

**Envoy Slams Int'l Community Over Failure on Afghan Burden**

NEW YORK (IRNA) – Iran's Ambassador to the UN Amir Saeid Iravani on Wednesday criticized the international community for its failure to support the Islamic Republic in bearing the burden of Afghan refugees as a result of years of U.S.-led occupation of the country.

Iravani said the mass exodus of Afghans following the 2021 U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has put a heavy burden on Tehran, where more than six million Afghans are now living in Iran, imposing an annual cost of over \$10 billion.

# Kayhan International

**Sunni Politician Named Governor of Iranian Kurdistan Province**

TEHRAN — Arash Zerehtan, a Sunni politician, has been appointed as the new governor of Iran's western province of Kurdistan, according to the government spokesperson.

The 39-year-old politician of Iranian Kurdish ethnicity was an MP in the Iranian parliament between 2020 and 2024. Yadollah Rahmani has been appointed as the new governor general of Iran's southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad.

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**Viewpoint**

## Time to Weed Out the Zionist Cancer

**Pezeshkian: Israeli Cyberterrorism Source of Shame for West**



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## The Excellent-Ever Exemplar

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

*"In the Prophet of Allah, certainly there is for you an Excellent Exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah greatly." (Holy Qur'an 33:21)*

We are on the eve of one of the grandest day in the history of civilization. It is the 17<sup>th</sup> of Rabi al-Awwal the day the Almighty Creator of the universe decided to bring into the world His Last and Greatest Messenger – Prophet Muhammad (SAWA).

It would be repetitive to say that he was born in the monotheistic Bani Hashem Clan descended from Prophet Ishmael (AS), the firstborn of that great iconoclast, Prophet Abraham (AS)

A detailed account of the noble ancestors of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) is outside the scope of this brief newspaper column. However, I cite here a famous hadith, narrated by our Sunni brethren as well, and which quotes the Prophet himself as saying:

**"(The Archangel) Gabriel told me: I turned over the easts and the wests of the Earth but did not find anyone superior to Muhammad, then [again] I turned over the easts and the wests of the Earth but did not find any clan superior to the Bani Hashem."**

It is clear from the wordings of this hadith that the Messenger of Mercy was neither born among the polytheists of Arabia nor in any uncouth, ill-mannered, and unprincipled Arab household.

In other words, terrorism and violence were alien to the nature of the posthumous son of Abdullah; the orphan of the pious lady, Amena bint Wahb; the grandson of the Leader of the Quraish, Abdul-Muttaleb; and the nephew of the Shaikh al-Bat'ha (Elder of Mecca) Abu Taleb.

The reason I have cited these few names is to emphasize the pure and pristine nature of the Best of God's creation, who says of his creation: "I was constantly transferred from the loins of the pure ones to the wombs of the pure ones."

Now we understand the phrase in the "Ziyarah" or standard form of salutation to Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) that reads:

**"I bear witness that you were (descended) through pure loins and chaste wombs."**

Another point worth stressing here is that, the person prophesied by such great Messengers of God, as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others in different ages and various lands, was not just the greatest of them all, but was the offspring of a long line of "Awsiya" or Legatees, of Ishmael.

Entrusted by God with the universal message of Islam, his mission was to bring hearts closers by removing differences and doubts, and to help build the morally sound and peaceful society, where everybody including those that were not yet Muslim and still adhered to what they believed as the ways of the other prophets, should live in peaceful co-existence. His invitation to the People of the Book, and his debates and accords, for instance, with the Christians of Najran, indicate these facts.

Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) was thus the finest example of the perfect-ever person in every sense of the term. He was a paragon of virtue and the most Excellent Exemplar for the human race. The Almighty distinguished him from all others by instilling in his sublime personality such fine qualities as modesty, truthfulness, kindness, patience, loyalty, honesty, courage, bravery, generosity, magnanimity, wisdom and the like.

By studying his lofty characteristics and the amazingly simple life that he led with his household, companions, wives and others, we are able to learn valuable lessons from his conduct and accordingly mould our own lifestyle.

Our society could never be an Islamic one unless we sincerely tread the footsteps of Allah's final Messenger to all humanity, heed his sayings, and emulate his practice and behaviour (Sunnah & Seerah), as the faithful among his companions did.

This means to desist from whatever he has forbidden, and obey whatever he has bequeathed to us, especially his last and final public proclamation on God's commandment at the memorable gathering of Ghadeer-Khom regarding the prime position after him of his dear cousin, ward, son-in-law, and vicegerent Imam Ali (AS).

To be more precise, since Prophets are infallible and immune from sins and faults, so shall be their legatees – untainted by vices and idolatry.

As the one and only Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (AS) has said in record as saying: **"By Allah, neither my father Abu Taleb ever worshipped idols, nor my grandfather Abdul-Muttalib, nor his father Hashem, nor his father Abd Munaf. They prayed facing towards the Ka'ba and followed the religion of Abraham."**

No wonder, it is highly recommended to visit the shrine of Imam Ali (AS) in Najaf or to salute him from afar on the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), in view of the undeniable fact that since Prophets are the emissaries of God, their Vicegerents should also be Divinely-designated.

It is also crystal clear that the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) was foretold in the Evangel, the Torah, and the previously revealed heavenly scriptures, as well as in the religious texts of the Zoroastrians, the Hindus, and others – parts of this prophecy is still preserved in spite of the tampering by interlopers that these books have gone through.

For instance, in Deuteronomy (18:15) we read the prophecy to Moses:

**"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren (Ishmaelite Arabs), like unto thee, and will put My Words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My Words which he shall speak in My Name."**

In the Gospel of St. John (18:7-14) we find the following prophecy of Jesus:

**"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. How be it when he, the Spirit of truth (the Comforter), is come, he will guide into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."**

The Holy Qur'an confirms these prophecies. For instance, Ayah 6 of Surah Saff quotes the tidings of Prophet Jesus (AS) to his followers, some six centuries before the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA):

**"O Children of Israel! Indeed I am the Prophet of Allah to you, to confirm what is before me of the Torah, and to give the tidings of the Prophet to come after me, whose name is Ahmad."**

In short, since we are celebrating the birth of the Best of creation, we should scientifically probe the exemplary life of the Best of Creation; the legacy he left, for whom, and did those who claimed to be the political representative of the Prophet of peace, follow his advice and formula for unity, especially the following hadith:

**"I am leaving behind among you the Thaqalayn (Two Weighty Things); the Book of God (Qur'an) and my progeny the Ahl al-Bayt; hold fast to them and you will not go astray, for the two never separate with each other even when they return to me at the Fountain (of Kowthar on Resurrection Day)."**

## Second Wave of Israeli Cyberterrorism Hits Lebanon Hezbollah Vows 'Difficult Reckoning for Criminal Enemy'



Mourners attend the funeral for 9-year-old Fatima Abdullah in the Lebanese village of Nabi Sheet in Bekaa Valley on Wednesday after she was martyred in a pager explosion in her home.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Hezbollah on Wednesday carried out a series of missile and drone attacks against Israeli settlements in the northern parts of the occupied Palestinian territories as more handheld radios detonated across Lebanon, in the latest cyberterrorism by the Zionist regime.

According to Shahab news, sirens were heard in different parts of the northern occupied lands, especially in Kiryat Shmona.

The retaliatory operation came as walkie-talkies and solar equipment exploded in Beirut and multiple parts of Lebanon in an

apparent second wave of attacks targeting electronic devices a day after hundreds of pagers blew up, state media and Hezbollah officials said. At least nine people were martyred and more than 300 people wounded in the second wave, the Health Ministry said.

The cyberterrorist attacks, which were widely believed to be carried out by the occupying regime of Israel, have hiked fears that the simmering conflict could escalate into all-out war.

Speaking to Zionist troops on Wednesday, Israeli war minister Yoav Gallant said, "We are at the

start of a new phase in the war."

In Wednesday's attacks, several blasts were heard at a funeral in Beirut for three Hezbollah members and a child martyred by exploding pagers the day before. In the southern coastal city of Sidon, a car and a mobile phone shop were damaged after devices exploded inside of them. A girl was hurt in the south when a solar energy system blew up, the state news agency reported.

The new blasts hit a country still roiling with anger after Tuesday's terrorist bombings, which caused many civilian casualties. Tues-

day's bombings martyred at least 12 people, including two children, and wounded some 2,800 others.

The second wave also deepened concern over the indiscriminate casualties caused in the attacks, in which hundreds of blasts went off wherever the holder of the pager happened to be — in homes, cars, at grocery stores and in cafes, often with family or bystanders nearby.

While the pagers were claimed to be used by Hezbollah members, there was no guarantee who was holding the device at the time of the blast. Also, many of the casualties were not Hezbollah fighters, but civilians mainly serving Lebanon's mix of Shia, Sunni and Christina communities.

At least two health workers were among those martyred Tuesday. Doctors, nurses, paramedics, charity workers, teachers and office administrators had pagers.

The Associated Press said Israel briefed the U.S. on the exploding pagers after they went off.

The UN human rights chief, Volker Turk, called for an independent investigation into the mass explosions. "The fear and terror unleashed is profound," he said in a statement, urging world leaders to step up "in defense of the rights of all people to live in peace and security."

Russia said the blasts are intentionally designed to "provoke a major war in the Middle East".

(Continued on Page 7)

## International Outcry Mounts Over Indiscriminate Carnage Iran Condemns U.S. Mischaracterization of Israeli Terrorism

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The Iranian Embassy in London on Wednesday condemned the U.S. characterization of the mass explosion of pagers in Lebanon, saying the attack by the Israeli regime was an "act of terrorism" not an "incident".

"Assassinations and killings of civilians in Lebanon is not an incident, it's an act of terrorism," the embassy said in a post published on social media platform X, after U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller called it an "incident".

"If the Israeli regime assassinates political figures such as a country's ambassador, or children and civilians, it is termed an 'incident', but if the same is done by the other side, it is labeled terrorism, necessitating a legitimate defense," it said.

Meanwhile, condemnations poured in, with Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib saying the terrorist bombings could be an omen of a wider con-

flict in West Asia.

Lebanon's top diplomat warned of the gravity of the attack, "because it comes after Israeli threats to expand the focus of the war with Lebanon, which would plunge the region into a larger cycle of violence, and signal a wider war."

In Amman, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Israel is pushing the whole West Asia to the brink of regional conflict by maintaining a dangerous escalation on several fronts.

"We stand by Lebanon's security, sovereignty, stability, and the safety of its citizens. And we condemn any action that threatens Lebanon's security, sovereignty, independence and the safety of its citizens."

He made the remarks after an Islamic and Arab ministerial contact group met in Amman to lobby for a Gaza ceasefire.

"About a year after this war, the international community failed to play its role, the Security Coun-

cil failed to carry out its duties to maintain security and peace.

"Israel continues to challenge the entire world and endanger the interests of the entire world because it is pushing towards a regional war that violates the credibility of international law and shows that there are double standards in the application of international law and international humanitarian law as a whole. Therefore it harms the whole international system," Safadi said.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelaty said in a press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken that his country is in full solidarity with Lebanon.

Ending Israel's aggression on Gaza through a ceasefire is paramount to deescalating tensions in the region, the minister said.

Syria also strongly condemned the attacks, saying the atrocity reflected the regime's warlike and bloodthirsty nature.

In a statement, the Syrian foreign ministry denounced the

"terrorist aggression and the new bloody crime committed by the Israeli occupation against civilians in Lebanon."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed sadness in a phone call with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati. He said Israel's attempts to escalate the war on Gaza to the wider region is dangerous and that efforts to stop Israel will continue.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that the European Union wants to avert an all-out war because it would have "heavy consequences for the entire region and beyond."

"Even if the attacks seem to have been targeted, they had heavy, indiscriminate collateral damages among civilians, including children among the victims."

"I consider this situation extremely worrying. I can only condemn these attacks that endanger the security and stability of Lebanon, and increase the risk of escalation in the region," Borrell said.

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## In the Name of the Most High Viewpoint

### Time to Weed Out the Zionist Cancer

By: Kayhan International

*For the dastardly terrorists the pager/walkie-talkie blasts they triggered and indiscriminately killed dozens of Lebanese people and injured almost three thousand others for two consecutive days, it is a thrill to see human beings, including children subjected to blood-spattering sufferings.*

*For the martyrs it is passport to Paradise and attainment of the perpetual blessings promised by the Almighty Creator.*

*For the victims, especially those who survived, it is a great success for their spirit of resistance in the ongoing struggle against the combined devilry of the illegal Zionist entity and its equally terrorist godfather, the US.*

*For the government of Lebanon it is an awakener to drop hesitancy and choose the correct path for the sake of the nation since the Israelis and the Americans are sworn satanic enemies intending to wipe them out – irrespective of their differences as Muslims (both Shi'a and Sunni), Christians (of all denominations), and Druzes.*

*For the Muslim world celebrating the blessed birth anniversary of the Messenger of Mercy, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), it is a reminder that only unity will end the plight of Palestinians and lead to the liberation of the sacred al-Aqsa Mosque, while disunity makes them permanent slaves of US-Israel duo.*

*For the UN and the so-called humanitarian agencies, the two days of telecommunication and solar equipment blasts are deplorable but not terrorism since the perpetrator of these cowardly killings happens to be Israel.*

*For the manufacturers of the devices secretly fitted with tiny explosives, it is only part of the inhuman duty to facilitate a novel form of terrorism on the orders of the super terrorists.*

*If the Taiwanese company Gold Apollo is to be believed the pagers it supplied had been made by a Hungarian firm authorized its brand on the devices. It claims the firm BAC Consulting KFT based in the Hungarian capital Budapest.*

*For the legendary anti-terrorist movement, the Hezbollah, it is now time for real action in Occupied Palestine in coordination with the other members of the Axis of Resistance since the cancerous tumour called Israel ought to be weeded out forever.*

# Pezeshkian: Israeli Cyberterrorism Source of Shame for West



Ambulances arrive at a hospital in Beirut on Sept 17, 2024 amid a wave of pager explosions across Lebanon.

TEHRAN -- President Masoud Pezeshkian said Wednesday Israel's pager detonations in Lebanon are a source of shame for the occupying regime's Western backers, not least the United States.

The Western supporters of Israel, the Iranian president said, feel unbound by any principle in pursuing their inhumane goals.

Speaking in a cabinet meeting here, Pezeshkian said the pager explosions are another proof of the fall of humanity in the West and that they don't want a ceasefire in Gaza.

"Using tools usually made to enhance the welfare of humans as a means of terror and destruction against those whose views do not align with us is proof of the fall of humanity and of the dominance of savagery and criminality," he said.

"This event once again showed that although the Western states and Americans claim they want a ceasefire, they practically offer full support for blind crimes, killings and assassinations."

Pezeshkian said Muslim nations must join hands to stop Israeli massacres.

"The cure for this situation and break-

ing the chain of oppression and crimes of the Zionist regime and its supporters against the oppressed Palestinians and the Muslim world lies in the unity and cohesion of Muslims and Islamic countries," he said.

The explosions of thousands of pagers widely used by resistance factions and also public service workers have left at least a dozen dead and around 3,000 people injured.

The Lebanese government has blamed Israel and vowed to file a complaint with the UN over the attack. Hezbollah has promised the Zionist regime will receive "just punishment" for the attack.

A medical relief delegation from the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has arrived in Lebanon to assist the victims, IRCS head Pirhussein Koli-vand said.

The team includes 12 doctors, 12 nurses and paramedics, he said, adding a significant number of those wounded who need more serious medical and health services will be transferred to Tehran.

The decision to send a medical team

to Lebanon was made following an emergency meeting of the IRCS.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said the Islamic Republic is ready to provide any necessary assistance for the treatment of the injured or their transfer to Tehran for medical care.

Iranian Health Minister Muhammad Reza Zafarghandi also spoke with his Lebanese counterpart after the pager explosions, reiterating Iran's readiness to send medical aid to Lebanon.

On Tuesday, Iran's UN ambassador said the Zionist regime must be held accountable for the heinous crime.

Addressing an emergency meeting of the UN General Assembly, Amir Saeid Iravani called on the world body to accept Palestine as a full member and reconsider Israel's membership for its constant violations of international law and norms.

The envoy urged the UN to find effective measures to put an end to the regime's violations. Iravani also slammed Israel's total impunity for killing and displacing Palestinians and occupying their lands.

### Grossi Visits Iran's Nuclear Achievements on Display in Vienna

VIENNA (Dispatches) -- Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi on Wednesday visited Iran's nuclear achievements, saying the Islamic Republic has made major strides in various sectors of the science.

Grossi visited Iran's pavilion on the sidelines of the 68th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) here. He said Iran has made significant

progress in various fields of the nuclear industry, including radiopharmaceuticals, stable isotopes as well as agricultural and medical industries.

Meanwhile, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi said Grossi will visit Tehran sometime in the near future, but said no specific date has been set for the trip yet.

Kamalvandi expressed hope

that Grossi's visit would yield positive results for Iran, serve its national interests and resolve the outstanding safeguards issues between Tehran and the UN nuclear agency.

"We hope we will be able to move towards settlement of the existing issues. It seems as if the status quo can improve relations with the International Atomic Energy Agency in the future," the AEOI spokesman said.

### Iran to Continue Expanding Russia Ties, Pezeshkian Tells Shoigu

TEHRAN -- President Masoud Pezeshkian has said relations between Iran and Russia will continue to expand along a permanent and lasting path as he met Russia's Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu here.

Pezeshkian said boosting cooperation between Tehran and Moscow will undermine the effectiveness of sanctions and the unjust actions against both countries.

Pezeshkian touched on the history of constructive relations between the two sides.

He said his government will seriously pursue the ongoing cooperation and efforts aimed at

enhancing the level of relations between the two countries.

Referring to Shoigu's comments about preparations for a meeting between presidents of the two countries on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Pezeshkian expressed hope that such a meeting would lead to fruitful discussions and agreements on bilateral, regional, and international cooperation between Iran and Russia, including within the frameworks of BRICS, Shanghai, and the Eurasian Economic Union.

Shoigu, for his part, emphasized that Russian President Vladimir

Putin had asked him to convey to the senior Iranian officials that Russia's position on cooperation with Iran on regional issues has not changed.

"Mr. Putin is eagerly looking forward to meeting with you on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia," Shoigu told Pezeshkian.

Earlier in the day, Shoigu also met with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian and reviewed the agreements reached between the two countries, reiterating support for Iran's policy (Continued on Page 7)

The Holy Qur'an  
And if they had intended to go forth, they would certainly have provided equipment for it, but Allah did not like their going forth, so He withheld them, and it was said (to them): Hold back with those who hold back.  
The Holy Qur'an (9:46)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	11:58
Evening (Maghreb)	18:23
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:50
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	04:26

### Iran's Ambassador to Beirut Says 'Honored by Injury'

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Iran's Ambassador to Beirut Mojtaba Amani said Wednesday he was honored to have his blood mixed with the people of Lebanon after the terrorist incident in Lebanon.

"It is my honor and pride that my blood is mixed with the blood of the wounded people of the honorable Lebanese nation who were targeted in yesterday's terrorist crime," Amani said.

The ambassador also hailed Lebanon for proudly standing with dignity and pride against the occupying regime of Israel.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) dismissed media reports that members of the force were among the casualties of Tuesday's pager explosions in Lebanon.

Brigadier General Ali Muhammad Naeini said none of the IRGC forces were martyred in the terrorist Israeli attack. (Continued on Page 7)

### FM Araghchi Reiterates Iran's Support for Peace in Yemen

TEHRAN -- Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has expressed Iran's support for lasting peace and security in Yemen under the auspices of the United Nations.

In a meeting with the United Nations' Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg here, Araghchi highlighted the sensitivity and interconnectedness of regional developments and underscored the direct impact of the continued atrocities of the Zionist regime in Gaza on the escalation of tensions and crises throughout the region.

He said the establishment of ceasefire and cessation of the Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza would play a critical role in reducing tensions and fostering peace and stability across various parts of the region, the Foreign Ministry's website reported. (Continued on Page 7)

## Iranian Researchers Develop Anti-Fire Coatings



TEHRAN -- Iranian researchers have achieved the formulation of a solution and anti-fire coatings that can contain the fire in one spot for two hours.

"We supplied coatings for construction and industrial steel structures that help in delaying fire and steel collapse in case of fire," said Mahmoud Torabinejad, the managing director of the Ateen Naqsh Jahan Fire Control Company.

"Steel loses its hardness at a temperature of 400 to 600 degrees Celsius, and by applying fireproof coatings on metal structures, these coatings turn into foam against heat, and this foam at a higher temperature of 220°C releases a harmless cooling gas that

delays the instability of metal structures," he added.

Noting that all formulations of this company's fireproof coatings are water-based and the product contains minerals like mica, silica, calcium carbonate and acrylics, Torabinejad added that the product has received special attention in Britain.

"We have received many orders from foreign countries like Canada, Australia and Russia," he said.

In August, Iranian researchers at a knowledge-based company at the Pardis Science and Technology Park near Tehran designed and built a system based on WATER MIST which is used to control the fire at oil and gas wells and petrochemical refineries.

# 'Women's Qur'anic Movement' Resumes Operation

TEHRAN -- A new chapter of activities for women has begun in Iran under the title of "Women's Qur'anic Movement", an official said.

Nafiseh Habibi, head of the Qur'anic affairs department of the Dar-ol-Quran Karim Organization, said the organization has put a special focus on the issue of Qur'anic activities of women given the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's emphasis on the important status and role of family in materialization of Islamic civilization.

She said the Women Qur'anic Campaign has been officially launched as a continuation of the activities of a women group



founded three years ago.

According to the official, it was necessary that after a decline in Qur'anic interactions of women

due to the coronavirus pandemic, these interactions should be revived and developed.

A steering committee of the

campaign has been established and its members have been selected, she noted.

In the first session of the committee, which is tasked with policy-making and guiding activities, educational content and programs in the field of women Qur'anic activities were discussed and the committee members underlined the importance of elevating the Qur'anic knowledge and awareness and training Quran teachers, she stated.

Habibi said one of the goals of the campaign is to develop discourse related to Qur'anic concepts about family and promote the Qur'anic style of life.

## Greece Spends €18,000 on Persian Rugs to Promote Image

ATHENS (Dispatches) -- The Greek tourism ministry has responded to media reports about its spending of almost 18,000 euros on two Persian Nain carpets, saying the items will "contribute to the promotion of the positive image of our country at an international level."

In a statement, the ministry, "as the outward-looking ministry par excellence," said its "main mission [is] the promotion of our country's image. In this context, a crucial part of its work is the reception of persons from all over the world who represent, among others, states and bodies in this vital sector for Greece."

Thus, it "was deemed necessary to renew the equipment and upgrade our infrastructure, a process that had been delayed for more than 15 years."

The ministry added that it had followed all "prescribed legal procedures" and "absolute transparency" in procuring the carpets.

"The improvement of the reception areas is considered necessary to ensure the excellent hospitality and service of the visitors, in the context of actions and works for the promotion of Greek tourism, as well as for the promotion of the positive image of our country at an international level."

A tender document uploaded to Diavgeia, the state's transparency portal, for the supply of carpets for use in Tourism Minister Olga Kefalogianni's office showed that the selected bidder would supply two Persian Nain rugs for €17,980.

Nain carpets have a higher knot density than other Persian rugs.



## Introducing 'Mother of All Cuisines'

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) -- Any quick search for what constitutes "the best cuisines in the world" tends to yield similar results. In each list you will invariably find the bountiful noodle dishes of China, the spicy aromatic curries of India, and the rich pastas of Italy.

It's a list that consensus seems to consider fair. However, one particular country is notable for its absence. In fact, its food has even been described by some as the "mother of all cuisines." For over two thousand years, Persian/Iranian cuisine has been evolving with a rich diversity that matches up to the world's best. Yet to most of the world, it remains a mystery.

This disconnect is something that Hanif Sadr, an Iranian immigrant living in San Francisco, is on a mission to upend. In the award-winning VICE produced-film Preserving Taste—streaming now in the player below and at the Munchies YouTube channel—Hanif vows to return home to Iran to rediscover natural preservation techniques that have produced a long list of unique dishes, before returning to San Fran to open his own restaurant.

For Hanif, it's high time Iranian food takes its rightful place in the culinary pantheon.

Ever since Cyrus the Great established the Achaemenid Empire in 530 BC, Iran has acted as a conduit of culture between the West and Far East, with major culinary exports including saffron, pomegranates, pistachios, and rosewater making their way in and out of the country along the Silk Road. Author Maragaret Shaida notes that even Herodotus—the Greek philosopher with little good to say about the Persian empire—begrudgingly acknowledged how rich and varied the Persian diet was.

The duality of "hot and cold"



food in Persian/Iranian cuisine also stretches back to ancient times. The concept centers around the ideal dish for a healthy body and mind striking a balance between "hot" (rich, oily, sweet, spicy, calorie-heavy) and "cold" (fresh and light) ingredients. Persian cuisine's biggest staples were established as far back as the fourth century AD, including the decadent meat stews and towering rice plates that still adorn Iranian dinner spreads today. During this period there was a massive exchange of key ingredients along the Silk Road, including citrus fruits, eggplants, and rice.

What is today known as Iran has gone through multiple periods of effectively foreign rule but its food has never lost its identity. On the contrary: the new rulers—including Arabs and Moghuls—have always come to adopt it as their own. It's why there's so much crossover between Iranian, Arab, and Indian dishes, including boorani—the Persian "naan"—and biryani. In the 16th century, with the rise of the Safavid dynasty, the first modern records of foreign dignitaries experiencing the joys of Persian/Iranian food for themselves (as well as one of our first "recipe" documents) began to pop up. It's a sentiment Hanif is now

looking to rekindle in the West.

Hanif's immersion in Iranian food began at the dinner table with family. He was introduced to local ingredients and dishes by his grandparents and their cook Baaji in northern Iran during his formative years as a teenager. After graduating university, Hanif traveled across the country and bore witness to the host of environmental issues Iran faces. He was desperate to pursue environmentalism, but knew he'd have to go abroad if he was ever to do so. After entering the lottery for an American green card, Hanif soon left for San Francisco.

Though it was never part of his original plan, he ended up employed as a cook at the Iranian Montessori School in Berkeley. The sustainable farm-to-table food culture taking hold in the Bay Area at the time triggered childhood memories of his grandmother's cooking, which followed the same principles of sourcing seasonal, local ingredients, and Hanif made it his goal to reintroduce traditional Iranian techniques to his new home. Fortunately, the climate of northern California mirrors that of northern Iran, which allowed Hanif to find ingredients locally and maintain his principles of sustainability through natural preservation tech-

niques such as fermentation, molasses, smoking, and meat curing, all signatures of Persian/Iranian cuisine.

The Mazandaran province, Hanif's summer home in the north of Iran, contains seas, mountains, prairies, and rainforests. The Caspian Sea blankets Mazandaran and, as the largest lake in the world, the sea offers a rich supply of sturgeon and whitefish for Hanif to collect, smoke, and salt. Arching from the Caspian is the Alborz mountain range, which spans over 400 kilometers and serves as a rich source of herbs and fruits. The main fruits of focus for Hanif are usually citrus, such as sour oranges and pomegranates.

They can both be converted into molasses, which—when combined with the dried and smoked fish from the Caspian—creates a long list of fish stews and rice plates the region is known for, such as "mahi polo" and "kouli ghourabij." Finally, from the prairies, both by the sea and on the mountainous highlands, come the ingredients for rice and flatbreads that form the foundation of most, if not all, Iranian dishes.

Then there is the southern province of Khuzestan in the south of Iran, offering an array of seafood dishes that many people do not associate with the country. It's a province with a long and storied history, often re-

ferred to as the "birthplace of the nation." The plains of Khuzestan are famous for their rich agricultural output and it is here that Hanif collects dates. For Hanif, something that is always distinctly memorable is to pick through the fishing hauls of the region, which include halva fish and shrimp.

Hanif's travels are just a small reminder of what can be learned from Iran's diverse and sustainable world of ingredients, and this film acts as a kind of tribute to Iran's under-explored landscapes, its people, its shifting culture, and the food that connects them to both the land and history.

## Picture of the Day



Aynak is one of Iran's largest wetlands in Rasht and the second largest in Gilan Province.

Photo by IRNA

# Russia, Iran, Turkmenistan Hold Talks on Gas Cooperation



TEHRAN – Chief executive of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Saeed Tavakkoli has said that Iran has held talks with Russia and the Republic of Turkmenistan to enhance bilateral cooperation in the gas sector.

Turning to the continuation of gas talks with

Turkmenistan and Russia, Tavakkoli stated that good deals have been made with Russia and Turkmenistan in the field of gas and the company is seeking to turn agreements into contracts in the negotiations held between Iranian and Turkmen officials.

In his reaction to the publication of news about Iraq's gas debt to Iran, the deputy oil minister said that neighboring Iraq is one of Iran's good customers that pays its money on time and now the Arab country has not any debt to Iran in the field of gas import.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Tavakkoli pointed to the gas agreement made with Russia and added, "It is hoped that this agreement will be operationalized in the very near future, because, this agreement is one of the most important and strategic contracts in the gas field, so that Iran can be turned into an energy hub in the region."

## Ministry: Iran Transited 773,000 Tonnes of Cargo Via Rail

TEHRAN – Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development said 773,000 tonnes of goods were transited from the country via rail in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year.

The transit of goods from the country via the rail sector in the first five months of

from the country via rail in the first five months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21 to August 22, 2023).

The report added that more than 1 million tons of goods were transited from the country via rail sector in 2021.



the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to August 22, 2024) registered a 47 percent growth compared to last year's corresponding period, it said.

According to the ministry's website, 526,000 tonnes of goods had been transited

Sarakhs and Astarra border crossings accounted for the largest volume of the transited goods with 536,000 tonnes and 129,000 tonnes of goods transited from Sarakhs and Astarra border crossing in this period, respectively.

## Pakistan-Iran Trade Grows 10% in Five Months



TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) reported the value of non-oil trade between Iran and Pakistan rose 10 percent in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21).

As reported, the two countries' bilateral trade stood at 1.906 million tons worth \$1.128 billion in the mentioned five months, indicating two percent growth in weight, year on year.

Pakistan was the fourth top trade partner of Iran among the Islamic Republic's neighbors in the first five months of the present year.

The value of Iran's non-oil exports to Pakistan in the

first four months of 2024 has reached \$360 million, showing an 18 percent growth compared to last year's corresponding period.

The Pakistani Ministry of Commerce's statistics show that Pakistan has imported \$360 million in products from Iran in the first four months of 2024, 18 percent higher than in January-April 2023.

Pakistan's import of products from Iran in April 2024 has hit \$73.2 million, registering a 30 percent growth compared to the same month last year.

The value of Iran's exports to Pakistan totaled \$944 million in 2023, indicating a 13 percent rise compared to a year earlier.

## Japan's Trade Deficit Grows While Both Imports, Exports Fall Short of Forecasts

TOKYO (AP) — Japan posted a trade deficit for a second straight month in August, the Finance Ministry said Wednesday, despite signs of sluggish consumer spending that weighed on imports.

Japan's trade deficit totaled 695 billion yen, or

\$4.9 billion, down 26% from a year earlier, the ministry said.

Exports totaled 8.4 trillion yen (\$59 billion), up 5.6% from the same month the previous year. Shipments to Asia rose while exports to the U.S. fell.

Imports totaled 9.1 tril-

lion yen (\$64 billion), up 2.3% from a year earlier. By region, imports from European nations, in categories such as pharmaceuticals, showed the strongest growth.

Both numbers fell short of forecasts for 10% growth in exports and even higher in-

creases for imports.

The Japanese yen has gained in value against the U.S. dollar in recent weeks, helping to boost the country's purchasing power. The dollar had traded at levels over 150 yen earlier this year but in recent days has dipped to about 140 yen.

## Iran's Road to Becoming World's Third Pharmaceutical Powerhouse



TEHRAN – Iran's pharmaceutical industry has gone through a fundamental transformation since the Islamic Revolution, moving from complete reliance on imports into a sector which is now able to domestically provide more than 97% of the country's needs for medicine.

The most important factor in pharmaceutical self-sufficiency is the access to active ingredients used in the manufacture of drugs. Iranian drugmakers now produce 70% of the raw materials needed to make medicines.

To produce the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API), however, we need key starting materials (KSMs). Most of the KSMs for the production of active ingredients are imported.

This is while the most added value occurs in the production of KSMs. By completing the value chain and production of active ingredients and precursors, Iran can save significant foreign exchange and generate more added value in its pharmaceutical industry.

What Iran needs is to give depth to its drugmaking through producing KSMs inside the country. Officials say the current strategy is to establish this capability in order to render the production of active ingredients cost-effective, sustainable and profitable.

Earlier this week, officials of Balkh in Afghanistan announced that they had met an Iranian delegation in order to build a pharmaceutical factory in the province, which would meet 90% of the local needs to medicine.

China and India are leading players in the pharmaceutical sector. Both are major API suppliers and producers of generic drugs, including the source of up to 80% of the active pharmaceutical ingredients imported by the U.S.

Iranian drugmakers say the country has an advantage over both China and India for production of KSMs. They say the basis of most synthetic medicines in their production is petroleum and petrochemical products which are found in abundance in Iran.

There is also suitable technical knowledge and expertise which can turn Iran into the third powerhouse for production of KSMs, especially a neighboring market of some 400 million people.

Iran has already started the full-fledged production of KSMs for the most widely used antibiotic in the country. Apart from its commercial merits, the production is enormously vital at a time of the most draconian U.S. sanctions which have created shortages of life-saving medical supplies and drugs in Iran.

A good case in point is propylene glycol, a raw material for the manufacture of consumer products in the medical and food sectors.

For years, Iran used to import it from South Korea, the Netherlands and the United States to produce many syrups, food and tobacco. The countries stopped its sales as the sanctions kicked in, forcing the Islamic Republic to produce the substance domestically and prevent the critical shortage of more than 150 medical items in the country.

To put it in perspective, Turkey's annual healthcare spending is estimated at \$20 billion against maximum of \$3 billion by Iran with a similar population size, which shows where the Islamic Republic stands in pharmaceutical industry.

# Ukrainian Drones Strike Major Military Depot in Northwest of Moscow



Flames rise during an explosion in Toropets, Tver region, Russia in this screen grab obtained from a social media video released on Sept. 18, 2024.

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian drones struck a large military depot in a town deep inside Russia overnight, causing a huge blaze and prompting the evacuation of some local residents, a Ukrainian official and Russian news reports said Wednesday.

Ukraine claimed the strike destroyed Russian military warehouses in Toropets, a town in Russia's Tver region about 380 kilometers (240 miles) northwest of Moscow and about 500 kilometers (300 miles) from the border with Ukraine.

The attack was carried out by Ukraine's Security Service, along with Ukraine's Intelligence and Special Operations Forces, a Kyiv security official told media.

According to the official, the depot housed Iskander and Tochka-U missiles, as well as glide bombs and artillery shells. He said the facility caught fire in the strike and was burning across an area 6 kilometers (4 miles) wide.

More than 100 domestically-produced kamikaze drones were deployed in the

attack on the depot, the Ukrainian Intelligence Office official added.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti quoted regional authorities as saying air defense systems were working to repel a "massive drone attack" on Toropets, which has a population of around 11,000. The agency also reported a fire and the evacuation of some local residents.

Ukrainian strikes on targets deep inside Russia have become more common as the war has progressed and Kyiv developed its drone technology.

Zelensky is also seeking approval from Western nations for Ukraine to use the sophisticated weapons they are providing to hit targets inside Russia. Some Western leaders have balked at that possibility, fearing they could be dragged into the conflict.

Ukraine's targeting of Russian military equipment, ammunition and infrastructure deep inside Russia, as well as making Russian civilians feel some of the consequences of the war that is being fought largely

inside Ukraine, is part of Kyiv's strategy.

On Wednesday, the Kremlin described as "dangerous" comments by Jens Stoltenberg, the outgoing head of NATO, that a decision by the West to allow Ukraine to use Western long-range weapons to strike Russia would not be a red line that would prompt an escalation by Moscow.

In an interview with The Times published on Tuesday, Stoltenberg dismissed a warning by Russian President Vladimir Putin last week that letting Ukraine use such weapons to strike deep inside Russian territory would mean the West was directly fighting Russia.

"There have been many red lines declared by him before, and he has not escalated, meaning also involving NATO allies directly in the conflict," said Stoltenberg, whose tenure as head of the military alliance ends in October, Reuters reported.

"He has not done so, because he realizes that NATO is the strongest military alliance in the world. They also realize that nuclear weapons, nuclear war, cannot be won and should not be fought. And we have made that very clear to him several times."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Stoltenberg's remarks were dangerous.

"This ostentatious desire not to take seriously the Russian president's statements is a move that is completely short-sighted and unprofessional," said Peskov.

Stoltenberg's position is "extremely provocative and dangerous," Peskov added.

A senior NATO military official said over the weekend that Ukraine would have good military reason to strike deeper into Russia using Western weapons. Kiev's allies, including the United States and Britain, are currently discussing whether to give Kiev a green light to do so.

## Over Arms Sales to Taiwan China to Take Measures Against U.S. Military Firms



Taiwan's F-16 fighter jets fly in close formation over President Office during National Day celebrations in front of the Presidential Building in Taipei, Taiwan, Oct. 10, 2021.

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China has decided to impose countermeasures against nine U.S. military companies for arms sales to the Taiwan region, according to a decision published on the Foreign Ministry's website on Wednesday.

The decision pointed out the United States recently has once again announced plans for arms sales to the Taiwan region, which has seriously violated the one-China principle and three China-U.S. joint communiques, interfered in China's internal affairs and undermined China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Pursuant to Articles 3, 4, 6, 9 and 15 of China's Anti-Foreign Sanc-

tions Law, China decided to take the following countermeasures against Sierra Nevada Corporation, Stick Rudder Enterprises LLC, Cubic Corporation, S3 AeroDefense, TCOM, Limited Partnership, TextOre, Planate Management Group, ACT1 Federal and Exovera.

Movable, immovable and all other types of properties in China will be frozen.

Organizations and individuals in China are prohibited from engaging in transactions, cooperation and other activities with the above-mentioned enterprises.

The decision will be effective from Sept 18, 2024.

## Kashmir Votes in First Regional Election in Decade



People queuing to vote at a polling station during the first phase of a legislative assembly election in south Kashmir's Kokernag town.

NEW DELHI (AFP) - The three-phased regional election started in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, with voters casting their ballots for the first time in a decade and in a new political setting after the Indian government stripped the region of its autonomy.

Some 8.7 million registered voters queued outside polling stations across the disputed Himalayan region on Wednesday to choose members for its 90-seat legislature under heavy security in the three-phased elections.

The mountainous territory is witnessing first assembly election in ten years, with the first phase being currently held for 24 seats in six districts. The other two phases will be held on September 25 and October 1.

"We have been waiting for this for the last 10 years because there are a lot of problems here in terms of healthcare, education and development. We will now be able to choose a good representative," local resident Shahnawat was quoted as saying by AFP, who did not provide his last name.

"Voting is everyone's right and if people are getting this great opportunity after 10 years to select an elected body or representative, someone who listens to your problems and issues, help you and the state progress, I think it is a good moment, good opportunity," said another voter, Subhash.

About 500,000 Indian troops are deployed in the region, which has witnessed a 35-year violence that has killed tens of thousands, including civilians and soldiers.

A federally appointed governor has controlled the disputed territory since August 2019 when the Hindu-nationalist government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered the abrogation of the region's special status under Article 370.

Modi urged people in all constituencies in a post on X to vote in large numbers

and strengthen what he claimed to be the "festival of democracy."

"I particularly call upon young and first-time voters to exercise their franchise," he added.

The turnout is projected by analysts to be high but key decisions will remain in New Delhi's hands, including security and appointment of Kashmir's governor. Modi's government will also have the power to override legislation passed by the 90-seat assembly.

Votes will be counted on October 8 and the results are expected to be released on the same day.

Anger rises among Kashmiris over the restrictions on civil liberties imposed after 2019, and as Modi's BJP is only fielding candidates in a minority of seats concentrated in Hindu-majority areas in order to split the vote.

Unemployment is also skyrocketing in the region, which has a jobless rate of 18.3 percent, more than double the national average.

"My biggest concern is unemployment," said Madiha, 27, a jobless graduate who gave only one name. "The cost of living has reached the sky."

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since their partition in 1947. Both countries claim all of Kashmir in its entirety and have fought at least three wars over the territory.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of supporting pro-independence fighters, an allegation rejected by the Pakistani government. Islamabad, in turn, is critical of India's heavy military deployment to Kashmir and its crackdown on the region's Muslim population.

Pakistan has described the move by the government in New Delhi to revoke the self-autonomy of Kashmir as illegal. Since the revocation, India has imposed more internet shutdowns and other restrictions in the region.

## News in Brief

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's government has announced the arrest of a fourth U.S. citizen in connection with an alleged plot to kill President Nicolás Maduro in which authorities claim the CIA, Spain's intelligence agency, organized crime groups, sex workers and members of the opposition are involved. Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello revealed the arrest and details of the plot during a speech before the National Assembly, whose members applauded the detention. Cabello did not identify the most recently detained American. "Those who try to mess with Venezuela, we will screw them, regardless of their name," Cabello said.

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union on Wednesday began the process of clawing back hundreds of millions of euros in funds meant to go Hungary after its anti-migrant government refused to pay a huge fine for breaking the bloc's asylum rules. In June, the EU's top court ordered Hungary to pay 200 million euros (\$223 million) for persistently depriving migrants of their right to apply for asylum. The court imposed an additional fine of 1 million euros for every day it failed to comply. The European Court of Justice described Hungary's actions as "an unprecedented and extremely serious infringement of EU law." Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán slammed its ruling as "outrageous and unacceptable."

NEW YORK (Xinhua) - An estimated 3.4 million children under five are at high risk of deadly epidemic diseases in Sudan, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said in a statement. With heavy rains and flooding in the country, diseases such as cholera, malaria, dengue fever, measles and rubella "can spread more rapidly and severely worsen the outlook for the children in the affected states and beyond," UNICEF Representative to Sudan Sheldon Yett was quoted as saying in the statement. The crises stem from significant declines in vaccination rates and the destruction of health, water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure due to the ongoing internal conflict, he said, adding that the deteriorating nutritional status of many children in Sudan puts them at even greater risk.

CARACOLLO, Bolivia (AP) — Thousands of anti-government demonstrators marching in support of Bolivia's former president Evo Morales have clashed with counterprotesters blocking their way, a stark sign of an escalating power struggle in the volatile Andean nation. In his most brazen show of force yet against current President Luis Arce, Morales sent word to his followers to mobilize what he called a "March to Save Bolivia," a 190-kilometer (118 mile)-trek from the small village of Caracollo to the capital, La Paz, denouncing the government of his protege-turned-bitter rival. Morales, a former coca grower, has retained significant support among poor and Indigenous Bolivians despite his resignation in 2019 amid mass protests over his disrupted reelection. The march in solidarity with him began peacefully Tuesday morning, but turned violent hours later when hundreds of counterprotesters, armed with tear gas bombs, stones and firecrackers, spread across the highway waiting to confront the nearly 10,000 marchers. Some of them set a giant effigy of Morales on fire.

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — More than 100 wildfires stretched thousands of firefighters to the limit in northern Portugal on Wednesday, with seven deaths since the worst spate of fires in recent years spread out of control over the weekend. Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro declared a state of calamity for the hardest-hit areas late on Tuesday, invoking powers to mobilize more firefighters and civil servants. He also called on police investigators to redouble their efforts to find those who started the fires and pledged help for those who have lost their homes or have been evacuated. The European Copernicus satellite service said that over 15,000 hectares (37,000 acres) had been scorched and a combined 13 kilometers (8 miles) of fire fronts had been detected as on Tuesday night. It added that an area home to 210,000 people was exposed to the fire risk.

## Boeing to Start Large Temporary Furloughs Amid Seattle Strike



Workers have been picketing 24 hours a day outside Boeing factories in the Seattle area since late last week.

NEW YORK (AFP) - Boeing said Wednesday it would start temporary furloughs of professional and white-collar staff as it seeks to conserve cash amid a labor strike that has shuttered Seattle manufacturing plants.

The furloughs, which pertain to executives, managers and employees, will be initiated in the coming days and affect tens of thousands of Boeing employees, company officials said.

Boeing plans for "selected

employees to take one week of furlough every four weeks on a rolling basis for the duration of the strike," said a message to employees from CEO Kelly Ortberg.

The new Boeing boss added that he and the rest of the leadership team "will take a commensurate pay reduction for the duration of the strike."

Boeing had said that furloughs were on the table earlier in the week when it announced a hiring freeze, travel budget austerity

measures and a reduction of supplier expenditures.

About 33,000 Seattle area Boeing workers with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 751 walked off the job Friday after overwhelmingly rejecting a contract renewal.

The two sides resumed talks Tuesday with the assistance of mediators from the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service.

The IAM blasted Boeing in a bargaining update posted late Tuesday. "We are frustrated," the IAM said. "The company was not prepared and was unwilling to address the issues you've made clear are essential for ending this strike: Wages and Pension. The company doesn't seem to be taking mediation seriously."

Ortberg's message to employees reiterated his commitment to "resetting our relationship with our represented employees and continuing discussions with the union to reach a new agreement that is good for all of our teammates and our company as soon as possible."

## North Korea Fires Short-Range Ballistic Missiles for Second Time in a Week

SEOUL (AFP) - North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles on Wednesday toward its east coast, South Korea and Japan said, days after Pyongyang unveiled a uranium enrichment facility.

The missiles lifted off from Kaechon, north of the capital Pyongyang, at around 6:50 a.m. (2150 GMT Tuesday) in a northeast direction and flew about 400 km (249 miles), South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, without specifying how many were fired and where they landed.

Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Ki-hara said at least one of the missiles fell near the North's eastern inland coast and that the launches "cannot be tolerated."

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's office held a meeting to assess the security situation and told Pyongyang to halt all provocations, including its ongoing

release of balloons carrying trash into the South.

On Thursday, the North fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula. This was the first major weapons test by the nuclear-armed country since early July.

North Korea stated media later reported that this had been a test of a "new-type 600mm multiple rocket launcher."

North Korea has staged dozens of nuclear tests this year. Pyongyang declared South Korea its "principal enemy" this year and recently moved nuclear-capable weapons to border areas.

On Friday, North Korea released images of its uranium enrichment facility for the first time, showing leader Kim Jong-un touring a nuclear facility.

The state media reported on Friday that the North Korean leader called for increasing the number of centrifuges for

uranium enrichment to increase the nation's nuclear arsenal for self-defense.

The country, which conducted its first nuclear test in 2006, has never publicly disclosed details of its uranium enrichment facility.

Such facilities produce highly enriched uranium by spinning the original material in centrifuges at high speeds.

Kim toured the Nuclear Weapons Institute and the "production base of weapon-grade nuclear materials," according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The KCNA did not provide the facility's location or visit date.

Pyongyang, which has been under harsh sanctions by the United States and the United Nations Security Council for years over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, says such military maneuvers amount to a rehearsal for invasion.

# Mbappe Scores as Real Madrid Kick Off Champions League With Win



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe (right) vies for the ball with Stuttgart's Anthony Rouault during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Real Madrid and VfB Stuttgart at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium, in Madrid, Sept 17, 2024.

MADRID (Reuters) - Real Madrid began their Champions League defense with a 3-1 win at home against Stuttgart, where

the German side will feel they let Real Madrid off the hook.

Kylian Mbappe put Madrid ahead just moments into the second half after a first 45 minutes in which Madrid had to thank goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois for keeping the scores level. The Belgian made crucial stops to deny Enzo Millot, Angelo Stiller, and Deniz Undav, who also saw an effort hit the woodwork.

Mbappe was Madrid's most dangerous player in the first half, creating several decent chances, while the VAR overturned a penalty initially given for a foul on Antonio Rudiger.

Rodrygo, who has become a bit of a forgotten man since Mbappe's arrival, set up the opening goal with a run into space and a pass that left the French interna-

tional with a tap-in to score.

However, if anyone expected that to open the floodgates, they were mistaken as Stuttgart continued to press. Rodrygo and Vinicius were close to doubling Madrid's lead, with Rodrygo taking too long to shoot and Vinicius hitting the bar.

Undav got his reward, leveling the score in the 67th minute for Stuttgart after a corner.

A costly mistake from Stuttgart goalkeeper Alexander Nubel, who misjudged the flight of a Luka Modric corner, allowed Rudiger to head Madrid back into the lead with eight minutes left. The keeper was again at fault deep into injury time as he allowed Endrick's long-range shot to beat him when he should have done better.

## Roma Fire Daniele De Rossi After Going Winless in 4 Serie A Matches



Roma's head coach Daniele De Rossi waits for the start of the Europa League second leg semifinal soccer match in Leverkusen, Germany, May 9, 2024.

ROME (AP) — Roma fired coach Daniele De Rossi on Wednesday in a move that was surprising despite the Giallorossi going winless in their opening four Italian league matches.

De Rossi, a former Roma captain, was hired in January to replace the fired Jose Mourinho and impressed so much during the second half of last season that he was given a contract extension in June through 2026-27.

"The club's decision is made in the best interests of the team, to get back on the desired path as soon as possible at a time when the season is still in its early stages," Roma said. "A heartfelt thank you to

Daniele, who will always be at home at the Giallorossi club, for the work done in recent months with passion and dedication."

Roma added that "communication regarding the team's technical guidance will follow."

Roma hosts Serie A leader Udinese on Sunday.

Ivan Jurić, who formerly coached Genoa, Hellas Verona and Torino, was close to formalizing a deal to replace De Rossi, the Gazzetta dello Sport reported. Jurić coached Torino the last three seasons, leading the club to 10th-place finishes in his first two campaigns and ninth place last season.

## Italy's World Cup Icon Schillaci Dies Aged 59

ROME (AFP) - Italian icon Salvatore Schillaci, the top scorer at the 1990 World Cup, has died aged 59.

Schillaci, better known as 'Toto', scored six goals to win the Golden Boot at the 1990 World Cup on home soil.

Italy lost in the semifinals, but Schillaci was also awarded the Golden Ball as the best player and gained hero status.

Schillaci was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2022.

Capped 16 times for his country, scoring seven goals, he represented Italian giants Juventus and Inter Milan after beginning his club career at Messina.

Juventus, whom Schillaci joined in 1989, said: "We immediately fell in love with Toto. His desire, his story, his being so wonderfully passionate, and it showed in every game he played."

"We at Juve were lucky enough to get excited about him before - in that incredible summer of 1990 - the whole of Italy did, captivated by those wonderfully energetic celebrations of his."

Schillaci scored his first goal of the 1990 World Cup as a substitute against Austria, and after another substitute appearance



Salvatore Schillaci scored six goals in seven appearances at the 1990 World Cup

against the United States earned his first start against the Czech Republic.

Partnering Roberto Baggio up front, Schillaci scored again as Italy's campaign built momentum, and his hero status was confirmed with further goals in the subsequent knockout round matches against Uruguay and the Republic of Ireland in the quarter-finals.

Despite opening the scoring in the semi-final against Argentina, Italy lost out on penalties in Naples - but Schillaci sealed the Golden Boot with his sixth goal of the tournament in the third-place play-off against England.

He would finish runner-up to

Germany's World Cup-winning captain Lothar Matthaus for the 1990 Ballon d'Or.

Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni said: "A football icon is leaving us, a man who has entered the hearts of Italians and sports fans around the world."

"The striker from the magic nights of Italia '90 with our national team. Thanks for the emotions you gave us, for having made us dream, celebrate, embrace and wave our national flag."

Serie A president Lorenzo Casini described Schillaci as "a champion who lit up the magical nights of the 1990 World Cup in Italy".

"His desire to emerge and reach the highest levels of football has been and will continue to be a source of inspiration for the many young people who chase the dream of playing in Serie A."

Schillaci scored only one more goal for Italy and did not appear for his nation again at a major tournament.

He became the first Italian player to play in Japan's J-League before retiring in 1999.

The president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), Gabriele Gravina, said of Schillaci: "His face was a symbol of shared joy [and] will forever remain a common heritage of Italian football."

"Toto was a great footballer, a tenacious symbol of will and redemption. He was able to thrill the Azzurri fans because his football was full of passion and it was precisely this indomitable spirit that made him appreciated by everyone and will make him immortal."

Former Italy team-mate Baggio said: "The magic nights of Italia '90 we experienced together will always remain imprinted in my heart. Brothers of Italy forever."

## FIFA Teams Up With WHO on Global Concussion Campaign

GENEVA (AP) — FIFA teamed up with the World Health Organization on Wednesday for a campaign to educate the soccer industry about the risks of concussion injuries.

"Concussion is a public health issue of concern at all levels of football, and many other sports, requiring greater levels of aware-

ness and action," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

Ten years after the alarming case in the 2014 World Cup final of Germany player Christoph Kramer, world soccer governing body FIFA is sending a toolkit to each of its 211 national federations to

help teach at all levels of soccer that symptoms of a head injury can take up to 72 hours to appear.

Kramer continued to play in the final against Argentina for 14 minutes after being injured despite being in clear distress. Match referee Nicola Rizzoli later said he alerted Germany players after Kramer

asked if he was playing in the final.

At the 2022 World Cup, Iran goalkeeper Ali Beiranvand was treated for several minutes on the field after clashing heads with a teammate, then continued to play on against England before finally being replaced.

## Britain Beat Swiss to Make America's Cup Challenger Final

BARCELONA (Reuters) - Britain clinched a 5-2 semifinal win over Switzerland in the America's Cup challenger series on Wednesday to secure a place in final in Barcelona.

In the other semifinal, the United States kept their hopes alive with a crucial win over Italy, who suffered dramatic equipment failure during their second race of the day.

"Looks like we've broken the

traveller track," Jimmy Spithill, co-helm on the Italian team, said of the damage to a key part of the AC75 foiling monohull's rig, which produced a massive bang and a temporary loss of control when it broke.

The United States are now on three wins, with Italy on four in the first-to-five semi-final. Whoever wins will face Britain in the final at the end of the month.

The winner of the Louis Vuitton Cup then gets to challenge defenders New Zealand for the coveted "Auld Mug", which dates back to 1851 and is the oldest international sporting trophy.

Britain under skipper Ben Ainslie had raced to a 4-0 lead, but the less-experienced Swiss crew won a reprieve on Monday.

The Swiss had looked set to cause another upset when they beat the British in the first race

on Wednesday, narrowing the gap to 4-2. But they could not capitalise on their improving form in the second race in tricky conditions.

"We are all very relieved to have got through today and to have survived and made it through to the final," Ainslie said on the America's Cup live broadcast after his team's victory on what he described as a "tough day".

## Juventus Return to Champions League With 3-1 Win Against PSV



Juventus' Pierre Kalulu in action with PSV Eindhoven's Ismael Saibari

TURIN (Reuters) - Juventus started their Champions League campaign with a comfortable victory over PSV Eindhoven at Allianz Stadium.

Kenan Yildiz gave Thiago Motta's side the lead in brilliant fashion in the 21st minute with a powerful, curling effort that flew in off the post.

The 19-year-old's strike means he has replaced Juventus legend Alessandro del Piero as the club's youngest goalscorer in Europe's elite competition.

Buoyed by Yildiz's goal, Juve pushed forward and added a second goal six minutes later through former Leeds midfielder Weston McKennie.

The United States interna-

tional slotted beyond PSV goalkeeper Joel Drommel with a first-time finish from seven yards out.

Six minutes into the second half, Dusan Vlahovic guided a beautiful pass across the box to find Nicolas Gonzalez.

The Argentine took one touch to set himself before firing beyond Drommel to score his first for Motta's side to make it 3-0.

With the last kick of the game, Ismael Saibari netted a consolation for the Dutch Eredivisie champions after being found by a fine pass from Johan Bakayoko.

Juventus travel to Germany next to take on RB Leipzig, while PSV welcome Sporting Lisbon to Philips Stadion.

# Oman Withdraws From 2024 Beach Club World Cup Over Israel's Participation

MUSCAT (Dispatches) – Oman has officially withdrawn from the 2024 Beach Club World Cup in Italy, which commenced on Tuesday, in protest against the Zionist regime's participation in the tournament.

The move is seen as a demonstration of Oman's continued support for the Palestinian cause and its refusal to engage with the Zionist regime in any international platform.

The decision has been met with wide approval in Oman, including praise from the country's Grand Mufti, Sheikh Ahmed Bin Hamad Al-Khalili, who described the withdrawal as a principled and moral stance in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The Grand Mufti, in a statement, commended the nation's leadership for taking a stand against what he termed as "normalization with the Occupied



Omanis gather in the capital, Muscat, to show support for people in the Gaza Strip, 20 October 2023.

ers". He further emphasized that this decision aligns with Oman's long-standing position on Palestine and the Israeli Occupation.

The Omani Football Association released a brief statement outlin-

ing the reasons for the withdrawal, noting that the country remains firm in its commitment to supporting Palestinian rights and opposing Israeli aggression in the Occupied Territories.

This move comes at a time when the participation of Israel in international events continues to spark debate, particularly in West Asia, where many nations have refused to normalize relations with the regime. Oman's decision reflects its continued refusal to engage with the Zionist regime diplomatically or on the sports field, despite growing regional trends of normalization by a few countries, following the so-called Abraham Accords signed by several Arab states.

Oman's withdrawal highlights the ongoing tension between nations that support the Palestinian cause and those willing to engage with the regime, further showcasing how sports can often intersect with geopolitics. The decision by Oman sends a clear signal of solidarity with Palestine to the global community.

## Hezbollah...

(Continued From Page One)

"We regard what happened as yet another act of hybrid warfare against Lebanon, which has harmed thousands of innocent people. It appears that the organizers of this high-tech attack deliberately sought to foment a large-scale armed confrontation in order to provoke a major war in the Middle East," said Maria Zakharova, spokeswoman for Russia's Foreign Ministry.

Hezbollah — Lebanon's strongest armed force — and Israel's military have exchanged fire almost daily since Oct. 8, the day after a deadly Hamas-led operation in southern occupied territories left Israel shell-shocked. Since then, hundreds have been martyred in Israeli strikes in Lebanon. Hezbollah said its strikes are in support of Palestinians.

Zionist leaders have issued a series of warnings in recent weeks that they might increase their aggression against Lebanon, saying they must put a stop to the exchanges to allow settlers to return to occupied territories near the Lebanese border. Israel began moving more troops to the Lebanese border on Wednesday, reports said.

In his comments, Gallant said that after months of the Israeli invasion of Gaza, "the center of gravity is shifting to the north by diverting resources and forces."

As extremist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu huddled with top security officials at military headquarters in Tel Aviv, Israel's army chief, Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, said plans have been drawn up for additional attack on Lebanon.

New details on the pager bombings began to emerge. An American official said Israel briefed the United States after the attack, in which small amounts of explosive had been hidden in the devices. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the information publicly.

The AR-924 pagers used in Tuesday's attack were manufactured by BAC Consulting KFT, which is based in the Hungarian capital of Budapest, according to a statement released by Gold Apollo, a Taiwanese firm that authorized the use of its brand on the pagers.

Gold Apollo's chair, Hsu Chingkuang, told journalists Wednesday the firm has had a licensing agreement with BAC for the past three years. "But the design and manufacturing of the products are solely the responsibility of BAC," Gold Apollo said in a statement.

At the headquarters of a building in a residential neighborhood of Budapest, the names of multiple companies, including BAC Consulting, are posted on pieces of paper on a window.

A woman who emerged from the building and declined to give her name said the site provides headquarters to various companies.

BAC's parent company is registered to Cristiana Rosaria Bársony-Arcidicono, whose describes herself on her LinkedIn page as a strategic advisor and business developer.

The attack in Lebanon started Tuesday afternoon, when pagers in their owners' hands or pockets started heating up and then exploding — leaving blood-splattered scenes and panicking bystanders.

The Health Ministry said health care workers and two children were among those martyred. In the village of Nadi Sheet in the Bekaa Valley, dozens gathered to mourn the martyrdom of one of the children, 9-year-old Fatima Abdullah.

Her mother, wearing black and donning a yellow Hezbollah scarf,

wept alongside other women and children as they gathered around the little girl's coffin before her burial.

Hezbollah said in a statement Wednesday morning that it would continue its normal strikes against Israel as part of the support front for Palestinians in Gaza.

"This path is continuous and separate from the difficult reckoning that the criminal enemy must await for its massacre on Tuesday," it said. "This is another reckoning that will come, God willing."

"We are absolutely certain of victory," said the movement.

## Iran's...

(Continued From Page 2)

On Tuesday, thousands of wireless communications devices used by Hezbollah members and others exploded simultaneously across Lebanon, an attack that both Hezbollah and Lebanese officials said was caused by a remote Israeli cyber attack.

At least 12 people, including members of the Hezbollah resistance movement, were martyred in the blasts and around 3,000 others wounded.

## Iran...

(Continued From Page 2)

regarding corridors and transportation routes.

Shoigu arrived in Tehran on Putin's order to follow up on the agreements made during the visit of Ahmadian to St. Petersburg.

An Iranian lawmaker said Wednesday a long-awaited strategic cooperation agreement between Moscow and Tehran will be signed during President Pezeshkian's upcoming visit to Russia.

MP Abolfazl Zohrevand, a member of parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, said Iran and Russia are moving on the path of strategic cooperation.

The lawmaker rejected reports that Iran had sold Russia ballistic missiles for the Ukraine war, saying European governments seek to influence the public opinion in Iran about strategic cooperation between Tehran and Moscow.

## FM...

(Continued From Page 2)

Praising the resolve of the Yemeni people and government in supporting the oppressed and defenseless people of Palestine, Araghchi said Iran supports any ceasefire approved by the Palestinian resistance and Hamas.

He also emphasized that the continued support of the United States and some European countries for the Zionist regime, along with their aggressions against Yemen, exacerbates tensions and complicates the situation and the political solution in Yemen.

Araghchi further emphasized that efforts, especially the UN's humanitarian aid initiatives for the people of Yemen, must not be influenced by other issues.

For his part, the UN envoy expressed his readiness to continue cooperation and consultations with Iran regarding issues related to the Yemeni crisis, particularly by taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the UN General Assembly in New York.

Grundberg also appreciated Iran's stances on regional stability and security, especially in Yemen, and presented a report on the UN's efforts at establishing lasting peace and stability in Yemen, reducing tensions in the Red Sea region, and advancing the prisoner exchange file in Yemen.

## Palestinian President in Madrid to Thank Spain for Support

MADRID (Dispatches) – Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to meet Thursday in Madrid with Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, in his first visit to the country since it formally recognized a Palestinian state in May.

Abbas is stopping in Madrid at Spain's invitation before heading to New York for the United Nations General Assembly, according to an official in his office.

Sanchez will meet with Abbas on Thursday, the Spanish premier's office said Wednesday, but the details of the program for the rest of the Palestinian president's visit is not yet known.

Abbas is also due to be received by Spain's King Felipe VI according to the official in his office, but the royal palace, contacted by AFP, has not confirmed this meeting.

His visit comes after Spain, along with Ireland and Norway, on May 28 formally recognized a Palestinian state comprising the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The Zionist regime was angered by their decision.

Spain's leftist government then announced that a first bilateral summit between Spain and Palestine would be held before the end of the year, and the first Palestinian ambassador to Spain presented his cre-

dentials on Monday to Spanish King Felipe VI.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has said the recognition of a Palestinian state is "not against anyone, least of all Israel," but the move led to a further deterioration in ties between the two sides.

He has been one of the most outspoken critics in Europe of the Zionist regime's Gaza onslaught since the start of the conflict.

The Zionist regime's aggression has so far killed at least 41,226 people in Gaza, according to the health ministry in the territory.

Sanchez vowed this month to continue to "pressure" Zion-

ist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the global stage over the war in Gaza, especially at the International Criminal Court, which in May requested an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and his war minister.

Spain, along with other nations, has joined South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice in which Pretoria has accused the Zionist regime of "genocide" in the Gaza Strip.

"We are going to strengthen our ties with the Palestinian state," Sanchez said, adding that Madrid hoped "to sign several collaboration agreements" with the Palestinian state at the bilateral summit later this year.

## Hundreds Call on London Theater to Cut Ties With Barclays Over Links to Israel Arms

LONDON (Dispatches) – Over 1,100 arts professionals have called on London's premier theater Sadler's Wells to end its funding relationship with Barclays due to the bank's significant investments in companies involved in the Zionist regime's arms trade.

In an open letter, which was delivered to the theater, the artists demand "Sadler's Wells cut ties with Barclays, remove Nigel Higgins from the board, and engage in discussions on ethical funding."

Higgins sits as chair on Sadler's

Wells' board of trustees. He is also Barclays Bank's Group chairman and chairman of Barclays Bank PLC.

Highlighting that the theater hosted a fundraiser for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, the artists say they "cannot ignore its role in providing cover for Barclays' egregious complicity in Israel's genocide in Palestine."

"As in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, we strongly believe that artists and cultural institutions have an ethical duty to end complicity in oppression.

We call on Sadler's Wells to join us in recognizing its own place in history."

A report released in May found that Barclays now holds over £2 billion (\$2.5 billion) in shares of companies whose weapons, components and military technology have been used in violence against Palestinians by the Zionist regime. Barclays also provides over £6.1 billion (\$7.6 billion) in loans and underwriting to these arms and military technology companies. This includes holding £2.7 million (\$3.36 million)

in Elbit Systems, which supplies the Israeli military with armored drones, munitions and artillery weapons used in its attacks in Gaza.

In response to MEMO's request for comment, Barclays pointed to a Q&A on its website which says "Barclays has been the subject of criticism in relation to Gaza based on two arguments: that Barclays is an investor in these businesses, and that we provide a range of financial services to clients which produce equipment used by the Israeli force."

## Afghan Embassy Reopens in Oman as Taliban Strengthen Regional Ties

KABUL (Dispatches) – Afghanistan's embassy in Muscat, Oman, has reopened under Taliban control, according to an official in Kabul.

The move marks another step in the Taliban's growing diplomatic presence in the Persian Gulf region, following the UAE's acceptance of a Taliban ambassador last month. Zia Ahmad Takal, deputy spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, confirmed the embassy resumed operations, though Omani authorities have yet to comment.

"The work of the embassy is carried out regularly by diplomats of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," said Takal.

"The resumption of embassy activities in

cooperation with the host country will play a constructive role in strengthening the political, economic, social and religious relations between Kabul and Muscat," he added.

The move comes as the Taliban continue to take control of Afghan embassies worldwide, despite not being officially recognized by most states. The Taliban have assumed control of 39 diplomatic missions globally, though embassies in London and Oslo recently closed.

Afghan outlet TOLONews quoted political analyst Salim Paigir as saying: "Oman is one of the countries close to the West. This country can play a major and fundamental role in improving relations between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and Western coun-

tries, especially the United States."

While major regional powers like China, Iran and Russia, have not yet acknowledged the Taliban as Afghanistan's legitimate government, they have been steadily courting the de-facto government. Last month, Uzbekistan's prime minister visited Kabul in the highest-level foreign delegation to meet with the Taliban since they took power in 2021.

International recognition remains a key issue and the lack of official status has strained Afghanistan's economy, with many countries and global organizations citing human rights concerns and the Taliban's governance as barriers to formal diplomatic relations.

GAZA (Dispatches) – Khaled Meshal has told the New York Times that Hamas will play a decisive role in the future of Gaza. The group's survival is in itself a victory, he explained, even if it is significantly weakened. The senior Hamas official said that Hamas has won the war against the Zionist regime and "now has the upper hand." He pointed out that the movement is still strong and has "exhausted" the Israeli army. Moreover, the senior official stressed that Hamas is in no hurry to reach a ceasefire at any cost, and will not give up its basic demands to conclude an agreement that includes ending the Zionist regime's war in Gaza and a full withdrawal of the Israeli army from the besieged enclave. He added that he is confident that Hamas will continue to play a central role in Gaza after the war, and rejected American and Israeli proposals to run the Strip without the movement, which he believes means that Washington now recognizes that Hamas is not going anywhere.

Whoever keeps in order his affairs with Allah, Allah will also put his affairs with men in order. Whoever makes arrangement for his salvation, Allah will arrange his worldly affairs; whoever is a preacher for himself, Allah will also protect him.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

# UN to Demand Israel End 'Unlawful'

## Presence in Palestine Within 12 Months

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) – The United Nations General Assembly will adopt a Palestinian-drafted resolution that demands the Zionist regime end "its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" within 12 months.

The action will further isolate the regime days before world leaders travel to New York for their annual U.N. gathering. Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to address the 193-member General Assembly on Sept. 26, the same day as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The draft resolution aims to welcome a July advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice that said the regime's occupation of Palestinian territories and settlements is illegal and should be withdrawn.

The advisory opinion - by the highest United Nations court also known as the World Court - said this should be done "as rapidly as possible," although the draft General Assembly resolution allows for a 12-month timeline.



The Zionist regime's military has leveled swaths of the Palestinian enclave, driving nearly all of its 2.3 million people from their homes, giving rise to deadly hunger and disease and killing more than 41,000 people.

The draft resolution is the first to be formally put forward by the Palestinian Authority since it gained additional rights and privileges this month including a seat among UN members in the assembly hall and the right to propose draft resolutions.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield urged

countries to vote no. Washington - an ally of the Zionist regime - has long opposed unilateral measures that undermine the prospect of a solution.

The ICJ advisory opinion is not binding but carries weight under international law and may weaken support for the Zionist regime. A General Assembly resolution also

is not binding, but carries political weight. There is no veto power in the assembly.

"Each country has a vote, and the world is watching us," Palestinian UN Ambassador Riyad Mansour told the General Assembly on Tuesday. "Please stand on the right side of history. With international law. With freedom. With peace."

The Zionist regime captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Al-Quds - areas of historic Palestine which the Palestinians want for a state - in the 1967 Middle East war and has since built settlements in the West Bank and steadily expanded them.

The war in the Gaza Strip began on Oct. 7, 2023. Since then, the Zionist regime's military has leveled swaths of the Palestinian enclave, driving nearly all of its 2.3 million people from their homes, giving rise to deadly hunger and disease and killing more than 41,000 people, according to Palestinian health authorities.

## UNHCR: Reports 'Very Concerning' About Israeli Recruitment of Asylum Seekers



Zionist troops point their guns as they arrest a blindfolded Palestinian man during an operation in the city of Tubas in the north of the occupied West Bank on September 11, 2024.

GENEVA (Dispatches) – The UN refugee agency on Wednesday described reports about the Zionist regime recruiting African asylum seekers for its military operation in the Gaza Strip as "very concerning, if true."

UNHCR's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) spokesperson Rula Amin said the agency is aware of the reports and is looking into it.

"In principle, recruitment of asylum seekers for military or other risky activities in exchange for better status is a practice UNHCR finds very concerning, if true," Amin said in response to Anadolu's question about the reports.

Underlining that asylum-seekers and refugees must be protected from persecution and violence, she said they are entitled to rights in the country of asylum based on their legal status.

"Military conscription of refugees by a host state is inconsistent with host countries primary re-

sponsibility to ensure the security and protection of refugees," she added.

The Zionist regime is luring 30,000 asylum seekers from Africa with the promise of permanent residency if they join the armed forces in its aggression against Palestinians in Gaza, the Haaretz newspaper said Sunday, adding that it could endanger their lives as the majority came to work in agriculture fields.

The occupying regime has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza since last October.

Flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire, the Zionist regime's onslaught has displaced almost the entire population of the territory amid an ongoing blockade that has led to severe shortages of food, clean water and medicine.

The regime faces accusations of genocide for its actions in Gaza at the International Court of Justice.

## Gazan Doctor Abducted From al-Shifa Hospital Dies in Israeli Custody

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A Palestinian doctor abducted by Zionist troops from Gaza City's al-Shifa Hospital has died in their custody, the Palestinian health ministry said on Wednesday.

Ziad Mohammed al-Dalou, an internal medicine physician, is the third doctor to die in the occupying regime's jails, where widespread torture has killed at least 60 Palestinian prisoners over the past 11 months.

Dalou was detained on 18 March from al-Shifa Hospital, along with dozens of other health workers, when Zionist troops raided the facility in a two-week-long assault.

The deadly raid decimated the hospital, which had been

the largest and most equipped medical facility in the Gaza Strip. After the Zionist troops withdrew, dozens of bodies were found buried in mass graves in the hospital's courtyards.

According to the Palestinian health ministry, Dalou was detained while performing his duties at the hospital.

"The ministry condemns this heinous crime against Palestinian healthcare workers," the ministry said.

"Targeting healthcare workers while performing their humanitarian duty is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law."

In April, it was revealed that Adnan al-Bursh, a Palestinian

surgeon and professor of orthopaedic medicine, had been killed by torture while in the Zionist regime's detention.

Bursh, who headed orthopaedic medicine at al-Shifa Hospital, was arrested in December from al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza after refusing to abandon patients wounded in Israeli bombardments.

Two months later, it was confirmed that another doctor, Iyad al-Rantisi, also died under torture by Israeli guards.

Rantisi, who was the director of the maternity department at Kamal Adwan Hospital, died shortly after he was detained by invading troops in November.

He was arrested while traveling from northern Gaza to the

south with his family, wearing his scrubs, and adhering to the Israeli-designated "safe corridor".

Zionist troops have abducted more than 300 doctors and other health personnel from across the Gaza Strip since October 7 last year.

Like thousands of other Palestinian civilians taken from Gaza, they have been forcibly disappeared and Zionist regime authorities have failed to disclose their whereabouts.

Former Palestinian prisoners report that the troops specifically single out doctors for cruel treatment in detention, where torture and abuse of Palestinian prisoners are widespread and systematic.

## Egypt Says Won't Accept Security Changes on Gaza Border

CAIRO (Dispatches) – Egypt will not accept any changes to the security arrangements that were in place on its border with Gaza before war broke by the Zionist regime on Hamas last October, the Egyptian foreign minister said on Wednesday.

Security on the border, and whether the Zionist regime will maintain a troop presence along a 14-km (9-mile) buffer zone known as the Philadelphi Corridor, have become a focal point of months-long talks aimed at securing a ceasefire and the release of captives in Gaza.

Zionist troops entered the buffer zone in May as they pursued an aggression around Rafah.

Egypt, which is a mediator in ceasefire talks, says the regime must withdraw and that a Palestinian presence needs to be restored at the Rafah crossing between Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Gaza. "Egypt reiterates its position, it rejects any

military presence along the opposite side of the border crossing and the aforementioned (Philadelphi) corridor," Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty told reporters during a press conference in Cairo with U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken.

Abdelatty also said that any escalation, including blasts that wounded people in Lebanon on Tuesday, would create hurdles for the completion of a Gaza ceasefire deal.

A day earlier, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi jointly called for putting an end to the Zionist regime's new wave of atrocities in the West Bank, expressing their deep concern over the regime's relentless attacks against Palestinians in the occupied territory.

During a phone call on Tuesday, El-Sisi and King Abdullah also warned of dangerous consequences of the Tel Aviv regime's continued aggression against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, Jordan's offi-

cial Petra news agency reported.

In the early hours of August 28, the Zionist regime's military conducted its biggest operation – dubbed "Camps of Summer" – in the West Bank in over 20 years, deploying hundreds of troops and carrying out airstrikes on Jenin, Tulkarm, and Tubas, which are major centers of Palestinian resistance against the occupying regime.

Since the onset of the current aggression in the West Bank, dozens of Palestinians have been killed by Zionist troops. The total death toll in the occupied West Bank has now reached over 700 since October 7 last year, when Israel launched its ongoing genocidal aggression against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

El-Sisi and King Abdullah also emphasized the urgent need for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza as a crucial measure to safeguard regional security and prevent the war from escalating further.

## Air Carriers Suspend Israel Flights Due to Security Concerns

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Air carrier companies Wednesday canceled flights to the Israeli-occupied territories due to security situation in the region.

On Wednesday, German-based airline Lufthansa decided to suspend all connections to and from Tel Aviv.

The decision will affect other airline firms under Lufthansa Group; Eurowings, Swiss, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines.

Another air carrier, Air France, also suspended its Tel Aviv flights, according to Haaretz newspaper.

Previously, American Airlines has canceled its flights to and from the Israeli-occupied territories until April 2025.

On Tuesday, nine people died and hundreds were injured in Beirut and several areas in Lebanon after wireless communication devices, known as pagers, exploded, and the Lebanese government accused Israel of being behind the incident.

After the issue, a UN spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, said deadly pager detonations across

Lebanon are "extremely concerning."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also on Wednesday warned of a "serious risk of dramatic escalation" in Lebanon after pager blasts.

"I think that what has happened is particularly serious, not only because of the number of victims that it caused, but because of the indications that exist that this was triggered," Guterres told the reporters.

His remarks came a day after at least 12 people, including children, were killed and thousands wounded when Hezbollah members' pagers were detonated across Lebanon.

"Because obviously the logic of making all these devices explode is to do it as a preemptive strike before a major military operation. So as important as the event in itself is the indication that this event confirms that there is a serious risk of a dramatic escalation in Lebanon, and everything must be done to avoid that escalation," Guterres said.