offerings of numerous participating countries, including Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Côte D'Ivoire, Croatia, Finland, Holy See (Vatican), Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

This exhibition stands as a testament to the United Nations' commitment to promoting cul-

tural diplomacy and fostering mutual respect and appreciation among diverse cultures and nations worldwide.

Each nation's display promises a unique blend of cultural heritage, artistic mastery, and creativity, presenting a mosaic of traditions, perspectives, and narratives that celebrate the global community's shared humanity.

The Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex serves as an ideal backdrop for this international showcase, fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding while underscoring the significance of solidarity and collaboration in today's interconnected world. Covering an area of about eleven hectares, the complex is composed of several landmark buildings, museums, and monuments constructed in the 19th and 20th centuries during the Pahlavi and late Qajar eras.

The exhibition as part of the collective effort to mark UN Day 2023 is set to captivate visitors until November 17.

Ancient DNA analysis reveals how the rise and fall of the Roman Empire shifted populations in the Balkans

Despite the Roman Empire's extensive military and cultural influence on the nearby Balkan peninsula, a DNA analysis of individuals who lived in the region between 1 and 1000 CE found no genetic evidence of Iron Age Italian ancestry. Instead, a study published December 7 in the journal *Cell* revealed successive waves of migrations from Western Anatolia, central and northern Europe, and the Pontic-Kazakh Steppe during the Empire's reign.

From the 7th century CE onwards (coincident with the fall of the Western Roman Empire), large numbers of people emigrated from Eastern Europe, likely related to the arrival of Slavic-speaking populations, which resulted in present-day Balkan residents having 30%–60% Slavic ancestry seen in present-day Balkan peoples.

"We found this genetic signal of Slavic migration all across the Balkans," says senior author and paleogenomicist Carles Lalueza-Fox of the Institute of Evolutionary Biology (IBE:CSIC-Universitat Pompeu Fabra) and Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona. "This could have important social and political implications given that the Balkans has had a long history of conflict associated with their perceived identities."

Most ancient DNA studies focus on pre-history—before the written record—but ancient DNA methods can also provide insight into more recent historical periods, especially when used in combination with historical and archeological information.

"Ancient DNA can give a lot of insight into historical periods, especially for regions where historical sources are scarce or when we don't know whether sources are biased or not," says first author and population geneticist Iñigo Olalde of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). "For example, most historical sources from the Balkans are written from the side of the Romans because the Slavic people didn't write at that time."

Previous studies have investigated the ancestry of people who lived in Italy and England during and after the fall of the Roman Empire, but little is known about demography and ancestry of the Balkans during this time. "This region was one of the distant frontiers of the Roman Empire, which makes it interesting to study because this is clearly a place where you would expect people to come in contact with people from outside the Empire, so you can

test things such as globalization," says Olalde.

To explore the population history of the Balkans and examine the influence of the rise and fall of the Roman empire, the researchers extracted DNA from 136 ancient individuals excavated from 20 different sites across the Balkans—defined as the region bounded by the Adriatic, Central Mediterranean, and Aegean Seas and the Middle and Lower Danube and Sava Rivers. These sites included large Roman cities, military fortresses, and small rural towns. The team focused on three periods: during the expansion and height of the Roman empire (1–250 CE), during the late Imperial period (circa 250–550 CE), and following the Western Empire's collapse (550–1000 CE).

To provide cultural and historical context for the genetic data, the team collaborated with local archeologists and historians. For each grave, they documented burial type, as well as any objects buried alongside the individuals, such as coins, jewelry, pottery, tools, and weapons. The researchers also used radiocarbon dating to verify the age of 38 of the ancient individuals, which generated isotopic data that provide a window into those individuals' diets.

The researchers were surprised to find no evidence of Italian Iron Age ancestry in the Balkan populations during the height of the Roman Empire. Instead, they showed that there was an influx of people from Western Anatolia, another part of the Roman Empire, during that period. They also found evidence of individual migrations into the Balkans from both within and outside the Roman Empire. Notably, a 16-year-old male who was excavated from a necropolis in a large Roman city was of 100% East African ancestry. The individual was buried with an oil lamp depicting Jupiter-related eagle iconography, but isotopic analysis of his teeth indicated that he had consumed marine protein sources during his childhood and therefore had likely grown up in a distant location.

"This was the only full Eastern African individual that we analyzed, and he was also a clear outlier with respect to the diet compared to the rest of the individuals buried in the same necropolis, which tells us that this individual clearly grew up outside the borders of the Roman Empire," says Lalueza-Fox.

(Source: EurekaAlert)

'Chogha Mish, the 9,000-year-old city, shouldn't remain buried'

Tourism Desk TEHRAN – The ancient city of Chogha Mish, nestled within the folds of Dezful's historical treasures, stands as a testament to Iran's rich cultural heritage, dating back approximately 9,000 years.

However, concerns have arisen over the neglect and potential oblivion of this invaluable historical site buried beneath the earth's surface.

Dezful's tourism chief, Hamidreza Khadem, emphasized the urgency of preserving Chogha Mish's exceptional historical significance during a commemoration ceremony held last week, marking the Day of Chogha Mish at Dezful's historical monument.

"The 9,000-year-old historical legacy in Dezful remains largely unrecognized and underappreciated," Khadem said.

Highlighting the unparalleled historical treasures within the region, Khadem said: "Dezful harbors numerous invaluable historical artifacts, some of which are unparalleled worldwide. Among the 80 historical mounds in Dezful, only five have received national recognition."

He stressed that reducing Chogha Mish to a mere annual celebration fails to honor its depth and importance. Instead, he advocated initiating excavations and comprehensive exploration to unveil and showcase this magnificent civilization buried beneath the ground.

"There exist 15 historical layers within Chogha Mish, attesting to the richness of its historical tapestry," Khadem emphasized, urging a more proactive approach

Chogha Mish, dating back to approximately 6800 BC, represents a significant Chalcolithic settlement nestled in the southwestern Khuzestan province situated on the eastern Susiana Plain.



toward uncovering and promoting this wealth of historical wealth.

Another speaker at the event, Mohammad Azarkish, who presides over the Dezpart association, echoed similar sentiments during the ceremony, expressing regret over the neglect of Dezful's historical capacities.

"Dezful boasts an abundance of historical heritage," he said while demanding the establishment of an archaeology museum.

"It's a request from heritage enthusiasts and the cultural authorities who are pursuing the creation of such a museum," Azarkish stressed.

Criticizing the lack of adequate promotion of Dezful's historical heritage, Azarkish lamented, "Despite the existence of historical artifacts spanning thousands of years, many of these remain unknown within the country due to negligence in their promotion."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he drew attention to a decade-long study at the University of Chicago

focusing on Chogha Mish, noting the widespread unawareness of this historical treasure within Dezful.

"Remarkable discoveries from Chogha Mish's historical mound include the world's oldest navigational document, the oldest musical script," Azarkish highlighted, underscoring the vast richness inherent in this invaluable historical site.

Chogha Mish, dating back to approximately 6800 BC, represents a significant Chalcolithic settlement nestled in the southwestern Khuzestan province situated on the eastern Susiana Plain. Positioned just east of the Dez River and approximately 25 kilometers to the east of the ancient Susa, it shares proximity with the smaller site of Chogha Bonut, located about six kilometers to the west.

Historical records indicate its occupation commenced around 6800 BC and persisted from the Neolithic era through the Proto-Literate period (Uruk period), encompassing periods from the Archaic era (7th millennium BC) to the Proto-Elamite period (approximately 3100 BC to 2700 BC).

Following the decline of Chogha Mish around 4400 BC, Susa, situated on the western Susiana Plain, emerged as the primary

cultural force in the region.

Archaeologically, the site comprises a cone-shaped mound with a substantial terrace to the south, covering an area of about 200 by 150 meters and rising approximately 27 meters above the plain. The terraced area spans around 400 meters by 300 meters and features four small peaks.

Excavations were conducted between 1961 and 1978, totaling 11 seasons, by the Oriental Institute and later involving the University of California at Los Angeles. This was under the direction of Pinhas Delougaz and Helene Kantor. The uppermost levels revealed Elamite structures, including a fort, dating back to the early 2nd millennium BC (commonly known as the Sakkalmah Dynasty period). Beneath this layer, significant remnants from the Protoliterate period were unearthed.

Discoveries included uniformly perforated stone disks, measuring 4 to 5 centimeters in diameter, presumed to be counters. Additionally, numerous clay cylinder seal impressions from the 4th millennium BC were uncovered.

Seals depicted images possibly representing spinning, weaving, and churning. Approximately a quarter of a million beveled rim bowl fragments were discovered, often in conjunction with kilns, signifying the Uruk period culture. An exceptional find was a high-quality Elamite cup crafted from soft bituminous stone. It was recovered from a burial jar situated in an ancient Protoliterate drain, featuring a handle carved in the likeness of a goat.

These excavations encompass the entire chronological spectrum from the Neolithic era to the Proto-Literate period, offering invaluable insights into cultural advancements in the oil-rich Iranian province.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili invited to Tehran tourism fair

TEHRAN – Iran's tourism ministry has invited Zurab Pololikashvili, the secretary-general of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), to attend Tehran's international tourism fair scheduled for February 2024.

Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi, who presides over the ministry's domestic tourism development, announced the presence of Pololikashvili at the 17th Tehran International Tourism & Related Industries Exhibition, Mehr reported.

Pololikashvili is expected to specifically turn the spotlight on the need for more and better-targeted investments aimed to promote and underpin economic growth and productivity.

UNWTO has identified investments as one of the key priorities for tourism's recovery and future growth and development.

The approach is in line with 2023 World

Tourism Day's motto "Tourism & Green Investment", which calls on the international community, governments, multilateral financial institutions, development partners, and private sector investors to unite around a new tourism investment strategy.

From travel agencies and tour operators to hotels and airlines, the event, according to organizers, will be offering networking sessions, seminars, workshops, and panel discussions to provide insights into the country's current tourism landscape.

"The annual exhibit aims to promote Iran as a tourism destination, introduce Iran's hotels, and examine the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism industry, encouraging tourism industry activists and relevant organizations to enter and expand activities in the tourism field."

Tourism categories being represented at the show include hotels; tourism villages; travel agencies; investment, banks, and insurance companies; associations; free trade zones; unique venues such as museums; and cultural heritage organizations. Also included are eco and nature, health, sport, and pilgrimage tourism segments.

According to available data, foreign arrivals to Iran during the first seven months of the current Iranian year were up 40% compared to the same period last year, the deputy tourism minister said.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 27 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Tehran meeting calls for updates on Iran-Russia visa waiver agreement



TEHRAN – On Saturday, Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts hosted a meeting focused on resolving the implementation challenges of the visa waiver agreement dedicated to tourist groups from Iran and Russia.

The participants called for the necessity of updating the visa waiver program while presenting

their suggestions for reducing existing challenges.

The specialized session saw the participation of representatives from relevant entities, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Passport Police, tourism associations, the Automobile and Touring Association, and some travel offices active in the Rus-

sian market.

During this meeting, Moslem Shojai, who presides over the ministry's foreign tourism marketing and development office, stated: "Improving the implementation process of the group visa waiver between the two countries will enhance tourists' visiting experiences and will be a significant factor in continuing this practice with other countries as well."

Referring to the nearing deadline for the completion of the joint action plan document between the two countries, Shojai added: "Updating the implementation process of the mentioned agreement to minimize its existing challenges and ambiguities is on the agenda of this office."

Shojai emphasized the need for increased necessary cooperation among relevant entities associated with this agreement, stating: "In the new update, challenges such as tourists' insurance on both sides and the digitization of the relevant form exchange process will be under review."

Furthermore, representatives from various entities and experienced tourism agencies involved in organizing tours based on the visa waiver cancellation process discussed and evaluated different topics.

On August 1, Tehran and Moscow officially implemented the long-awaited visa-free tourist exchanges that benefit groups of five to 50 travelers for up to 15 days at a time.

Tehran, Muscat discuss ways to enhance sci-tech ties

TEHRAN – Mohammad-Sadeq Khayatian, the head of Iran National Innovation Fund, and Abdul Aziz Mohammed Al Hinai, the deputy chairman at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones of Oman, in a meeting in Tehran on Wednesday stressed the need for the development of scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries.

"In several visits to Iran, I have become familiar with Iranian products, companies, and industries closely," Al Hinai said, highlighting the significance of research and development.

"Oman can be a gateway for Iranian companies to access the international market," he added, Mehr news agency reported.

He also suggested creating a network of universities in the Islamic world to lead joint technological working groups.

Khayatian, for his part, said that about 9,300 knowledge-based companies and almost the same number of start-ups are operating in 45 science and technology parks in the country which shows Iran's high capacity in the field of science and technology.

"Despite the cruel sanctions over the past few decades, the export of knowledge-based products has roughly reached one billion dollars per year," he added.



Iran, Oman share experience in ICT

On October 28, a discussion session was held between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of information and communication technology.

The Omani side was headed by Saeed bin Hamoud al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, while the Iranian side was represented by Issa Zarepour, Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Times of Oman reported.

During the session, bilateral relations were reviewed, and discussions were held on strengthening the existing cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic

Republic of Iran in the fields of information and communication technology, in a way that serves their common interests and brings more benefits to the two friendly peoples.

The Iranian official also met with the Omani Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation Rahma bint Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi and the head of the country's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed joint academic and research collaborations and made suggestions about the axes of these collaborations.

Referring to the activities of Iran's Communications and Information Technology Research Institute, Zarepour introduced the capacities

of this institute and other Iranian technology parks and called for joint cooperation of Oman's Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation with Iranian institutions.

The Omani minister welcomed this proposal and it was agreed that by forming a working group, the existing axes for cooperation would be examined and explored in expert meetings.

Iran ready to share technological expertise

In May, the deputy science minister said Iran is ready to share its technological expertise with other Islamic countries.

Science and technology should be applied in order to create world peace and human justice, and Muslim countries can bring peace and progress not only to the Muslim nations but also to human beings with unity and empathy, Vahid Haddadi-Asl said, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks at the 1st Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Dialogue Platform (OIC-15) which was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on May 25-26.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers it its duty to support science and technology diplomacy between Islamic countries, through conducting joint scientific projects in areas needed by Islamic countries, he highlighted.

Over 13,000 Afghan nationals deported from Khorasan Razavi border

TEHRAN – A total of 13,204 illegal Afghan nationals have been sent back to their homeland through borders in Khorasan Razavi province.

"In line with the policy to deal with illegal nationals in the country, they were identified over the past week," IRNA quoted Majid Shoja, the commander of Khorasan Razavi province's border police, as saying.

"The illegal nationals were returned via Dogharon and Taybad borders and handed over to the representative of Afghanistan," Shoja said.

He went on to say that Afghan nationals who intend to enter or have entered the country without meeting the legal requirement for entry and permission will be arrested and expelled from the country.

"Afghan refugees who intend to enter the country must enter through official and legal borders," Shoja highlighted.

No permission to stay

Unauthorized foreigners have no permission to stay in the country and receive services, IRIB quoted Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi as saying.

Paying a visit to a center for organizing immigrants in the city of Karaj, he added illegal foreign nationals will be identified and sent to specific camps and then returned to their homeland.

"Illegal foreign immigrants are treated with dignity even though they have entered Iran's borders illegally," Vahidi added.

Deported illegal Afghan nationals

"Since July 23, around 450,000 undocumented foreign nationals have been sent back to their own country," ISNA quoted Javad Khani, an offi-

cial with the National Migration Organization, as saying on November 19.

"The deported migrants were those who had illegally entered the country," he added.

The provinces that host the majority of foreigners are Tehran, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khorasan Razavi, Qom, Kerman, Yazd, Fars, and Alborz, respectively, as 92 percent of the total national foreigners are residing in these provinces, he added.

Khani went on to say, "So far, one million smart identity cards have been issued to foreigners."

He referred to blocking the borders as one of the basic measures to deal with the entry of illegal migrants, adding that most of the migrants are from Afghanistan.

On October 7, around 328,000 Afghan migrants who had illegally entered Iran during the first half of the Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), were sent back through the borders of the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, IRNA reported.

Shoja said that 488,000 Afghans officially and legally entered the country within the same period. On August 1, more than 7,500 illegal Afghan migrants were deported to their home country.

No more capacity for immigrants

In November, the head of Iran's immigration organization said, "Iran has no longer the capacity to accept new immigrants, and if the

international community does not bear the responsibility for supporting refugees in Iran, most of them will migrate to European countries.

Abdollah Mobini made the remarks at the 114th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva, held from November 27-29, IRNA reported.

Highlighting the disproportionate burden of hosting refugees by the international community, Mobini said, "Iran has far exceeded its share in hosting and supporting refugees; the international community should consider the fair distribution of this international responsibility."

Migration is driven by several factors, including political, and military interventions and climate change in the neighboring countries of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the shadow of the military interventions of extra-regional countries in Afghanistan and Iraq; Iran has hosted several million refugees and displaced persons for more than four decades, he added.

Mobini went on to say, "Security and economic problems and constraints such as banning male and female students from studying have been among the reasons for the displacement of Afghan nationals and their migration to neighboring countries."

Unauthorized immigrants have no permission to stay in the country and receive services.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran to build desalination plants along Persian Gulf, Sea of Oman

The Department of Environment (DOE) is preparing a plan to deploy desalination plants on the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in order to supply drinking water to the coastal provinces.

Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy chief of the marine environment of the DOE, announced that the project, which is to be carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy, will supply water for 17 drought-ridden provinces.

The country's coastline stretches to about 5,800 kilometers, which includes the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in the south.

برنامه ایران برای تامین آب شرب از طریق خلیج فارس و دریای عمان

سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ایران در حال مطالعه طرحی برای استقرار آب شیرین کن‌ها در سواحل خلیج فارس و دریای عمان به منظور تامین بخشی از آب شرب استان‌های ساحلی است.

به گزارش ایرنا، احمد رضا لاهیجان زاده معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اعلام کرد این طرح که قرار است با همکاری وزارت نیرو انجام شود شامل ۱۷ استان خشک و بی آب می‌شود. طول سواحل کشور حدود پنج هزار و ۸۰۰ کیلومتر است که شامل دریای خزر در شمال و خلیج فارس و دریای عمان در جنوب می‌شود.

Refugees, precious power to rebuild Afghanistan

By Mohammad-Reza Manafi

TEHRAN – For about half a century, Pakistan and Iran, two friendly neighbors of Afghanistan, in spite of suffering from their own economic predicaments, have been hosting and serving millions of Afghan refugees.

Since the former Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, many Afghan people sought refuge in other countries to escape from war and poverty, and Iran and Pakistan as friendly neighbors opened the doors to over 90 percent of those Afghans who had no choice but to leave their hometown while many other countries including the western nations were quite reluctant to accept the refugees.

Pakistan with a huge population of over 220 million is suffering from its own economic, security, joblessness, etc., and the Islamic Republic of Iran immediately after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, was faced with eight years of imposed war and then heavy economic sanctions which caused huge economic crisis to the country.

Despite all their problems and economic shortages, Pakistan and Iran did their best for decades to serve as safe and friendly hosts to millions of their Afghan sisters and brothers and offered a good amount of humanitarian aid and services including accommodation, jobs, free education, social services, health services, etc.

Even after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the military occupation of the war-torn country, millions of Afghan refugees poured into Iran and Pakistan as war refugees.

International authorities and institutions including the UNHCR, officials of former Afghan governments, and also officials of the current Taliban of Afghanistan have clearly acknowledged the precious hospitality of Iran and Pakistan for over ten million Afghan refugees for over half a century.

In a situation where the US and Western countries, as the invaders, occupiers, and perpetrators



of the pains and sufferings of Afghan people, have closed their doors to Afghan refugees for years, Pakistan and Iran have been doing their best for tens of years to express sympathy with their Afghan sisters and brothers and minimize their pains of the US-led NATO triggered war.

More than two years since Afghanistan got rid of the American and NATO occupiers, the country has a long way ahead to heal the wounds left by years of war and occupation. But according to the clear acknowledgment of Afghan Taliban officials, Afghanistan has improved in terms of security and economy and it's time for all Afghans to return to their homeland and play their own role in rebuilding the country.

Thanks to the host countries for providing equal educational and training opportunities in a series of different fields including different techniques and industries, agriculture, sports, arts, etc. to Afghan refugees, now there are many educated, talented, and experienced ones among the refugees who can play precious roles in rebuilding a new Afghanistan; an opportunity that Afghans have been dreaming for years, and now it is time that their dream can come true.

As well, Iran and Pakistan as the friendly neighbors of Afghanistan are always there to cooperate with and support the brotherly nation of Afghanistan on the holy task of building a prosperous Afghanistan.

The author is a journalist, expert on Pakistan and Afghanistan

Iran, Kyrgyzstan to boost anti-narcotics co-op

TEHRAN – A bilateral meeting has been held between Iran and Kyrgyzstan to strengthen collaboration in combating drug trafficking, Mohammad Zarei, an official with the Iranian anti-narcotics headquarters, said.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the Fifty-Sixth Session of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, which was held on November 21-24 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The Iranian delegation announced readiness to share their experiences in the fight against drug trafficking with Kyrgyzstan.

Regional and international cooperation to reduce the cultivation and production of narcotics and psychoactive drugs; the promotion of alternative development; conducting financial investigations on drug trafficking cases; explaining the role of digital currencies in trafficking and the resulting money laundering; dealing with illegal production of various precursor chemicals in the production of narcotics

and psychotropic substances as well as the relation between narcotics and the environment were among the agendas of this meeting.

During the meeting, Mohammad Zarei stated that the production of narcotics and poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has long been a source of income and livelihood for farmers; so Afghans must be encouraged to move away from illicit crop cultivation and the sale of poppy and support the transition to licit crop cultivation for a sustainable livelihood.

On the other hand, the reduction of traditional narcotics cultivation may be accompanied by a change to industrial narcotics since in the last 9 months, two large shipments of industrial drugs from Afghanistan have been discovered.

Also, the representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Kyrgyzstan announced that following the ban announced by the Taliban, poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has decreased by 95 percent in 2023.



Saffron harvest in Khuzestan

A woman is picking saffron flowers at a vast farm in Dezpart County, southwestern Khuzestan Province, on December 6.

Some 70 kilograms of saffron is estimated to be harvested this year.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be not like the hypocrite who, when he talks, tells lies; when he gives a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he proves dishonest.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:57 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:34 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:03 (tomorrow)

Iranian documentarian Mehrdad Oskui to hold workshop at Cinéma Vérité



Iranian filmmaker Mehrdad Oskui in an undated photo.

TEHRAN- Mehrdad Oskui, the Iranian director of the acclaimed documentary "Sunless Shadows", will be holding a workshop at the 17th edition of Iran International Documentary Film Festival Cinéma Vérité, which will be held in Tehran from December 18 to 23.

In the workshop titled "Remote Documentary Filmmaking," Oskui will impart his valuable experiences in the art of filmmaking to the attendees, ILNA reported on Saturday.

Several workshops are planned to be held during this edition of the festival, focusing on documentary, experimental, and animation

cinema with the participation of Iranian and international experts, covering various topics, the report added. Oskui is the director of a number of award-winning documentaries including "My Mother's Home, Lagoon", "Nose, Iranian Style", "Sunless Shadows", "Starless Dreams" and "The Other Side of Burkha".

He has won several awards for his films at Iranian and international festivals.

The 17th Cinéma Vérité will be organized by the Documentary & Experimental Film Center (DEFC). It aims to represent the history and culture of Iranian Islamic society and present a real picture of what human is facing today in his/her individual and social life through documentary films.

With this objective, the special focus of this edition of the festival is on two national and international challenges: the water crisis and population issues. A total of 2,454 documentaries from around the world have been submitted to the event including 615 works are from Iran and 1,839 foreign documentaries from Turkey, China, the U.K., Russia, Poland, Spain, Egypt, Argentina, Indonesia, and Germany among others.

Olivia Colman signs letter calling Israel's actions 'cruel beyond words'

Oscar-winning actress Olivia Colman has signed a letter alongside more than 1,000 other actors and artists that cites a warning about a potential Israeli "genocide" against the Palestinians and describes Israel's retaliation against Hamas as "cruel beyond words".

The letter, which was also signed by Olivier Award winners Harriet Walter and Juliet Stevenson, Bafta-winning actress Aimee Lou Wood, The Crown actor Amir El-Masry and Bridgerton star Nicola Coughlan, accuses cultural institutions across Western countries of "repressing, silencing and stigmatizing Palestinian voices and perspectives", the Jewish Chronicles reported on Friday.

The statement says its signatories "refuse to pit one community against the other, and stand

firmly against all forms of racism including Islamophobia and antisemitism".

The letter says: "The scale of violence unfolding in Gaza demands our collective attention and action. Members of Israel's far-right government are openly calling for ethnic cleansing."

"The use of starvation as a weapon of war, along with denial of water and electricity, is cruel beyond words." "The wholesale destruction of civilian infrastructure, the bombing of hospitals, schools, churches and mosques, the killing of 14,500 people in a matter of weeks, amount to a policy of collective punishment against the Palestinian people." "The United Nations and hundreds of legal scholars have called on the international community to prevent genocide."

Cartoon of Day



Gaza the massgrave

Cartoonist: Hassan Bleibel from Lebanon

Iran's "Suitcase" wins award at Red Sea film festival

From Page 1 ▶ "In Flames" by Zarrar Kahn from Pakistan received the Golden Yusr for Best Feature Film, while "Somewhere In Between", a co-production between Lebanon and France by Dahlia Nemlich won the award for the best short film.

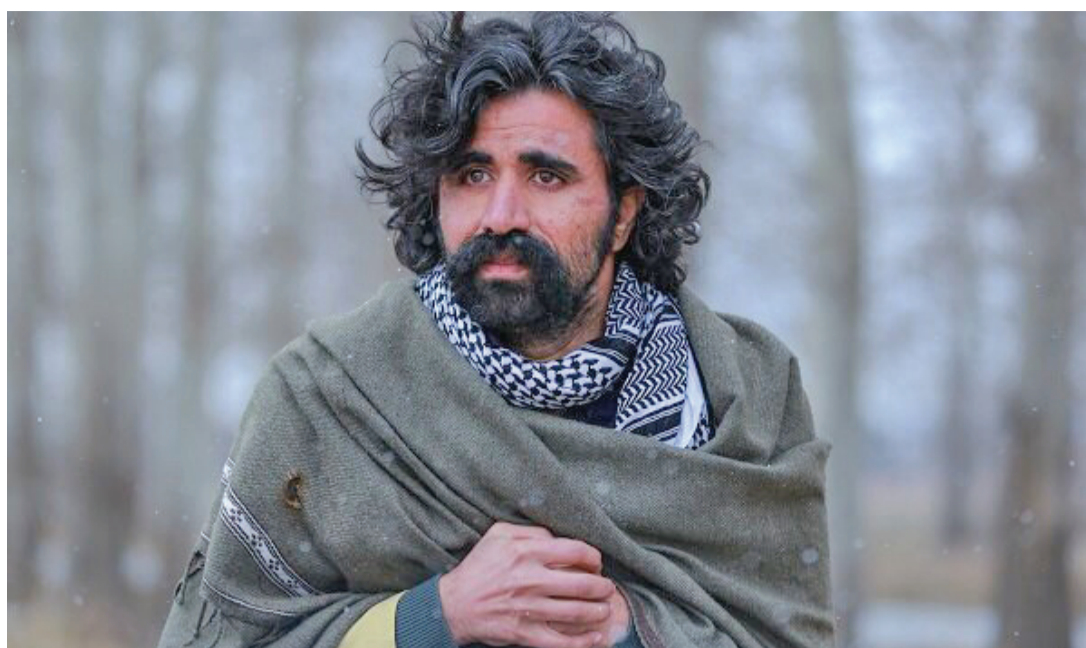
"The Teacher" by British-Palestinian filmmaker Farah Nabulsi received the Jury Prize and Shokir Kholikov from Uzbekistan was named best director for his movie "Sunday."

Additionally, six more Iranian productions including three feature films, one short film, an animation and a series participated in this edition of the festival.

"Roxana" written and directed by Parviz Shahbazi represented Iran in the main competition section, while "Titanic, Suitable Version for Iranian Families" by Farnoosh Samadi competed in the short film section.

"The Last Snow" by Amirhossein Asgari was screened at the Festival Favorites section and the animated movie "3 Little Kungpoo Goats" by Kianoush and Farzad Dalvand and feature film "Captain" by Mohammad Hamzei were the Iranian works in the Families and Children section of the Red Sea Festival.

The series "Actor" written and



A scene from Iranian short film "Suitcase" by Ako Zand-Karimi and Saman Hosseinpur

directed by Nima Javidi was also present in the Series section of the event.

Launched in 2019, the Red Sea International Film Festival mainly focuses on new storytelling trends, as well as emerging talents from Saudi Arabia, the Arab world, the West Asia, and the rest of the Global South.

The Red Sea International Film Festival is a unique and powerful platform for

celebrating film, connecting cultures, and expanding horizons while welcoming everyone's stories from all walks of life. It is a comprehensive cinematic platform that promotes diversity in all facets of narrative and filmmaking, elevating it beyond just a film screening event.

These ideas of diversity, connection, and cultural exchange were manifested in this year's theme; "Your Story, Your Festival". A bold, artistic,

progressive, and creative ten-day festival for filmmakers, storytellers, film lovers, enthusiasts, distributors, and audiences from around the globe.

This year, the visual concept across all Red Sea International Film Festival communications was inspired by the camera movement notes that directors add to a storyboard—those red scribbles that end up making the shots, emphasizing the hero of the story, "You."

IAF cinemathèque to screen "The Conversation"



A scene from "The Conversation" by American filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola

TEHRAN- The Cinemathèque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) will screen American filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola's movie "The Conversation" on Monday.

The screening will be followed by a review session by Iranian film expert Saeid Nouri.

"The Conversation" is a psychological thriller written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola in 1974. It follows the character of Harry Caul, a surveillance expert and loner who becomes increasingly paranoid about a conversation he has recorded for a mysterious client.

The plot revolves around Caul, who is hired to record a seemingly innocent conversation between a young couple in San Francisco's Union Square. As Caul starts analyzing the tape, he becomes convinced that the couple is in danger and that his recording may be used for malicious purposes. Haunted by guilt from a past assignment where his work led to tragedy,

Caul becomes obsessed with uncovering the truth.

Throughout the film, Caul's paranoia intensifies as he discovers that the conversation might involve a high-level conspiracy. His actions attract the attention of various individuals, including a mysterious aide and a rival surveillance expert, all of whom seem to be monitoring him. Caul becomes distrustful of everyone and struggles to make sense of the blurred line between reality and imagination.

"The Conversation" is renowned for its portrayal of surveillance culture and the ethical implications of privacy invasion. Coppola skillfully delves into Caul's inner turmoil and isolation, highlighting his struggle to maintain professional detachment while confronting his own conscience. The film examines themes of guilt, identity, and the impact of technology on human behavior.

As the story unfolds, Caul realizes that he cannot escape the consequences of his work, and the film builds towards a climax that questions the limits of personal privacy and societal control. "The Conversation" serves as a chilling exploration of the effects of paranoia and the complexities of human morality in a world filled with surveillance and secrecy.

"The Conversation" received critical acclaim upon its release and went on to win several prestigious awards.

The film was nominated for the prestigious

Palme d'Or award at the 1974 Cannes Film Festival, where it received widespread acclaim for its originality, direction, and thought-provoking themes. It also won the BAFTA award for Best Film of the Year in 1976, recognizing the film's exceptional storytelling, cinematography, and direction.

Francis Ford Coppola received the Writers Guild of America Award for Best Original Screenplay in 1975 for his masterful script, which skillfully delved into the intricacies of surveillance culture and ethical dilemmas.

The film won the Edgar Award for Best Motion Picture in 1975, presented by the Mystery Writers of America. This recognizes the film's exceptional achievement in the mystery and suspense genre.

"The Conversation" was named Best Picture of the Year by the National Society of Film Critics in 1975. This prestigious honor further solidifies the film's impact on both critics and audiences alike.

In addition to these major awards, "The Conversation" was also nominated for three Academy Awards in 1975, including Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Sound. Though it did not win any Oscars, the nominations themselves highlight the film's acclaim and recognition in the industry.

"The Conversation" is widely regarded as a cinematic masterpiece, and its critical success and award wins affirm its enduring impact on both the thriller and psychological genres.

Protesters call for Gaza ceasefire at Art Basel Miami Beach

As fair visitors flowed in and out of the Miami Beach Convention Center on the third day of Art Basel, Friday, December 8, artists and activists from multiple advocacy groups rallied outside the entrance to demand a permanent ceasefire in Palestine.

Calling for an end to Miami-Dade County's investments in Israeli bonds to the tune of \$76 million, demonstrators lined up along Convention Center Drive holding Palestinian flags and placards that read "Divest From Death" and "Call It What It Is: Genocide," Hyperallergic reported on Saturday.

Under the collective name South Florida Coalition for Palestine, the ad hoc group of over 100 demonstrators includes both cultural workers and members of the nationwide anti-Zionist group Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP).

"Netanyahu, what do you say? How many kids did you kill today?" chanted protesters as a few cars in the adjacent parking lot honked. Wendy Blazier, a local

art historian and curator, told Hyperallergic amid tears that she was moved to see young people "protesting against violence."

At least 16 police officers surrounded the protesters as they unfurled and held up a massive green banner with the words "Let Palestine Live" on the sidewalk facing the building parking lot. Around 4:15pm, an hour into the action, a demonstrator was arrested after an apparent scuffle with an officer who blocked him from crossing into the protest area. Rachel Komich, a writer present at the action who witnessed the incident, told Hyperallergic that the officer "grabbed him by the shoulders and pushed him against the wall."

The Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD) told Hyperallergic that the activist was arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and resisting without violence. A second protester was arrested on charges of resisting without violence, the spokesperson for

MBPD said.

Nikki Morse, a filmmaking teacher from West Palm Beach and member of the South Florida chapter of SVP, told Hyperallergic that she was at the protest to affirm the point that "never again is now."

"As an observant Jew, I'm horrified to see what's being done in Palestine, the genocide that's taking place, supposedly in our name," Morse said. "I'm here to say: This is not in our name, this is not for Jewish safety."

The demonstration comes as the death toll continues to rise in Gaza and the Occupied Territories, with more than 17,000 Palestinians killed by the Israeli military since October 7 as the United States continues to provide weapons to the regime. International entities including the United Nations have called for urgent action to stop the attacks in order "to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people."

Miami-Dade County, which

includes Miami Beach, had invested \$51 million in Israeli bonds prior to October 7. On October 17, in the wake of Hamas's attack, county Mayor Daniella Levine Cava announced an additional \$25 million investment. According to the Guardian, US states have purchased \$300 million in Israeli bonds in recent weeks; a majority of the investments were made by Republican states.

Marty Rajandram, a Miami resident who was at the protest today, said that as a senior citizen she could not afford to visit Art Basel — where even a discounted ticket for people over 62 costs \$58 — and that she had come to the Convention Center specifically for the action. She wore a bright yellow sign bearing the number of Palestinian children killed in the last two months: nearly 7,000.

"What Israel is doing is inhumane. The killing of children everyday is heartbreaking. It has to end," Rajandram said.