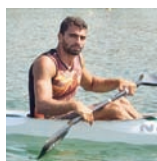




**Iran, world powers hold fourth round of nuclear talks** *Page 3*



**Iranian rower Aghamirzaei secures Olympics quota** *Page 3*



**20 new free trade, special economic zones to be established in Iran** *Page 4*



**Foreign students in Iranian universities more than tripled** *Page 7*



SPECIAL ISSUE

# You are not alone

**Will normalization of relations between Israel and some Arab regimes affect the Palestinian Cause? Experts answer**

## Leader: Palestine, most crucial issue of Islamic world

TEHRAN— In a televised speech on International Quds Day, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, stated that the issue of Palestine is the top priority of the Islamic world, and the fight against Israel is a public duty.

«Is there a weaker, more unfounded logic than that used for establishing the Zionist regime? As they claim, Europeans oppressed Jews during the Second World War.

*Continued on page 2*

## Iran's annual petrochemical exports up 13%

TEHRAN – Iranian exports of petrochemical products increased by 13 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) compared to the preceding year, general secretary of Iran's Association of Petrochemical Industry Corporation (APIC) said.

According to Ahmad Mahdavi Abhari, last year 11 new petrochemical complexes went operational across Iran which increased the country's petrochemical output by about 10 percent.

*Continued on page 4*

## Turkish, Iranian artists win top prizes at Palestine Is Not Alone contest

TEHRAN – Turkish cartoonist Hicabi Demirci and Iranian artists Payam Vafatabar and Puya Sarabi won the top prizes at the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest, the organizers announced on Thursday.

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## Iran's significant contribution to world's scientific growth

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI

The share of Iranian articles with international participation has had significant growth of 209 percent during an eight-year period (2013-2020), becoming the Islamic world's leading country in science diplomacy, according to the Scopus International Citation Database.

Launched in 2004, Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings. Delivering a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities, Scopus features smart tools to track, analyze and visualize research.

The number of articles indexed by the Iranian researchers on the Web of Science website in 2020 increased by 122 percent compared to that of 2013, which made Iran 16th in the world with 69,779 articles, and first among the Islamic countries for several consecutive years, Gholam Hossein Rahimi, deputy minister of science has said.

This improvement is not limited to the number of articles and the country's share in terms of top articles (the quality) grew from 0.95 percent in 2013 to 4.28 percent in 2020, which indicates a 350 percent growth in the production of the world's top articles, he explained.

The growth has not been limited to the field of research and has been very significant in the field of technology; for instance, the creation of 13 science and technology parks, 4,553 technology units, and 1,653 new knowledge-based companies during the last eight years could provide employment for 34,707 university graduates.

Revenue from sales of technological products of companies located in science and technology parks in 2020 was close to 137 billion rials (nearly \$3.2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which compared to 4.6 billion rials (about \$152,000) in 2013, shows growth of 2883 percent, he highlighted.

This issue was quite evident in the export sector of these companies so that the export of knowledge-based products was equal to \$1.14 million, but this amount increased to \$63.2 million in 2018, while reached \$98 million in 2020, despite the very harsh sanctions imposed on the country, he stated.

*Continued on page 7*

## The Arab-Israeli normalization is a betrayal of the Palestinians' political cause: Geopolitical analyst

BY M. A. SAKI

Andrew Korybko, an American scholar based in Moscow, believes that the Arab-Israeli normalization is a betrayal of Palestinian's cause and it seems to be an inter-elite process which doesn't reflect the view of Arabs nations.

"The Arab-Israeli normalization is a strictly inter-elite process which doesn't reflect the sentiment of average Arabs in the region. It's being advanced for strategic purposes related to the desire of "Israel" and some of the Arab countries to more publicly coordinate attempts to contain Iran," a member of the expert council for the Institute of Strategic Studies and Predictions at the People's Friendship University of Russia, Andrew Korybko tells the Tehran Times.

Korybko, who is author of "Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach to Regime Change", argues that the Arab-Israeli normalization is "a betrayal of the Palestinians'

political cause in exchange for attempting to buy them off with promised economic investments through the so-called "Deal of the Century". The Arab Monarchies are leading the charge and encouraging their regional proxies to follow suit, holding out the carrot of "Israeli" investments in their own economies to incentivize them to do so."

He also adds that the end result of the normalization is that "the Palestinians will continue to suffer because their legitimate right to self-determination isn't being respected."

The text of the interview with Korybko is as follows:

**How do assess the ongoing regional developments in West Asia?**

The situation remains complicated, as has been the norm for decades already, but some of the strategic dynamics are changing.

*Continued on page 5*

## People mark International Quds Day across world

People across the world mark the International Quds Day to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people and denounce Israeli atrocities in the occupied territories as well as the besieged Gaza Strip.

The International Quds Day is a legacy of the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini, who designated the day in solidarity with the Palestinians and in opposition to the Israeli regime.

Quds Day events have been held worldwide on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Today marks this year's Quds Day.

On the occasion, political and religious leaders shed light on the Palestinian cause and urge Muslim unity against Israel.

This year's events were held online in Iran and some other countries due to the spread of the coronavirus.

Nevertheless, some people took to the streets in the Iranian capital to voice solidarity with the Palestinian people. Videos circulated online showed people burning the flags of the Israeli regime.

In Tehran's Felestin (Palestine) Square, demonstrators shouted "Down with the US" and "Down with Israel".

In Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, groups of young people took to the streets in their vehicles, waving Afghan and Palestinian flags to express their nation's solidarity with the people of Palestine.

One of the participants, Qari Hassan, said while the Afghan people are far away from the Palestinians, they are connected through their faith, IRNA reported.

Iraqis also marked the international day, saying irrefutable evidence shows that the Zionist regime of Israel is in decline.

## Seljuk-era arch bridge near Tehran undergoes restoration

TEHRAN –The first phase of a restoration project and rehabilitation work has been commenced on Pol-e Khatun; a centuries-old arch bridge near capital Tehran.

The deck of the monument, which is situated in Karaj, the capital of Alborz province, was slightly collapsed last December due to severe rainfalls.

The project involves lightening the bridge and preparing it for the next rounds of restoration works, the provincial tourism chief Fereydoun

Mohammadi announced on Friday.

Days after the collapse, the monument taped the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan for a personal inspection to the province, some 30 km from Tehran in a westward direction. Visiting the bridge, the minister stressed the need to speed up emergency protection operations to prevent further destruction of the Khatun ["Girl"] Bridge and to provide the necessary conditions for the reconstruction and

restoration of this historical monument.

"Emergency protection operations, proper coverage, and installation of warning signs should be carried out as soon as possible to save the lives of citizens... and a suitable space should be created to prevent further destruction of the bridge."

This is a brick bridge, and despite proper and continuous maintenance, some part of it has collapsed and most of it is still standing, he added.

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© ISNA / Abdolvahed Mirzazadeh

## Iranians gather to support Palestine

TEHRAN— On the anniversary of International Quds Day (last Friday of Ramadan, May 7), Iranians gathered to declare their support for the Palestinians and urge them to move forward and continue their fight against the usurping regime.

## Selling out Palestine will not result in regional security and stability

BY PROFESSOR DAVID N. YAGHOUBIAN

The United States is on its back foot in West Asia. As it overtly signals the preposterous intent to contain and reverse Chinese and Russian development and multilateralism to maintain global economic and military hegemony and perpetuate unilateral "Full Spectrum Dominance," the U.S. is drawing down forces and repositioning equipment in the region as it "pivots" to the east. Here it will ostensibly rise to the self-created challenge of another set of unnecessary and truly unwinnable conflicts, and it is here that the U.S. empire, already well along the path of decline, will meet its Waterloo. Indicative of this decline, and therefore the absurdity of this telegraphed imperial "pivot" east, are U.S. initiatives against Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan, which have either failed or are in the process.

Recent moves towards diplomacy and rapprochement with Iran by regional governments, and what seems to be an increasing interest—albeit pragmatic rather than altruistic—in ending the genocidal war on the people of Yemen by its perpetrators are other positive indicators of this trajectory. Optimally this juncture will provide the context and the motivation for regional governments to collaborate in the creation of their own security and cooperation agreements (eg. the Hormoz Peace Endeavor advanced by Iran) which I believe are key to future stability and development throughout West Asia.

The normalization process between some Arab countries and Israel is only as tenable as the governments that have participated.

*Continued on page 5*



## Iranian government: Quds issue priority of Muslim Ummah

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**— On the anniversary of International Quds Day, the spokesman for the Iranian government stated that the issue of holy Quds is not just Iran's priority, rather it is the priority of Muslim Ummah, independent countries, and prominent intellectuals.

"The issue of Jerusalem and Holy Quds is not only a holy place but also a symbol of the sectarian occupation called Zionism against the great Islamic culture and religion," the spokesman said.

Rabiei noted that the occupying Israeli regime has always sought to remove this priority from the minds of the Islamic community, and in recent years has sought in a divisive way to promote Iran as a security problem by fomenting false strife.

"Whenever Iran raises in its rightful position towards a constructive interaction with the world, the Israeli regime seeks to disrupt; in its view, a path that runs counter to its oppressive interests," he remarked.



The spokesman also pointed to Iran's constructive interaction with the outside world, citing the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as a symbol of the Islamic Republic's success that has been fiercely opposed by the Zionist regime of Israel since day one.

"In my opinion, the Zionists considered the JCPOA as a 'diplomatic intifada' against them and did their best to thwart it," he said.

He said that from the first day, Israel tried to provoke others to take steps to prevent the implementation of the nuclear deal.

The government spokesman called "the physical assassination of nuclear scientists" as examples of this enmity.

Rabiei added that Iran will continue to pursue a policy of peace in the region with seriousness.

"This year, Iranians, not only with slogans but also with an analytical understanding, express their disgust with the enmity and hatred of the Zionist regime against the oppressed people of the region and against Iran," he concluded.

## Qatar in contact with U.S., Iran to encourage them to have positive dialogue

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Qatari foreign minister said that in separate contacts with the U.S. and Iranian governments, Doha is urging both sides to take an effective approach to advancing negotiations to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

"We have strong and strategic relations with Washington and good relations with Iran, and we do not want tensions to increase, which will have a negative impact on Qatar and the region," Al-Thani said.

He said that there are ongoing contacts with the United States and Iran, and Qatar encourages them to participate in the negotiations effectively.

In recent weeks, talks have been held in Vienna within the Joint Commission of the JCPOA to revive the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) through a return of the legally-binding commitments.

The process of lifting sanctions against Iran by the United States and Iran's efforts to restore its nuclear compensatory measures will be examined.

## Amnesty for 46 Iranian prisoners in Oman on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to Muscat has said 160 Iranians are currently in prison in Oman or living in temporary detention, announcing the 46 of them have been released on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr by Oman's Sultan.



Ali Najafi said that last year, 66 Iranian prisoners were also pardoned.

The Iranian diplomat noted that the crimes of most Iranian prisoners is drug trafficking and illegal entry, and that these crimes carry heavy penalties in Oman, such as long-term imprisonment and deportation.

Najafi, while thanking the mercy of the Sultan of Oman, said, "Recently, we asked the relevant officials to release prisoners who do not have a private plaintiff, if possible, and we hope to see this happen."

The ambassador stressed the need to intensify preventive measures by the relevant border officials to prevent the commission of the above-mentioned crimes by a small number of offenders and warned that anyone committing these crimes would be severely punished in Oman.

## Riyadh confirms Iran-Saudi dialogue

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**— An official at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed that Riyadh-Tehran dialogue has been shaped.

Ambassador Rayed Krilmly, head of the policy planning at the ministry, told Reuters that the talks are to "reduce tensions in the region."

The official expressed hope that the talks would conclude positively, "but it's too early, and premature, reach any definitive conclusions."

Iran has welcomed a change of tone in Saudi Arabia in the past weeks, yet stating that it's not enough.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has stated that Tehran also needs to see "change of behavior" as well as change of tone by the Saudi Kingdom.

# Leader: Palestine, most crucial issue of Islamic world

→ **1** So they say that should revenge oppression by displacing a nation in West Asia and committing horrible massacres there," the Leader said.

Stating that the East and West both helped Israel, the Leader remembered the history of the usurping regime. "The two camps of capitalism and communism colluded with Zionist Qaroons (Korahs). Britain masterminded and pursued the plot. The U.S.S.R. was the first government to recognize the establishment of that illegitimate state officially, and they sent a large number of Jews there."

Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Israel isn't a country; it's a terrorist camp against Palestinians and other Muslim nations. Fighting this despotic regime is fighting against oppression and terrorism. And this is everyone's responsibility." He noted that since day one, Zionists have turned occupied Palestine into a base for terrorism.

The Leader stated that the balance of power has shifted to the benefit of the world of Islam and Muslims' cooperation on Quds is a nightmare for Zionists.

"The failed 'Deal of the Century' and efforts to normalize relations between a few weak Arab states and the Zionist regime were desperate attempts to flee that nightmare," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He stressed that these attempts wouldn't get anywhere.

"I tell you with confidence, the downward spiral leading to the decline of the hostile Zionist regime has started and will not stop," the Leader said.

Discussing paths to solve the Palestine issue, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that two factors determine the future, persistent resistance in Palestine and global support for Palestinian fighters.

He also praised the martyrs of Resistance, the martyrs Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, Abbas Musawi, Fathi Shafaqi, Imad Mughniyeh, Abdul-Aziz Rantisi, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and finally, the prominent figure among Resistance martyrs, Qasem Soleimani. "Their lives and martyrdoms influenced Resistance."

The Leader referred to the origin of Palestine in the Quran, saying, "Palestine is described in the Quran as 'the Holy Land.' For years, this pure



land has been occupied by the evilest people, racists who for more than 70 years have been harassing the land's owners by slaying, looting, imprisoning and torturing them. But they have failed to break their willpower."

Noting the responsibility of all Muslim nations and states on the issue of Palestine, Ayatollah Khamenei said that the Palestinians themselves are the "axis of Jihad."

"Their population today reaches to about 14 million people inside and outside their land. The unity and unanimous willpower of these people will work wonders," the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said.

Introducing the "strategy of coalescence," the Leader stated that all Palestinians, including those in Gaza, in the West Bank, in the lands of 1948 and even those in refugee camps, form a single unit, and they should adopt the strategy mentioned above.

Referring to the humiliating defeats of the Israeli army, the Leader said, "Today, the balance of power has radically shifted. Now and after experiencing the 33-day war in Lebanon and the 22-day and 8-day wars in Gaza, the Zionist enemy that described itself as 'the army that will never be defeated' has turned into 'an army that will never taste victory.'"

Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the internal conflicts of the usurping regime, exemplifying the increasing desire of Jews to emigrate from Israel.

"As for the political situation, the Zionist regime has been forced to hold four elections in two years. In terms of security, it keeps failing. Moreover, the increasing desire of Jews to

emigrate from that land has become a source of embarrassment for that pretentious regime," he said.

Referring to Abraham Accords and normalization of relations between Israel and UAE, Sudan and Bahrain, the Leader said, "Tens of years ago, the Zionist regime established relations with Egypt, but it has become much more vulnerable since then. Therefore, will the normalization of relations with a few weak, pitiful countries be able to help that regime?"

He reminded Muslim and Christian scholars of their most important duty, stating that they must declare normalization to be religiously forbidden, calling it "a stab in the back to Palestine." "Intellectuals and free individuals should explain for everyone the results of this treachery," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that a referendum would determine the political system.

He offered a solution to the issue of Palestine, saying, "Original residents of all ethnicities and religions will vote in it (the referendum). That political system, which has been chosen by referendum, will bring back to their own country all of those who have been displaced, and it will decide about the foreign settlers."

He then urged the Palestinian fighters to continue their "legitimate, morally correct" fight against the usurping regime "until it is forced to submit to a referendum being conducted."

At the end of his speech, he referred to a verse from Surah Al-Hajj, verse 40, which says, "God will certainly aid those who aid His cause," and urged the Palestinians to move forward in the name of God.

## Khatibzadeh: Washington's return to JCPOA dependent on U.S. itself

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**— In an interview with MSNBC's Morning Joe on Friday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh stated that progress has been made in the talks, though not sufficient, but good enough to start drafting an understanding between all sides.

"We are not moving fast, as there are differences over a few issues," he said.

The diplomat noted that the Vienna negotiations is not a place for bargaining and "give and take."

"All the give and take and bargaining was concluded in July 2015," he reminded the United States.

Khatibzadeh explained that Iran and P4+1 are in Vienna to discuss how the U.S. can get back to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and to materialize "compliance for compliance plan."

He noted that it is too soon to make any judgments.

"I think the return of the United States to the JCPOA depends on the U.S. itself," the spokesman remarked.

He added that it's high time for Joe Biden to make a political decision, whether to instruct its administration to stick to the failed Donald Trump policy, or distance from that.

Responding to a question about what is at stake if all sides fail to reach an agreement, the spokesman said that now it's the time to focus on reviving the JCPOA.

He noted that it is too soon to jump to conclusions, thinking that the deal might fail or not.

"I think there is an ample hope that we can revive the deal." The diplomat remarked.

Elaborating on that, he said that there are good grounds for that Iran is trying to materialize all the potentials it witnesses in the deal.

In response to a question about shuttling between diplomats in Vienna and whether direct negotiations with the United States would make the procedure less complicated, the spokesman said that what is happening in Vienna is the seasonal Joint Commission of the JCPOA meeting and it is not a meeting between Iran and the United States.

"Iran, P4+1, plus European Union as the coordinator of the deal are focusing on how a party which left the deal, which seized its participation can get back to full compliance and possibly can return to the deal," Khatibzadeh elaborated.

He noted that the EU and P4+1 have decided to coordinate and communicate with the U.S., and Iran has decided not to, as Donald Trump left the JCPOA without negotiating with Iran or its allies.

"When they (the Trump administration) put illegal sanctions on Iran, they did not communicate with us. We think there is no need for direct or indirect talks," the diplomat remarked.

Responding to a question about the possibility of direct Iran-U.S. talks if the United States return to the nuclear deal, he said, "Then, there would be (the) JCPOA table, and (the) United States can sit at the table."

Responding to a question about Iran's position on sanctions relief, the spokesman noted that Iran's position is based on legal and logical grounds.

"(The) United States was the party that left the deal, seized its participation, imposed crippling sanctions on Iran and Iranian economy and also tried to demolish the deal and punishing those who were abided by the deal. They broke the deal, they have to fix it," Khatibzadeh noted, stating that everyone understands this logic.

"Anything than a wholesale, single step, verifiable removal of all sanctions is not acceptable by Tehran, and would make it impossible for the United States to return to the deal," the spokesman noted.

He noted that the hollow labels Trump put on sanctions was to demolish the deal and would make it impossible for any ad-

ministration that wants to get back to the deal.

"(The sanctions) were aimed to hurt Iran's economy, were aimed to sabotage Iran's external trade with others, and were aimed to securitize Iran in international politics," he remarked.

Recounting Trump era sanctions, the spokesman noted that there is no distinction between different sanctions Trump imposed on Iran.

"This is why Iran has always insisted that all sanctions imposed, re-imposed or re-labeled should be removed," he stated.

The diplomat reminded that the JCPOA bans the EU and the U.S. to re-impose the sanctions by re-labeling them.

He also stressed that "everything should get back to the implementation day."

Khatibzadeh stated that Trump deliberately tried to completely kill the nuclear deal.

"Iran was not able to get benefit out of the nuclear deal. We think it's important for Washington to understand that they have to verifiably get back to full compliance, upon which Iran is ready to stop all the remedial measures taken in response to the blind violation of the deal by the United States," he said.

In response to a question about Sen. Menendez asking for a JCPOA+, Khatibzadeh said that the JCPOA, by design and intentionally was limited to the nuclear issue.

"It's significant for those in Washington to understand that if Trump couldn't achieve anything under the illusion of a better deal, no one can also get anything by relabeling those illusion of a stronger, broader, and longer set of understanding or agreement," the spokesman remarked.

He also stated that the "Maximum Pressure" campaign resulted in "maximum failure" and this is the lesson Washington should learn.

"Iran will never negotiate its national security with anybody," the diplomat stated.

He then reminded about allies of Washington's destructive behavior, exemplifying the occupying regime of Israel as a regime that possess hundreds of nuclear warheads, a regime that is not a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and a regime that is responsible for the assassination, kidnapping and humiliation of Palestinians, the carte blanche it has given o Saudi Arabia to start such atrocity in Yemen, and hundreds of billions of military equipment sold in the Persian Gulf region, along with a long list of interventionism in the region.

Khatibzadeh also stated that Iran is following a different path than the U.S., referring to the indigenous Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE).

"Washington should abandon this mindset that can exclude Iran and make Iran an exception in international relation and international law. If they start to change the mindset, I do believe that we do have a better situation in our region and the world," Khatibzadeh noted.

He stressed that Iran is not going to negotiate its means of defense.

The diplomat stressed, "We are not to negotiate or compromise our national security."

He stated that the U.S. is thousands of kilometers away from the region and it has no justification to talk about the situation in the region.

"If there were no aggression toward Afghanistan and toward Iraq, if there were no aggression in different parts of our region, then there would be no war as a norm in our region," the spokesman noted.

Responding to a question about Sen. Menendez's proposal to have a broader agreement rather than the JCPOA, Khatibzadeh said that Washington has shown that it is capable of violating even

**'Let the cry for the liberation of Palestine be accompanied by the cry for the trial of the Zionists'**

Mohsen Baharvand, Legal and International Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote an article on the anniversary of International Quds Day.

In his article, he wrote, "The impunity of international criminals in the absence of a supranational mechanism is one of the most significant shortcomings of the global system. Unfortunately, we live in a world where justice is so low.

The Zionist regime regularly and daily commits a collection of international crimes in occupied Palestine. But why should the world impunity international criminals in the occupied territories and not take effective action to prosecute the criminals and prevent these crimes that affect the human conscience?

Under Trump, the United States was so rude that it threatened to sanction the International Criminal Court, an international body, and impose sanctions on its prosecutor, stating that the International Criminal Court would be sanctioned if it investigated the crimes of the U.S. military or its allies. With such a statement, the United States declared that this government and its partners committed the crime, but the world must turn a blind eye to these crimes to cast a shadow of impunity on the criminals.

At the same time, it can be said that on this side of the issue, Islamic countries and other members of the international system should make an effective effort to answer and implement criminal justice for the criminals who have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the occupied Palestinian territories. Unfortunately, they have not done so yet.

The liberation of Palestine from the occupation of Zionism is not an ideal but a legal obligation and commitment, and no civilized country have agreed to aggression and occupation and the destruction of a nation. The world must take practical and tangible action against the occupation of the Palestinian territories and put pressure on Israel to stop this criminal act.

Silence on the issue of Palestine is a crime against all of humanity."

The International Quds Day falls on the last Friday of Ramadan, which collides with May 7 this year.

treaties, as experienced under Trump administration.

He noted that legally speaking, the JCPOA is a binding agreement, as it was incorporated by the United Nations Security Council Resolution (2231).

The diplomat reminded that the U.S. violated treaties that were ratified by Congress, saying that Iran does not care for the United States domestic politics.

In response to a question about whether Iran is seeking another agreement with the United States, the spokesman stated that the JCPOA is "concluded, signed and sealed."

Responding to a question about the possibility of Republicans coming to power in 2024 and repeating Trump's actions, the diplomat said what happened in 2017 may happen in the future, but Iran would also react.

He noted that after the violation of the deal, Iran decided to exercise one year of "strategic patience" due to the request of other parties in the deal.

He added that Iran decided to reduce its commitments only after the Europeans signatory to the 2015 nuclear deal failed to keep up with their commitments.

"If the United Nations Security Council Resolution is not a guarantee for the United States, nothing can be a guarantee for the United States. The only thing is that Iran can also reverse everything, could reverse then, and will reverse in the future as well," the spokesman remarked.

**'Israel assassinated many Iranian nuclear scientists'** Responding to a question about the sabotage at Natanz, Khatibzadeh said the identity of the occupying regime indicates that they are responsible for many sabotages in the region, including the assassinations of nuclear scientists in Iran.

"They sabotaged (the) Natanz facility which could result in a catastrophe because it was a blind act of terrorism in Iranian soil," Khatibzadeh said.

He stated that Iran has always reserved the right to respond in full defense against its national security.

In response to a question about Iran's possible response to Israel, he said that Iran always reserve its right to defend.

**'Iran's relations with China, Russia and neighbors are genuine, sincere and authentic'**

Responding to a question that Iran is focusing on the East, and whether this outlook would continue after the revival of the JCPOA, Khatibzadeh stated that Iran's relations with China, Russia, and its neighbors have always been genuine, sincere and authentic.

He noted that Iran announced the strategic partnership with China when Obama was in office, thus, it had no relation with Iran-U.S. relation, and rather, it shows cordial relations between Iran-China, and Iran and other countries.

He noted that China, Russia and some other countries stood by Iran during the hardest time under Trump's reign of power, when Europeans were incapable of fulfilling their commitments and froze Iran's resources and did not allow Iran to use its resources to import "badly needed anti-COVID medicine and vaccine."

"What happens between Iran and the world reflects the realities on the ground," the spokesman noted.

The diplomat noted that Iran is seeking to diversify its economic relations and make a new balance in its external economic relations.

"(The) JCPOA was actually designed to help this," Khatibzadeh remarked.

He noted that there will be no change in Tehran-Beijing and Tehran-Moscow relationship even if Iran and P4+1 can reach an understanding and get the U.S. back to full JCPOA compliance.

He stressed that neighbors are a top priority.

The diplomat also noted that the resilient economy of Iran will make it less vulnerable to anybody.



# Leader ushers in decline of Israel

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei highlighted the clumsiness of the logic behind the establishment of Israel, saying the Israeli regime is doomed to decline in the face of resistance by Palestinian people.

In a televised speech delivered on the occasion of the International Al Quds Day on Friday, the Leader addressed the Palestine Question in view of the latest developments in the region and in Palestine.

He described it as the most important issue of the current time that was created by cruel capitalism which drove people out of their homeland.

“The issue of Palestine continues to be the most important and active issue for the Islamic Ummah collectively. The policies of the oppressive and cruel capitalism have driven a people out of their homes, their homeland and their ancestral roots and instead, it has installed a terrorist regime and has housed a foreign people therein,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

The Leader shed light on the weakness of the logic behind the establishment of a “terrorist regime” in Palestine and then pointed to the inevitable decline of this regime.

According to the Leader, the logic behind the establishment of Israel is that the Europeans wanted to make up for the oppression against the Jews in Europe by moving them to Palestine and confiscate the land of a whole nation in West Asia. He said the Palestinian people were victimized in the process.



“Can one find a logic weaker and shakier than that of the establishment of the Zionist regime? On the basis of their claim, the Europeans oppressed the Jews during the Second World War, therefore they believe that the oppression against the Jews should be revenged by displacing a nation in West Asia and by committing a horrible massacre in that country!” he added, “This is the logic which western governments have relied on with their wholehearted and blind support for the Zionist regime, thereby disproving all their false claims about human rights and democracy. It has been 70 years now that they have been sticking with this laughable

and at the same time tragic story and every now and then, they add a new chapter to it.”

But will Israel, which the Leader described as a “terrorist base,” continue to exist in the future? The question is a resounding no. Ayatollah Khamenei said Israel is not a country, instead, it’s a terrorist base. Therefore, it is doomed to decline.

“Since the first day, the Zionists turned the usurped Palestine into a terrorist base. Israel is not a country, rather it is a terrorist camp against the Palestinian nation and other Muslim nations,” he pointed out.

This camp has now lost its viability due to a change in the balance of power in the region.

Back in 1984 when Israel was established, the Leader said, the Islamic countries were weak and subject to active Western interference. And this paved the way for the “disastrous usurpation of Palestine,” the Leader noted.

But now things have changed and the decline of Israel has begun, the Leader asserted.

“Cooperation between Muslims around the pivot of Holy Quds is an absolute nightmare for the Zionists and for their American and European advocates. The failed project called ‘The Deal of the Century’ and the effort to normalize the relations between a few weak Arab governments and the Zionist regime were desperate attempts to run away from that nightmare,” Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

This may be the reason why the Leader confidently ushered in the end of the Israeli occupation. “I tell you with confidence: These attempts will not get them anywhere. The downward movement of the Zionist enemy has started and it will not stop moving downward,” he said.

The Leader also bought into focus two “decisive” factors in the future. These factors will nullify the enemy’s plots.

“There are two determining factors in the future: First and foremost is the continued activities of resistance in the Palestinian lands and the strengthening of the line of jihad and martyrdom and second, global support, on the part of governments and Muslim nations throughout the world, for the Palestinian mujahids,” Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out.

## Iran calls for referendum in Palestine

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has called for the settlement of a number of issues related to the Palestinian crisis, including the determination of Palestine’s future system based on a referendum attended by all main residents of Palestine.

In a statement on the occasion of the International Quds Day on Thursday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran believes the establishment of tranquility and lasting peace in Palestine will be possible only through the settlement of key issues associated with the Palestine crisis, including the cessation of occupation, the return of refugees, the determination of Palestine’s future system based on a referendum attended by all main residents of Palestine and finally the establishment of an integrated Palestinian government.”

The statement noted that Iran will continue to support the Palestinian people and stand up to Israeli “criminal occupiers.” It was issued to mark the International Quds Day which was designated by Imam Khomeini. The day is marked on the last Friday of Ramadan every year.

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran insists on Tehran’s pressing ahead with its policy of supporting the Palestinian people’s liberation struggles and standing up to usurper and criminal occupiers, and calls on all world nations, especially the dignified and resistant people of Iran to participate in programs scheduled to honor the International Quds Day (May 07, 2021), asking all Muslim nations and governments to put pressure on superpowers as well as official and international authorities to make them fulfill their legal human responsibility of backing Palestinian people, ending the occupation, stopping the Israeli regime’s savage crimes in Bait-ul-Muqaddas and their acts of aggression plus tension-provoking moves in the region, and [all Muslim nations and governments] to keep the flame of resistance and struggles alive in order to preserve the voice of justice which calls for refusal to forgo Palestine,” the statement continued.

The Foreign Ministry praised Imam Khomeini’s decision to designate the Quds Day, calling it a historical initiative. “Imam Khomeini’s everlasting and historical initiative of designating the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as the ‘International Quds Day’ has kept the cause of the liberation of Palestine alive and unmasked the Zionists’ tyranny and crimes against the defenseless Palestinian people,” the statement noted.

“Over the past years, the International Quds Day has turned into a symbol of fighting occupation and bullying among Muslims and all freedom-seekers across the world, and has played a unique role in thwarting the wicked

and anti-human schemes of aggressors and bullies in the world such as the United States and Israel against Palestinian people,” it added.

“Today we keep the cause of International Quds Day alive at a time when the Israeli regime’s apartheid tyranny and crimes, as well as the violation of Palestinians’ rights, have intensified, and, by marking this day, Muslims and freedom-seekers around the world play an invaluable role in boosting the morale of Palestinian people and warding off the Israeli regime’s diabolical policies, especially its destruction of holy Quds and forcing its residents out of their homes,” said the statement.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also said that Iran has supported the Palestinian people and called for a plebiscite in Palestine, which he described as a democratic solution.

“Palestine is a yardstick for justice. Few measure up. But Iran has proudly stood with Palestinian people—who resist the brutality of an apartheid regime. Quds Day is yearly reminder of moral imperative of global solidarity for Palestine. Democratic Solution= Palestine Referendum,” the chief Iranian diplomat said on Twitter.

He also translated this tweet to other languages such as Arabic, Turkish and Russian.

The Iranian foreign minister also discussed the Palestine issue during a recent telephone conversation with his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mekdad. The conversation took place on Wednesday.

Zarif and Mekdad pointed to the International Quds Day, and once again stressed their all-out support for the Palestinian nation, according to a separate statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Palestine has been restive over the past few weeks due to Israeli mistreatment of Palestinians in the occupied East Jerusalem (al-Quds) and other parts of the West Bank.

Israeli authorities imposed new bans on the residents of East Jerusalem during the holy month of Ramadan, effectively preventing them from practicing their faith. To make things worse, Israeli authorities paved the way for extremist far-right Jews to stage anti-Arab marches. These extremists marched in the occupied Jerusalem chanting provocative slogans such as “death to Arabs,” something that enraged Palestinians and prompted them to launch what some observers called another Intifada which soon spread to other parts of Palestine, including the Gaza strip.

Hundreds of Palestinians were injured during the Israeli crackdown on them. Israel also bombed sites in Gaza.

The Palestinians are locked in a decades-long struggle against Israel to protect their cities and identity. They have staged countless demonstrations so far to make the world understand that Israel is an occupying force

and that the Palestinians have the right to live in peace on their ancestral land.

Israel is also trying to evict the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah’s neighborhood in the occupied East Jerusalem, a move that caused an international outcry and a surge in tensions in Palestine.

UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland issued a statement that he was “deeply concerned” by the violence in Palestine.

“I am deeply concerned by the surge in tensions and violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan,” the UN official said in a statement. “In the past few days alone, two Palestinians, including a woman and a child, were killed in separate incidents, by Israeli security forces (ISF) in the context of clashes or attacks.”

He also said that the latest developments related to the eviction of Palestine families in Sheikh Jarrah and other neighborhoods in the occupied East Jerusalem are also very worrying.

“I urge Israel to cease demolitions and evictions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law,” Wennesland said.

Jordan, a neighboring Arab country directly affected by developments in Palestine, called for immediate action to stop the eviction of Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah.

“We urge effective, swift international action to prevent the crime of evicting Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah,” Ayman Safadi, Jordanian foreign minister, said on Twitter.

According to Safadi, Palestinians threatened with eviction in Sheikh Jarrah are the rightful owners of their homes as documents provided by Jordan to PNA [Palestinian National Authority] and home owners prove beyond doubt.

“As the occupying power, Israel is legally responsible for ensuring these ownership rights are protected,” Safadi said, adding, “Israeli illegal & provocative measures in occupied Jerusalem, including the inhumane threat of eviction of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah from their homes, are pushing tension to dangerous limits. Jerusalem is a red line. This is playing with fire.”

Safadi also welcomed a statement by France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK urging Israel to stop settlement-building in the occupied West Bank.

“We urge the government of Israel to reverse its decision to advance the construction of 540 settlement units in the Har Homa E area of the occupied West Bank, and to cease its policy of settlement expansion across the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” the joint European statement said.

## Iran, world powers hold fourth round of nuclear talks

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal held another meeting on Friday to discuss the latest developments concerning the nuclear deal.

During the meeting, participants agreed to expedite talks and start working on a draft text of the final agreement to revive the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The Friday meeting has marked the start of the fourth round of nuclear talks, which is taking place in the Austrian capital of Vienna within the framework of the JCPOA Joint Commission.

The Friday Joint Commission was chaired, on behalf of EU High Representative Josep Borrell, by the Deputy Secretary General/Political Director of the European External Action Service, Enrique Mora. Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran’s deputy foreign minister, led the

Iranian delegation. Araghchi met with Mora ahead of the meeting. He also met with the Chinese envoy to the Vienna talks on the sideline of the meeting.

The European Union said in a statement on Thursday that participants would “continue their discussions in view of a possible return of the United States to the JCPOA and on how to ensure the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA.”

Araghchi issued a brief statement shortly after the JCPOA Joint Commission. He said that during the meeting “it was decided to start expert and technical consultations and work on the draft texts immediately.”

The statement added, “All parties reaffirmed their seriousness to achieve the result in the shortest possible time.”

The Friday meeting also opened a new round of talks, according to the Russian envoy to the Vienna talks, Mikhail Ulyanov. “The Joint Commission of JCPOA at

its meeting today opened a new round of the talks on full restoration of the nuclear deal. The participants agreed on the need to intensify the process. The delegations seem to be ready to stay in Vienna as long as necessary to achieve the goal,” Ulyanov said on Twitter.

Earlier on Thursday, the Russian diplomat said that Iranian and U.S. delegations at the Vienna talks have provided “cautious” assessments about the talks.

“The Head of the Iranian delegation is cautious in his assessment of the current state of affairs at the Vienna talks (very similar to assessments of the U.S. colleagues). But both Iran and U.S. refrain from pessimistic conclusions. This seems to be not a bad sign as of the moment,” Ulyanov said.

He was responding to comments by Araghchi that there is a lot of agreement but also many barriers ahead.

“As I said before, we are on a specified



path about which there are fortunately agreements, but there are serious obstacles in the way as well,” the top Iranian nuclear negotiator said after a meeting Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi.

“We have a long way ahead the timing of which is impossible to imagine or predict, and it would be unrealistic if we want to enter into the timing discussion,” he pointed out.

## SPORTS

### Iranian rower Aghamirzaei secures Olympics quota

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Ali Aghamirzaei secured an Olympic Games quota at the men’s K1 1000 on Thursday at the Asian Canoe Confederation qualifiers in Pattaya, Thailand on Thursday.



Aghamirzaei crossed the line ahead of Uzbekistan’s Shakhriyor Makhkamov and Japan’s Taishi Tanada.

He finished in the first place with a time of 03:36.555. Makhkamov and Tanada also came second and third with 03:37.433 and 03:38.963 respectively.

### Iran wins two golds at World Para Powerlifting World Cup

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Amir Jafari Arangeh and Rouhollah Rostami won two gold medals at the 2021 World Para Powerlifting World Cup in Bangkok, Thailand.

Jafari, who has a world silver from Mexico City 2017 and a world bronze from Nur-Sultan in 2019, lifted 197kg in the second round and set his new personal best at the men’s under-65kg class of.

Silver medal went to Kazakhstan’s Vladimir Nizavitin with 115kg, and Phutachat Panomkhet of Thailand won bronze with 107kg.

Rostami won a gold medal in the men’s under-80kg with a best lift of 241kg - a new world record.

The reigning world champion from Nur-Sultan 2019 and a London 2012 Paralympic silver medalist bettered the previous record by one kilogram.

The powerlifters from Georgia and Thailand won silver and bronze medal, respectively.

And Nader Moradi took a silver medal at the under-72kg class by lifting 204kg.

Bonnie Bunyau Anak Gustin from Malaysia won the gold medal with 226kg.

Alexandr Daskov from Kazakhstan snatched the bronze medal by lifting 140kg.

Iran has sent six powerlifters to the World Para Powerlifting World Cup

The competition got underway in Bangkok, Thailand from May 6 to 9.

### Qatari clubs eye Esteghlal forward Mehdi Ghaedi

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Qatari clubs have reportedly set their sight on signing Esteghlal star Mehdi Ghaedi.

Qatari media reports suggest that Al Duhail and Al Sadd are interested in signing the Iranian international forward.

Ghaedi helped Esteghlal qualify for the 2021 AFC Champions league Round of 16.

The iconic player had been previously linked with a move to European clubs.

### 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games postponed

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — The 2021 Islamic Solidarity Games, which were planned to be held in Konya, Turkey, were postponed.

The event has been postponed until 2022 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Islamic Solidarity Games is a multinational, multi-sport event. The Games involve the elite athletes of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation who compete in a variety of sports.

The Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is the organization that is responsible for the direction and control of the Islamic Solidarity Games.

### Iran football federation dismisses Branko Ivankovic link

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has dismissed the speculation that it might consider Branko Ivankovic as Iran football team next coach.

Media reports suggest that the Iranian federation intends to appoint Ivankovic as National Team coach in the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The federation, in a statement, has dismissed the speculation linking it to the former Iran and Persepolis coach.

“With only 27 days left until the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, all football federation’s officials support the National Team staff and players to participate in the qualification with all our might. This is a ridiculous story which has published by a sports newspaper,” the statement reads.

“To spread the fake news, could affect our concentration ahead of the important event. The federation will never appoint Branko Ivankovic as Iran coach. Please don’t spread disinformation for the sake of Iran national team,” it added.

Iran will have to travel to Bahrain on May 31 to play their four matches at Group C of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

The ‘Persian Leopards, headed by Dragan Skocic, will meet Hong Kong, Bahrain, Cambodia and Iraq in a centralized venue from June 3 to 15.

Iran are third in their group of five, but have a game in hand over their opponents.

They sit on six points from four matches, having won 14-0 at home to Cambodia and 2-0 away to Hong Kong.

Iraq are top on 11 points, with Bahrain second on nine after five matches.



## 20 new free trade, special economic zones to be established in Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The Secretary of Iranian Free Trade Zones High Council Hamidreza Mo'meni announced the approval for the establishment of 13 new special economic zones and seven free trade zones across the country, IRNA reported.

According to Mo'meni, the decision was made during a meeting with the members of the Expediency Council on Wednesday.

"After discussion on all proposed areas and based on the experiences of the existing zones, the establishment of seven free zones and 13 special economic zones was approved," the official said.

The mentioned free zones will be established in Kordestan, Ilam, Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr, Kermanshah, Ardebil, and Golestan, while the special zones are going to be based in Fars, Yazd, Zanjan, Lorestan, West Azarbaijan, Qazvin and etc.

The development of free trade zones and special economic zones through production, exports, and investment is one of the goals of creating these zones in the country.



To achieve this target, different measures were taken in the past two years, such as attracting innovative and technological units to these areas and introducing investment opportunities and advantages in these zones.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province, and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

Considering the important role that the free zones play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran is seriously pursuing the development of its existing zones and the establishment of new zones as well.

More development measures in this field have been taking since the U.S. re-imposition of sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as Iran is reducing its dependence on the oil income while elevating its domestic production and non-oil exports.

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian free zones; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

Many strides made for increasing activities in the free zones have played a significant part in boosting the country's non-oil exports and brought prosperity in the other economic sectors.

## Monthly exports from Zanjan province rises over 500% yr/yr

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Zanjan province, in the northwest of Iran, has increased 512 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), as compared to the same month in the past year, the governor general of the province announced.

Fathollah Haqiqi said that lead ingots were added to the export basket of the province for the first time and added that the value of each ton of the province's exports is more than five times the national average.



Iran exported 8,302 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$2.968 billion in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year, registering an 80 percent rise in terms of value compared to the same period in the previous year.

According to the Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, the country's non-oil exports in the said period also increased by 56 percent in terms of weight.

Iran traded 10,343 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$5.762 billion with its trade partners in the mentioned month, Mir-Ashrafi stated.

The country's trade balance was \$174 million positive in the said month, according to the official.

China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, and Afghanistan were the Islamic Republic's top export destinations in the period under review.

Mir-Ashrafi noted that gasoline was the top exported item in the mentioned month.

According to the official, Iran also imported 2,041 million tons of goods worth \$2.794 billion in the said month, which indicated an 18 percent decrease in terms of weight and a 47 percent increase in terms of value.

Mobile phones, sunflower oil, wheat, rice, and meal were the top imported items of the country during the mentioned period.

The UAE, China, Turkey, India, and Russia were Iran's top five import sources in the mentioned month.

# Iran's annual petrochemical exports up 13%

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Abhari noted that despite the obstacles created by the U.S. sanctions, the Islamic Republic does not have any problems for exporting petrochemical products, saying: "Based on a predetermined procedure, the transfer of petrochemical revenues into the country is underway."

He further mentioned the continuous development of the country's petrochemical industry and said: "This year too, we will witness a great surge in the production and export of petrochemical products in the country."

Iran has been highly developing its petrochemical industry over the past few years as

the development of the giant South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) has been supplying more feedstock to the petrochemical units.

According to the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), the second leap of the petrochemical industry is going to be realized in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) to boost the country's annual petrochemical revenues up to \$25 billion.

The third leap of the industry, which is aimed to increase the revenues from the mentioned sector to \$37 billion, is also planned to take place in the Iranian calendar year 1404 (begins in March 2025).



According to President Hassan Rouhani, the country's petrochemical production capacity has nearly doubled over the past eight years.

"The petrochemical production capacity is expected to reach 100 million tons in the current year and this shows that a lot of work has been done. the revenues from the petrochemical industry have helped

us during the years of economic war and sanctions," Rouhani said earlier.

The president noted that 17 petrochemical projects worth about \$12 billion were planned to be inaugurated across the country to realize the second leap of the industry, of which 12 were put into operation in the previous year and the rest will go operation this year.

## Annual production of home appliances up 24% yr/yr

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The production of home appliances in Iran increased by 24 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) compared to its preceding year, the secretary of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran announced.

"We expected to produce about 12 million units, including small and large appliances in the previous year, however, the figure increased to about 15 million by the yearend, registering a 24 percent growth compared to the preceding year," Abbas Hashemi said.

We also had good growth in after-sales service, product quality improvement, indigenization and exports, so that last year \$345 million worth of home appliance products were exported, Hashemi added.

Pointing to the advantages of home appliance industry in Iran, the official said: "Production of home appliances in the country is an advantage considering cheap energy and workforce and the country's geographical situation."

"This industry should be more supported," he stressed.

Regarding the return of foreign brands to the country, Hashemi said: "we should prevent the imports of foreign



finished products into the country in order to support domestic producers."

He further noted that foreign companies can invest in this industry and co-produce their products with local manufacturers.

Back in April, Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister

## 250 industrial projects with over 60% progress to be completed by Mar. 2022

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry plans to complete 250 important industrial projects with over 60 percent physical progress by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

According to the Industry Ministry's programs for the current year, pioneering projects including steel sheet production units and knowledge-based projects are the priority for completion, IRNA reported.

As reported, the ministry also plans to revive and modernize 50 major industrial units, 60 mining complexes, and 1,500 small business units.

Back in April, Director General of Planning and Financing Office of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade Alireza Hadi



had announced that 3,639 semi-finished industrial projects with over 80 percent physical progress have been identified across the country.

According to Hadi, over 119 trillion ri-

als (about \$2.833 billion) is needed to be invested in the mentioned projects which can provide job opportunities for 155,000 people.

The number of projects with physical progress between 60-80 percent is 12,993 993 projects with a total investment of about 289 trillion rials (about \$6.88 billion) which can provide jobs for 463,000 people, the official said.

Nearly 19,185 projects also have physical progress between 20-60 percent with 579 trillion rials (about \$13.78 billion) of investment and the possibility of employment for 747,000 people are underway across the country, he added.

The official noted that currently, the Industry Ministry's priority is to fund pi-

oneering projects with over 80 percent of physical progress.

Like the previous year, reviving idle units is also another important program that the ministry is pursuing in the current year which has been named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles."

Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki had earlier announced that 1,500 idle industrial units were revived in the country during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Industry Ministry programs, reviving 2,000 idle small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is also on the agenda for the current year.

## Trade rising between Iran, Syria

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The chairman of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce said that trade is rising between the two countries.

Keyvan Kashefi said that currently Syria is moving towards reconstruction, and items in the fields of construction, bridge and dam building, electricity supply, and technical and engineering services are at the top of Iran's list of exports to this country.

Syria's trade statistics show that trade with China and India has not changed in the past three years, but Iran's trade with Syria is on the rise, he added.

Saying that the two sides are still far from their targeted bilateral trade, the official said plans must be put in place to see an improvement in exports and imports with this country, and some important steps have been taken in this due over the past year.

In early March, the International Institute of Iran Industries Research (MPSIran) hosted a conference on Iran-Syria trade cooperation in Tehran.



The event was attended by senior officials from both sides including Deputy Director of Tehran Industry, Mining, and Trade Organization Houshang Rezaei Samarin, the Director-General of Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives

and Social Welfare for Intl. Affairs Ali-Hossein Shahrivar, Syria's Commercial Attaché in Tehran Ahmad Khamis, and Hamid Hosseini, board member of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce.

The attendees of the meeting discussed a variety of issues in this event and explored ways for removing the barriers in the way of the expansion of two countries' trade.

At the same time, Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce had also organized and held a conference on the business opportunities of the two countries at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

The conference was attended by senior officials from the two sides including the head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce, and the head of the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce Fahd Mahmoud Darwish, as well as the Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum.

## 15 idle mines to be revived in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province by next March

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, 15 mines will be revived in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, in the southwest of Iran, by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2022).

Mehrdad Qasemi, the deputy head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department for mining affairs, said that 1.2 trillion rials (about \$28.5 million) will be invested to revive these mines, which will create jobs at least for 105 persons.

He said that the idle mines include two groups; one group have exploitation licenses and the other do not have, that will be handed over through tenders.

The official further announced that 5.2 million tons of minerals have been extracted from the mines of province in the past Iranian calendar year.

As announced last week by the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries De-

velopment and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), 253 idle small-scale mines were revived throughout the country in the previous year.

According to Vajihollah Jafari, the plan for reviving idle mines in the previous year was realized by 126 percent.

Saying that the mentioned mines have been reactivated as part of a comprehensive program for reviving idle small mines across the country, Jafari also announced that under the framework of the mentioned program 200 mines are planned to be put back into operation in the current year.

The official noted that the successful implementation of the said program in the previous year was achieved despite the problems created by the outbreak of coronavirus.

Emphasizing that the above goals have been achieved as a result of productive cooperation among the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, provincial industry or-

ganizations, Iran Mines houses, and private sector companies, Jafari noted that since the beginning of the program in March 2019 up to the end of the previous year, 303 mines have been revived.

As reported, under the framework of the mentioned program, 672 idle mines were identified and prioritized in the previous year, and diagnostic procedures were performed on 194 mines to determine the reasons for the halt in their production.

The program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO's missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several provinces.

Khodadad Gharibpour, IMIDRO's former head had mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of "Resistance Economy", saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

Reviving the small mines not only is a major step for supporting and boosting domestic production, it also plays a significant



role in job creation throughout the country, Gharibpour said back in June 2020.

Following this program, so far various small-scale mines including chromite, manganese, hematite, and dolomite, iron ore, copper, and construction stone mines have been surveyed by monitoring and diagnosing the problems of the mines and providing solutions for resolving their issues.



# Selling out Palestine will not result in regional security and stability

Normalization between expansionist Zionism and regional monarchial despotisms is inherently oxymoronic

➔ **1** As such, so-called “normalization” between a colonialist apartheid rogue state and despotic monarchies beholden to the United States and completely detached from domestic popular opinion will not result in the security and stability the process is ostensibly designed to achieve. The concept of “normalization” between expansionist Zionism and regional monarchial despotisms is inherently oxymoronic.

**The resistance will neither be forgotten nor limited to Palestine**

If anything, the so-called normalization process will further invigorate the movement for a free Palestine, as the collective Arab memory of Zionist occupation, oppression, theft, collective punishment, and war crimes will not diminish simply because despotic Arab leaders found it politically and economically expedient to sell out the Palestinians and throw them—as well as international law—under the proverbial bus.

The resistance will neither be forgotten, nor limited to Palestine. Paradoxically, this fact is a likely motivator for some Arab governments to have entered into this process and further attempt to acquire security and legitimacy from foreigners, yet ultimately this action will serve as another catalyst for their eventual downfall. As brilliantly illustrated by the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime by the Iranian people in 1979, U.S. client states that acquire inordinate autonomy from domestic popular opinion and political participation generate internal dissent and instability that can come to unseat even the most well-armed and ruthless monarchists, and in the process bring an end to the client relationship, and thus the stability and benefits it was devel-



oped to provide for the imperialists and their regional stooges.

The normalization is essentially a betrayal by Arab monarchies with the addition of Sudan, which shamefully sold out the Palestinians to obtain economic relief by way of its removal from the US Treasury/OFAC State Sponsors of Terrorism list. Thus, the process will be limited to those Arab monarchies who are completely reliant on the US for their ongoing existence, as well as potentially Arab governments seeking short-term economic relief and/or favor from the United States to help prop up their flagging rule. With that said, I believe a majority of Arab elites remain aware of the reality of public opinion and the long-term ramifications of selling out the Palestinians, and as such I do not foresee so-called “normalization” advancing further.

When it is not engaged in murderous aerial

onslaught against the civilian population of Gaza, Israel maintains the largest open-air prison on earth there. Gazans drink poisonous water and their caloric intake is calculated and regulated by the Zionist jailers. In the occupied West Bank the daily abuse and oppression of Palestinians, the ongoing theft of their land, and the destruction of their property and agriculture is an ongoing amalgam of atrocities functional for the ethnic cleansing that Zionist colonialists continue to advance. In this context the cruel decision by the Israeli government to block COVID vaccinations from Gaza is neither surprising nor unexpected. Until the United Nations Security Council—in which the United States wields its veto power consistently to protect Israeli violations of international law, war crimes and crimes against humanity—is reformed or scrapped, Zionists can continue to count on an inert UN response to the collective

punishment, ethnic cleansing and apartheid they perpetuate throughout Palestine.

The Biden administration will strategically employ more neutral rhetoric in its communications with the Israeli government and its statements regarding Israeli policies, and will pay lip service to the idea of a “peace process” geared for a two-state solution. Of course, this means the Biden administration will continue to facilitate the bogus process by which Palestinian land is being occupied and stolen while holding out the rotten carrot of less than 22% of historic Palestine to negotiate over.

The Biden administration will not risk angering the Zionist lobby or the many “Israel-firsters” of the Democratic Party by countering any of the absurd declarations and allowances of the Trump administration, and it will likely continue the process of integrating Israeli and US military forces in West Asia. In short, the United States under President Biden will continue to serve as apartheid Israel’s bodyguard, lawyer, attack dog, golden goose, and punching bag simultaneously. With that said, lacking the extreme Zionist zealotry that characterized the Trump regime’s understanding of and foreign policy approach to the region, there will be less pressure and/or incentives for Arab countries to engage in so-called normalization with Israel.

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## The Arab–Israeli normalization is a betrayal of the Palestinians’ political cause: Geopolitical analyst

➔ **1** The US’ large-scale withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 reduced its military presence in the central part of the region, though this was soon followed up by smaller deployments to that country and Syria on the pretext of fighting against ISIS. Russia has also emerged as a key military and diplomatic player as a result of its anti-terrorist intervention in Syria and leading role in the Arab Republic’s peace process. Moscow is using its involvement there as a springboard for advancing its regional “balancing” strategy between all of West Asia’s key stakeholders, which also importantly includes “Israel” as well even though few ever discuss this. In parallel, China has become a major economic player through the expansion of its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), especially in Iran following the 25-year strategic partnership deal that was recently clinched.

Altogether, these developments suggest that the region is still in flux and will likely remain so for some time. It’s still an arena of competition between Great Powers, including those within the region such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, as well as other important players such as “Israel” and the UAE. The main challenge is in trying to find possible convergences between everyone in order to reduce the risk of kinetic conflict and thus improve the locals’ living standards, but that seems unlikely since some of their interests are contradictory. For instance, the US is dead-set against BRI’s expansion into West Asia and is totally opposed to Iran retaining its regional influence, the latter of which is a concern that it shares with “Israel” and Saudi Arabia. There’s also the ongoing War on Yemen that few talk about, which is a major factor of regional destabilization. Looking forward, it’s difficult to predict what the future might bring due to these complicated dynamics.

**What is your thought on the Arab-Israeli normalization?**

The Arab–Israeli normalization is a strictly inter-elite process which doesn’t reflect the sentiment of average Arabs in the region. It’s being advanced for strategic purposes related to the desire of “Israel” and some of the Arab countries to more publicly coordinate attempts to “contain” Iran. This scheme also includes an economic component since “Israel” has plenty of money to invest in the region and has some pretty competitive businesses in many spheres too. This dovetails with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 initiative of

transitioning to a post-oil economy through more real-sector economic investments.

The implications of this process are obvious, and it’s that the strategic situation is changing at least on the international level. The growing number of Arab countries that join this process testifies to their elites’ lack of interest in the Palestinian cause that used to unite them. Instead of being the driving force behind Arab unity, it’s now being grossly exploited as the driving force for unity between the Arab and Zionist elite. The end result is that the Palestinians will continue to suffer because their legitimate right to self-determination isn’t being respected. The occupation likely won’t end anytime soon, and their situation will thus worsen.

**Do you think that normalization seeks to undermine the thought of resistance and the idea of free Palestine?**

That’s precisely what’s happening since some Arab elites care less about their ethnic compatriots’ legitimate rights to self-determination and more about their strategic interests vis-a-vis Iran and economic benefits connected to “Israeli” investments in their countries. That said, this normalization process is also provoking a lot of anger among some average Arabs, who instead of forgetting about resistance and the cause of a free Palestine, are more motivated than ever to support them. However, it’ll remain to be seen how successful they are outside of the Resistance Axis states since there’s heavy pressure being put upon them by “Israel” and its new Arab allies to cease their activities and submit to the so-called “new normal”.

It’s a betrayal of the Palestinians’ political cause in exchange for attempting to buy them off with promised economic investments through the so-called “Deal of the Century”. The Arab Monarchies are leading the charge and encouraging their regional proxies to follow suit, holding out the carrot of “Israeli” investments in their own economies to incentivize them to do so. Given the lack of independence displayed by many Arab nations as well as their less-than-ideal economic situations to put it mildly, it can’t be discounted that some of their leaders might be considering this offer since it appears attractive to them from their elite perspective. That doesn’t, however, mean that their people will support it though since many still proudly stand in solidarity with

the Palestinians’ self-determination cause.

**In your thought, what will be Biden’s foreign policy toward this dispute?**

Biden’s foreign policy is formulated by Obama-era and -influenced officials who are intent on replicating as much of that prior one as possible. If history is any indication, then while the US will remain close to “Israel” like it was during Obama’s two terms, it might also publicly disagree with it on some key issues, notably the need to hold negotiations about Iran’s nuclear energy program and possibly cut some kind of new deal if the political will is present by both sides to do so and the terms are mutually acceptable. Observers can therefore expect the Biden Administration to somewhat diverge from its predecessor’s strident support of “Israeli” interests in all respects. This shouldn’t be misinterpreted as the onset of any sort of rift, but rather the possible beginning of an ironic “normalization” of US-“Israeli” relations whereby the latter is no longer treated as special as it used to be even if it still remains the most privileged of America’s foreign partners.

**The Western mainstream media introduce the Axis of Resistance as a kind of expansion of the Shiite influence over the region. What is your take on this policy?**

The Axis of Resistance is a non-sectarian cross-religious movement that includes Shiites, Sunnis, Christians, Atheists, and others all across the world even though it’s mostly concentrated in West Asia. Focusing only on the Shiite component is meant to discredit the Resistance and imply that it’s really just an Iranian proxy network. It’s still important to be aware of how the Mainstream Media misportrays the Resistance in order to more effectively counter its information warfare narratives, which is why these slanderous claims shouldn’t be ignored but confronted head-on by proud non-Shiite members of this network. They might even consider the wisdom of publicly pledging loyalty to its ideals, if it’s safe for them to do so in their home countries, that is. In any case, the West’s infowar against the Resistance could be flipped around to generate more interest in it if the they creatively use these attacks as the opportunity to raise more awareness about the truth of this network among those who’ve just only heard about it because of the false attacks against it.

## The International Quds Day: Heading towards a historic decisive confrontation

By Driss Addar

The International Quds Day embodies the protection of memory, before the land and properties, from abuse. And the holy places always anticipate the sacred act. On the day that the last Friday of Ramadan was announced as the International Quds Day, the conditions of time and place imply that the future would be for Al-Quds. This city has turned into an address that the resistance resort to whenever he wanders from the road. The city has become a standard for the falsehood and right.

Today we see the intensity of serious action for liberating Al-Quds, which gives all those looking to this day strength, determination and ability. Indeed, it is the spirit of Al-Quds and the power of Al-Quds that prepare the condition for this force and might that we see today along the axis of resistance.

Contrary to what many people think, the disclaimer of some of the Palestinian cause does not mean the end of the issue, but it is a different beginning towards another horizon. They did not offer anything to the case except conspiracy night and day. The truth is that the Palestinian struggle has got rid of the false support for the Palestinian people; in order for the latter to know his a distinction between the camp of truth and the camp of falsehood.

The future of the Palestinian “Israeli” conflict is heading towards a historic decisiveness. All indications suggest the historic defeat of the occupation entity, and I will limit here to three elements that represent the essence of the conflict, and therefore, Israel cannot live so much:

First: “Israel” is not a historical fact, rather it is just a false answer to a question that was posed to Europe, not to the Arab and Islamic world, since the fall of the “Khazaria state” in the Caspian Sea, and the rise of “Jewish trade”, the West has been living what has become known as the “Jewish question”, which constituted a historical dilemma for most European countries. This issue posed a historical impasse. In order to get rid of this historical problem, the European countries searched for many solutions, and Zionism was part of the proposed solutions.

The idea of an alternative homeland came just an answer to a question that was posed to Europe. This answer does not matter the countries in which the entity was planted, as it will definitely end because it is not a real answer. This is only a way to get rid of an element that was considered a haunting factor in the social and economic and political life in the West, as it cannot stand up to confrontation of the landowners.

Second: There is an obstacle in history and geography that confirms the inability of “Israel” to survive in this land. It can be said that geopolitics is currently a catalyst for the rise of the star of the usurper entity, but “Israel” remains a non-state natural, because it is like the advanced caserne of the invisible “Khazaria” state, which is the United States of America, and since it is only a functional tool, its end is linked to the end of the job or the retreat of the employer.

History and geography reject this existence. History is condensed with religious and spiritual symbols, which reject this material existence, which is an occupation under the titles of “historical right”, and a big difference between a historical right and a false right. Therefore, the symbols cannot meet with all this intensity and it is illogical that the meeting takes place between contradictory symbols: Symbols of human tolerance, and historical violence and the desire for revenge that those coming from far horizons carry against the history of the region.

As for geography, it is impossible to gather two extremes in a very small geographical area, as it cannot accommodate the existence of two states, and therefore one of the two states will survive and endure.

Third: The rise of the axis of resistance, as it moves towards ability in the horizon of the moment of historical decisiveness. “Israel” was an indomitable state with a power army in the region and occupies the Arab countries whenever it wants, but today it counts a thousand accounts for whatever step it takes. Despite the enemy’s possession of power, however, there is an important element that distinguishes resistance from occupation. Resistance is a plant that does not need any external condition in order to survive, but the occupation is a strange plant and in order to survive, it is in need of someone who waters it and takes care of it, and if the care process ends, it dies.

Finally, victory over the enemy remains not only a historical inevitability but a divine promise, and the victories of the resistance are the practical verification of Imam Khomeini’s vision, when he declared the last Friday of Ramadan as the International Quds Day. This day is not only symbolic, but it is a way to prepare for a decisive confrontation. The end of “Israel” may come at a lower cost than the resistance fighters expect.

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## Quds Day: To remember the injustice and criminal deeds of the Zionists

By Sonja van den Ende

The current situation in West Asia is deteriorating; even there is a new administration in the U.S., which many thought would be promising for the peace process between Israel and Palestine and the stability for peace in Syria, and Iraq. The renewal of the JCPOA agreement with Iran, or at least a new initiative, has been proven disillusioned. The situation in Syria is still precarious, the U.S. is still looting oil and there is no withdrawal of U.S. forces. Also, Iraq is still facing violence and suppression of the U.S. and its allies NATO. The U.S. is still occupying Iraq, since the illegal war and occupation in 2003. The situation with Israel and Iran is escalating. Israel is killing Iranian scientists and destroying Iranian tankers, loaded with oil for Syria, so people in Syria don’t starve and have oil, their oil is stolen, every day, the U.S. and NATO stealing oil and sending it to the U.S. and Europe to sell it illegally to EU and U.S. citizens as gasoline for their cars.

Under the Trump-administration a so-called peace plan was developed, Israel signed peace treaties with Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE) and even with Morocco. It doesn’t mean that the people

of above-mentioned countries agree, it is just an agreement with the governments. Furthermore, it must be mentioned that the countries who signed a so-called peace treaty have predominantly Sunni-leaders and its population is diverse, for instance in Bahrain, the leaders are Sunni. However, the majority of the Bahraini population is Shiites, and the rulers of Bahrain are connected to the rulers of the KSA.

The U.S. and EU have chosen to let Israel make peace treaties with Sunni religion leaders, these are the countries who have the most oil, therefore they, according to human rights, are discriminating Shiites, throughout the Arab world. For Westerns, who have no idea of the Arab world, it looks like Israel is a “democratic country” seeking peace with its neighbor’s; a distraction from reality, the Zionist strategy, as we can call it, who continuously suppressing Palestinians, stealing their land, violating the so-called Oslo-agreements are violating human rights, detaining children and depriving the Palestinian people from right of a free existence, as laid down in the UN’s Universal declaration of Human Rights.

As long as the Western world, meaning the U.S. and EU are discriminating Arab people on religion,

there is no peace, as long as the Western world its aim is only to steal oil and keep up its imperialistic policy, there will be no peace and prosperity for Arab people and as long as the Western world keep supporting the corrupt elites in these countries, there will be no peace.

There will be no normalization if the Western countries keep occupying Arab countries and most of all, if they don’t recognize that Israel is ruled by Zionists, who have nothing to do with religion as such, the Zionist dream is and will be a “Greater Israel”, no matter how many Arab lives it has to sacrifice. When there is no real effort made for peace and as long as Western ‘puppets-regimes’, like the KSA and Bahrain stay in power there will be no normalization.

The United Nations (UN) is dominated by certain countries and therefore, the organization of the UN must certainly be adjusted after 75 years. The most important issue is that the charter must be fully respected and implemented especially under the COVID-19 pandemic where we see discrimination and violation of the boycott by Israel of sending vaccines to Palestine. The UN has, like most International Organizations, for instance the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW who expelled Syria) a tool for

Western governments only, also the International Criminal Court (ICC) is a good example of Western influence. These institutions don’t acknowledge a multipolar world. They continue their hybrid war on the costs of many, mainly, Arab lives.

The (U.S.) Biden-administration policy towards Israel, will not see dramatic changes. Biden is pursuing the agenda of the Obama-administration, not even that, the policy of the Biden-administration is, I dare to say, the continuation of the war in Syria and Iraq, the unconditionally support towards Israel. Biden and his administration are under the influence of AIPAC and actually they have no real power in the U.S.

The real power in the U.S. (and Europe) are the deep-state, existing from many lobby groups.

As for the propaganda from the West, this is all part of the hybrid war, the U.S. and its partner NATO are waging this war on the countries who embrace the ‘new Silk Road’, Russia and China, also, they are spreading false information about the so-called Axis of Resistance. Blaming mainly Iran (Hezbollah and Syria’s Assad) for wanting to expand its territories, using religion as a tool in this information war. Actually it’s an answer to the hostilities of the Axis of Evil, introduced by the Bush jr. - administration, to destroy countries

who didn’t comply with the war of terror, after the 9/11 attacks on the WTC buildings. The West is known for using religion as a tool of war, they started this ‘game’ in 1999, during the Yugoslavia war, there they started their practice of favoring Sunni Muslims above (in Yugoslavia) Orthodox-Christians. It seems like it has become the standard in their information war and psychological warfare.

The Palestinians are suffering deeply, since 1948 under the yoke of illegal occupation, driven out of their land the majority became refugees. The Arabs and most of all Palestinians have to bleed for the, “mistakes and atrocities” done by the West. It has nothing to do with religion but only occupation, stealing land and resources. The Zionists and Western countries use religion as a tool of war, to divide and conquer. To remember Quds Day is to remember the exodus of the Palestinians and the land that was stolen from them, the injustice and criminal deeds of the Zionists.

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## Seljuk-era arch bridge near Tehran undergoes restoration

➔ 1 The foundation of the bridge was constructed during the Seljuk era (1037–1194) while its other sections were thoroughly renovated in the time of Safavids (1501–1736). Arch bridges have been built since ancient times due to the easy accessibility of stone masonry, which is an appropriate material for sustaining compressive forces.

An arch bridge carries loads primarily by compression, which exerts on the foundation both vertical and horizontal forces. Arch foundations must therefore prevent both vertical settling and horizontal sliding. Despite the more complicated foundation design, the structure itself normally requires less material than a beam bridge of the same span.

Arch bridges can be classified into deck arch bridges (featuring arches below the deck) and through arch bridges (those with arches above the deck, generally tied arches). In all arch bridges, the structural difficulty can be found in the minimization of the misalignment of the arch axis and the line of thrust, as well as a sufficient bending and buckling resistance. General design recommendations focus principally on the arch-to-span ratio, the arch and deck slenderness, and the number of hangers or piers.

Recent innovative arch bridges include high-speed railway (HSR) bridges, concrete-filled steel tubular and precast concrete arches, high-performance concrete or ultra-high performance concrete arches, and steel-concrete composite arches, and feature innovative erection methods. Recent research has been dedicated to the shape and magnitude of equivalent geometric imperfections, fatigue detailing, erection methods, reduction of the arch's self-weight, and new materials for arches, hangers, and ties.

## Ancient objects discovered while digging trench for water pipes

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Ancient objects have recently been unearthed accidentally in a northeastern Iranian village where locals were digging a trench to lay water pipes.

Two earthen urns, which are expected to date from the late Islamic era, have been discovered accidentally during a water supply project in the village of Burs in Torbat-e Heydarieh county, Ali Mohammadi, the tourism chief of the county, announced on Thursday.



The locals soon informed authorities in charge of protecting the cultural heritage that the discovery had been taken place near one of the residential houses, the official added.

Over the past couple of years, Torbat-e Heydarieh and its surroundings have yielded traces of the ancient settlements. Last year, an archaeological site was exposed on the outskirts of Torbat-e Heydarieh after torrential rains washed the soil away. The site was accessed to date back to the early and middle Islamic eras, according to preliminary studies carried out by the cultural heritage experts.

According to archaeological studies, Torbat-e Heydarieh is home to several historical caves due to its favorable habitat conditions and traces of habitation from about 40,000 years have been identified in the caves of the region. The history of the area stretches back to the Achaemenian Empire from the 6th to 4th century BC and the Parthian Empire from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century CE.

## Restoration project completed in ancient village in southeast Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN – Restoration work has been completed on the historical core of Nahuk village, which is situated in the lesser-known Sistan-Baluchestan province, southeast Iran.

The restoration project was commenced last September on the village that bears 22 historical monuments, of which 11 are registered on the national list of cultural heritage, according to Mansoureh Molla-Elahi, the deputy provincial tourism chief.



Some historical monuments and walls were strengthened and restored to former shapes using original material such as traditional bricks, mud mortar, and straw, the official explained.

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. In ancient times, the region was a crossword of the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations.

The province possesses special significance because of being located in a strategic and transit location, especially Chabahar which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters. The vast province is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

# Sassanid-era Sirvan to undergo archaeological survey

HERITAGE TEHRAN – An archaeological survey and research project is planned to start on Sirvan, a western Iranian town in modern Ilam province, which dates from the Sassanid era (224–651).

A budget of two billion rials (about \$48,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, provincial tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh announced on Friday.

The mission involves researching, identifying, documenting, and preparing management plans for the historical site, the official added.

Sirvan was one of the most important and prosperous cities of Iran in the Sassanid period. It is home to the ruined bridges, roads, yards, numerous castles, and other ancient settlements dating back to the Sassanid era.

The historical city of Sirvan was inscribed on Iran's National Heritage List in 2001.

The under-the-radar province is making its best to grow into a major travel destination for both domestic and international holidaymakers, sightseers, history buffs, and nature lovers.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Experts believe during the Sassanid era the art and archi-



itecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

The Sassanid archaeological landscape also represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern

Iran -- titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region"-- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. It reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

The dynasty evolved by Ardashir I and was destroyed by the Arabs during a period of 637 to 651. The dynasty was named after Sasan, an ancestor of Ardashir I. Under his leadership who reigned from 224 to 241, the Sassanians overthrew the Parthians and created an empire that was constantly changing in size as it reacted to Rome and Byzantium to the west and the Kushans and Hephthalites to the east, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

At the time of Shapur I (reigned 241 CE–272), the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys.

## Access path to once out-of-reach fort under construction

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Local authorities have launched a tourism project to construct an access path to Qahqaheh fortress, which was once an out-of-reach military monument in Meshkinshahr, north-western Ardebil province.

The access road to Qahqaheh fortress, which is located in the Moradlu region of Meshkinshahr, is being constructed to facilitate tourism and to pave the way for the better introduction of historical and natural elements of the region, Meshkinshahr's tourism chief Imanali Imani announced on Thursday.

A budget of 150 billion rials (about \$3.5 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, which is estimated to be completed by the month of Tir (which starts on June 22), the official added.

The original structure of the fortress, which is registered

on the national cultural heritage list under the number 6192, dates back to the Parthian period (247 BC – 224 CE). And it was used as a jail in the Safavid period (1501–1736) to keep political prisoners, he explained.

Meshkinshahr embraces several historical sites including Qale Khohneh ("Old Castle"), the ancient site of Shahr-e Yeri, and Qahqaheh castle.

Situated near the high Mount Sabalan, Meshkinshahr enjoys a moderate mountainous climate and the Sabalan summit can be seen in the south of the city with eye-catching sceneries. The antiquity of the city dates back to the early centuries of Islam but in the Safavid era, it was thriving even more. The city is well known for its rugs and its mineral springs.

Meshkinshahr suspension bridge with 345 meters long, 3 meters wide, and 80 meters high, which was inaugurated



in 2015 and is said to be the largest of its kind in West Asia, is also one of the top tourist destinations of the city.

## 400 beds to be added to accommodation capacity of Yazd

TOURISM TEHRAN – A total of 400 beds is expected to be added to the accommodation capacity of the touristic Yazd province, a local official announced on Wednesday.

Ten tourism projects, which are composed of hotels and other lodging centers, are under construction across Yazd province, the official said.

"Construction work has been finished on two of the projects, and the rest are complete by 70 to 90 percent."

"200 [hotel] rooms and 400 beds will



be added to the accommodation capacity of Yazd when the projects come on stream," the official said.

The central province is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is home to thousands of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the capital city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very

harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Yazd is known today for its traditional districts, the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad. The city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

## Some \$3.5m paid to support tourism businesses in Golestan

HERITAGE TEHRAN – The Iranian government has paid some 147 billion rials (\$3.5 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic as well as floods in the northern province of Golestan.

Furthermore, the changing scene of tourism, ceremonies, exhibitions, and festivals have contributed to the level of handicrafts sales since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, the provincial tourism chief Ahmad Tajari said on Tuesday.

Travel-relates businesses were also severely damaged when the province was hit hard by catastrophic floods during the Iranian New Year holidays in March 2019, he added.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst its most famous. Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that the tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

**Government's care and support packages**

Last October, the deputy tourism chief, Vali Teymouri, announced that a new support package was approved to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (\$3,800



at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to nine billion rials (\$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate, he said.

The loans would be allocated to tourist guides, travel agencies, tourism transport companies, tourism educational institutions, eco-lodges and traditional accommodations, hotels, apartment hotels, motels, and guesthouses as well as traditional accommodation centers, tourism complexes, and recreational centers, the official explained.

Teymouri in September pointed to the 1.3 million tourism workers in the country, who are facing several issues due to the coronavirus crisis and said "This number, in addition to their households, includes a significant population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be

considered in ministry's decisions."

Teymouri in August announced that the tourism ministry had approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million) to support corona-affected tourism businesses, covering as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector.

**Tourism industry in critical situation**

Mounesan in October warned that Iran's cultural heritage and tourism would be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue.

Last August, the tourism minister said that the tourism sector of the Islamic Republic had suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

He also noted that the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

## Pre-historic potteries recovered from illegally excavated site

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Iranian police have recently recovered 27 prehistorical potteries from an illegal excavation site situated in the ancient hill of Monjuq in Tarom, northwestern Zanjan province.

The discovered relics are estimated to date back to the Iron Age, said Hossein-Ali Fazli, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage, CHTN reported on Friday.

The objects, which include clay utensils, statues, and hairpins, have been handed over

to the province's directorate of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the official added.

The culprits had escaped before the police forces arrive at the crime scene.

Unfortunately, the authorities haven't managed to detain any individuals involved in the illegal excavations yet, he explained.

Iron Age is the final technological and cultural stage in the Stone–Bronze–Iron Age sequence. The date of the full Iron Age, in which this metal, for the most part, replaced

bronze in implements and weapons, varied geographically, beginning in the Middle East and southeastern Europe about 1200 BC but in China not until about 600 BC, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Although in West Asia iron had limited use as a scarce and precious metal as early as 3000 BC, there is no indication that people at that time recognized its superior qualities over those of bronze.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE).

The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation on the Iranian plateau is found from deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites in the Zagros Mountains, which dates back to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).



# Foreign students in Iranian universities more than tripled

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — In 2013, some 18,000 foreign nationals were studying in Iranian universities, now the figure has increased by 3.2 times, reaching up to 58,000. Mojtaba Sedighi, deputy minister of science has stated, IRNA reported on Thursday.

Afshin Akhoundzadeh, head of the office for non-Iranian students at the Organization of Student Affairs, said in April that students from 133 countries are currently studying in Iranian universities.

Some 25,000 of the students are studying in universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science (4,000 with scholarship, 16,600 without a scholarship, and 10,000 through the Iranian national university entrance exam), while 25,000 others are receiving education in Azad University, and about 2,000 in medical universities.

Fifty-seven percent of the international students are studying for a master's de-



gree, 27 percent for a bachelor's degree and 15 percent are educating to receive a Ph.D., while the remaining one percent study at other levels.

Law, Persian literature and computer engineering are the top three fields of study for foreign students in Iran, while civil engineering, business management, political science, English language and literature, Quran and hadith sciences, international relations, and electrical engineering, and other majors with the highest number of non-Iranian students.

In 2013, 35 centers were allowed to admit foreign students, which has increased to 77 in 2021.

Abdol-Hamid Alizadeh, deputy minister of science has said that 40,000 foreign nationals are studying in 43 Iranian universities, 22,000 of whom are studying at the universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science, 8,000 at the Azad University, 3,000 at the Ministry of Health, and the rest at other universities.

## Philanthropists donate \$10m to youth marriage

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Iranian benefactors have provided 37,864 home appliances worth 419 billion rials (nearly \$10 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to support the marriage of financially-struggling couples.

As an integral part of the Iranian marriage tradition, the bride's family provides the couple with furniture and home appliances (called Jahiziyeh in Persian) several days before the wedding.

A national campaign launched by the Ministry of Sport and Youth to facilitate and remove barriers to youth marriage and with the aim of providing Jahiziyeh to the needy couples throughout the country, IRNA reported on Thursday.

There are several organizations and numerous charities in Iran which help support the marriage of deprived couples or support the couples experiencing fertility problems.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, also known as Setad-e Ejraiy-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Imam, also provided 3,000 financially struggling couples with necessary home appliances in July 2019.

The Foundation has also financially supported 7,000 infertile couples in rural areas to receive necessary treatments earlier in April.

The Barakat family growth plan has been implemented since 2015, which resulted in the identification of 13,270



infertile couples in rural areas, and 7,000 of whom have been introduced to medical centers and received treatment.

### Marriage threefold of divorce in Iran

Some 307,349 marriages and 99,679 divorces have been registered in the country during the first seven months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-October 21), according to the statistics of the National Organization for Civil Registration.

In December 2020, Seifollah Aboutorabi, the National Organization for Civil Registration spokesman said that during the first 9 months of the current [Iranian calendar]

year, some 853,084 births were registered across the country, as well as 397,501 deaths during the same period.

### Demographic issue

The fertility rate in Iran has been declining over the past eight years, the lowest of which was related to the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019- March 2020) with a birth rate of 1.2, according to the data published by the Statistics Center.

The number of births in the whole country faced a downward trend over the past three years, as registered births decreased to 1,196,135 over the past [Iranian calendar] year; a difference of roughly over 120,000 to 16,000 per year.

Population decline comes up with consequences, including the reduction of the working population (aged 15 to 64) and the aging population in the coming decades.

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) wrote in an article earlier in July that the fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history.

Melinda Gates, an American philanthropist and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, also wrote on her Twitter account that "The fastest decrease in the rate of childbearing per woman in the history of the world has happened in Iran!"

## Meeting climate goals would 'halve' sea level rise from melting ice, study says

Limiting global heating to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels could halve the amount of sea level rise from melting land ice this century, when compared to a scenario based on current climate pledges, a study finds.

Under the Paris Agreement, countries agreed to restrict global heating to "well below" 2C by the end of the century, with an aspiration of keeping temperatures at 1.5C. However, current pledges put forward by countries would see the world reach around 3C of warming by 2100.

The new research, published in the journal Nature, examines the extent to which the world's glaciers and ice sheets will contribute to sea level rise by 2100 under different levels of global heating.

It finds that, under current climate pledges, the melting of land ice could cause sea levels to increase by a median of 25cm by the end of the century. However, if efforts are made to keep global temperature rise to 1.5C, this figure could be reduced to 13cm.

The contribution of melting ice to rising seas could be much higher if Antarctica follows a "pessimistic" pathway in the future, the research adds.

The findings come as a second study, also published in Nature, warns that sea level rise from Antarctica could increase substantially

if global temperatures exceed 3C, with an "abrupt jump" in the pace of Antarctic ice loss expected around 2060.

Dr Tamsin Edwards, a climate scientist at King's College London and lead author of the first research paper, told a press briefing: "We know that global sea levels are going to continue to rise, but we could halve the contribution from ice melt if we limit warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, relative to current pledges.

"That means that coastal flooding will still increase but less severely if we manage to limit warming to 1.5C."

Global sea levels have risen by a total of around 18 to 20cm since 1900, raising the risk of coastal flooding and the loss of low-lying small islands, among other impacts.

Melting land ice – glaciers and the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets – currently account for around half of all sea level rises. The other major driver is "thermal expansion", a term for how seawater expands as it heats up.

The research makes use of high-resolution models and a wide range possible scenarios for how humans will heat the planet over the coming decades.

It finds that increasing global temperatures will continue to drive the loss of glaciers, slow-moving rivers of ice that supply drinking

water for millions.

It also finds that increasing heat will continue to have a large impact on the Greenland ice sheet, a mass of frozen freshwater around three times the size of Texas that sits on the island.

The study says that limiting global heating to 1.5C could reduce the amount of mass lost from Greenland's ice sheet by 70 per cent by the end of the century, when compared to a scenario based on current climate pledges.

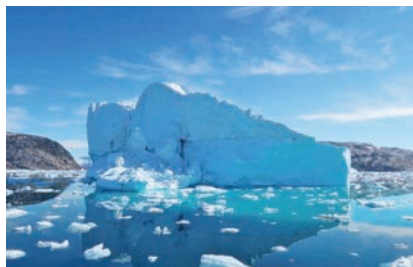
The researchers also find that global heating will continue to affect the Antarctic ice sheet – the single largest mass of ice on Earth.

However, in the research paper, the authors say their findings come up with "no clear" picture of how Antarctica is likely to respond to rising emissions.

The reason for this is that the factors affecting Antarctica as the world heats up are likely to be complex and are not yet fully understood, the scientists say. In addition, the different regions of the vast ice sheet are expected to vary in their response to heating.

To account for this, the authors include a range of possible scenarios of Antarctic ice loss over the course of the 21st century.

"If we're unlucky with the future of Antarctica and the predictions are at the upper end of the modelling uncertainty range ... that



makes a big difference," Dr Edwards said.

The results suggest that, under a pessimistic scenario, Antarctic ice loss could be five times higher – leading to 42cm of sea level rise from melting ice by the end of the century under current pledges and 30cm of sea level rise if global heating is limited to 1.5C.

The findings of the study are "consistent" with the sea level rise estimates put together by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's leading authority on climate science, said Dr Ruth Mottram, a climate scientist at the Danish Meteorological Institute, who was not involved in the study.

"The big uncertainties in terms of sea level rise are still bound up with Antarctica, and that I think will continue," she told The Independent.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

## Female Asiatic lion to join male companion in Iran

Iran will play host to a female Asiatic lion from Ireland to accompany the recently returned male lion under a population management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), a veterinarian at Eram Zoo has said.

The female lion, born 4 years ago, now is coming back to its motherland after being extinct for 8 decades, YJC quoted Iman Memarian as saying on Saturday.

He went on to say that the lion has undergone genetic tests and diagnostics under the EAZA supervision, and the results have showed that the animal is completely healthy.

Both will be kept at Tehran Zoological Garden separately for a period, and then will live together, Memarian concluded.

## شیر ماده ایرانی به جفت نر خود می پیوندد

دامپزشک پارک پردیسان و مدیر باغ وحش ارم از پیوستن شیر ماده ایرانی از ایرلند به جفت نر خود تحت نظر برنامه تکثیر گونه‌های در خطر انقراض خبر داد.

ایمان معماریان در گفتگو با خبرنگار حوزه محیط زیست گروه اجتماعی باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، اظهار کرد: شیرماده ایرانی که در باغ وحش دوبلین ایرلند به دنیا آمده و ۴ ساله است، پس از ۸۰ سال در راه بازگشت به وطن است.

وی افزود: شیر ماده ایرانی از نظر ژنتیک و نبود بیماری چک شده و هیچ گونه مشکلی نداشته، این شیر پس از استانداردسازی مورد تایید اتحادیه باغ وحش‌های اروپا به ایران جابه جا شد.

دامپزشک پارک پردیسان و مدیر باغ وحش ارم ادامه داد: دو شیر ماده و نر ایرانی مدتی جدا از هم زیست خواهند کرد و به صورت تدریجی این دو گونه به هم معرفی خواهند شد.

## Iran's significant contribution to world's scientific growth

### ➔ 1 Iran leading the world in 'science diplomacy'

In November 2020, scientific studies and analyses extracted from the Scopus International Citation Database showed that the rate of scientific contributions of Iranian researchers to the world increased from 17 percent in 2011 to 31 percent in 2020, becoming the world's leading country in science diplomacy with 14 percent growth.



The development of international scientific partnerships and diplomacy is one of the main policies of Iran, which is also emphasized by the country's higher education system, Mohammad Javad Delghani, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC), said.

One of the most important indicators of scientific participation is the share of the latest joint international scientific findings in the total scientific publications of the country, he added.

In 2016, the share of articles with international participation in total science production of the country was 20 percent, which reached 22-24-27-31 over the past 4 years, respectively.

"The share of articles with international participation has accelerated from the total number of articles produced in all subject areas. But comparing 2019 with 2018, the fields of humanities and basic sciences have had the highest growth rate.

In 2019, about 30 percent of the scientific publications in the field of basic sciences with the participation of international researchers held the highest share among other fields.

After that, the articles of two fields of technology, engineering, and agricultural sciences are in the next position with 29 percent publications, then comes social science and medical science," according to Delghani.

### Iranian universities performance

Times Higher Education has published its annual ranking of the world's top universities for 2021, listing 47 Iranian universities, which shows an increase of 7 universities compared to the last year.

With 47 Iranian universities ranked among 1,527 top universities of 93 countries in the world in 2021 rankings, Iran achieved a great improvement in the academic field.

Some 21 Islamic countries were also listed in the ranking, however, Iran holds the highest share with 47 universities.

With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

According to statistics released by the International Web of Science Database, Iran's citation rank has always been on the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

Iran ranks first in terms of the number of universities in the region and among Islamic countries, according to Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2020.

Two Iranian universities have been ranked among the top 100 universities in Asia, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities for July 2020.

Moreover, 7 Iranian universities have been listed among the best 1000 worldwide; including, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, Tarbiat Modares University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology.

In June 2020, THE Asia University Rankings 2020 ranked five Iranian universities among the top 100 universities worldwide.






The Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking has placed 36 Iranian universities in the list of over 1,000 major universities worldwide in 2020 compared with 26 universities in 2019.

Also, five Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top 1,000 universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 177)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Well done!	آفرین!	
permission	إِجَازَه	
to permit	إِجَازَه دَاَدَن	
hope	أَمِید	
hopeful	أَمِیدوار	
ancient	بَاسِتانِی	
to weave	بَافِتن - بَاف	
by reason of	بِه دَلِیلِ /da'lele/	
hall	تالار	
formation	تَشکیل	
to be formed	تَشکیل شُدَن	
civilization	تَمَنُّدَن	
riddle	چِیستان (چیست آن؟)	
reason	دَلِیل (جَمع : دَلایل, دَلیل‌ها)	
hello	سَلام عَلَیکُم : سلام	
cultural	فَرهَنگی	
collection, complex	مَجموعِه	



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you overpower your enemy, then pardon him by way of thankfulness to Allah, for being able to subdue him.  
Imam Ali (AS)

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



**Cartoon**  
■ A collection of cartoons on Palestine are on display in a virtual exhibition at the Palestine Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran. The exhibition, which has been organized to observe International Quds Day, will run until May 12 on www.honar.ac.ir/index.aspx-?&siteid=1&&siteid=1&pageid=3035.



**Painting**  
■ Artibition Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Nasser Ovissi, Mohammad-Ali Taraqqijah and Sadeq Tabrizi. The exhibit runs until May 16 at the gallery located at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golsabi St., off Shariati Ave.



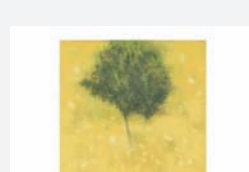
■ A collection of paintings by Habib Moradi is on display in an exhibition at the Hall 1 of O Gallery. Hall 2 of the gallery is showcasing artworks in various media by Armin Ebrahimi, Maryam Espandi, Maryam Mehri, Afshan Daneshvar and several other artists. The exhibitions will be running until May 24 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Farshid Maleki is underway at Tarrahan Azad Gallery. The exhibit will run until May 20 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.



■ Entezami Gallery is hanging paintings by a group of artists, including Shiva Sadeqi, Shabnam Moradi, Parastu Vahidi and Nahid Ahmadi, in an exhibition entitled "Poetry of Colors". The exhibit will run until May 12 at the gallery located at 608 Shariati Ave. near Motahhari St.



**Drawing/painting**  
■ Hamidreza Andarz is hanging his latest collection of drawings and paintings in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery. The exhibit titled "The Bottle of Time" will run until May 19 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



**Multimedia**  
■ Behdad Lahuti, Iman Safai, Farzaneh Hosseini and Mojtaba are displaying their latest artworks in various media in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Overture" will continue until June 3 at the gallery located at 72 Khodami St., Vanak Sq.



■ A collection of artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Motaahreh Khabiri, Maryam Ramezani, Parisa Gholamian and Faezeh Alinejad, is on view in an exhibition at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Gap" will run until May 12 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Sohrab Pak, Tannaz Tavassoli and Ahmad Sharbati is currently underway at Sharif Gallery. The exhibit will be running until May 18 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.



**Photo**  
■ Arash Afruzi is showcasing his latest collection of photos in an exhibition at Golhayeh Davudi Gallery. The exhibition will be running until May 13 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.

# Turkish, Iranian artists win top prizes at Palestine Is Not Alone contest

➔ Demirci took first prize in the cartoon section and Vafatabar and Sarabi won first prizes in the caricature and poster categories respectively.

The competition was organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization in solidarity with Palestine. Submissions to the contest were showcased in an exhibition at the Abolfazl Aali Gallery of the bureau over the past two weeks.

Second prize in the cartoon section went to Mahmud Nazari, and Alireza Baqeri and Iman Mandegari, both from Iran, received second prizes in the caricature and poster sections.

In the cartoon section, the special jury award was given to Palestinian artist Haneen Taysier Al Amassie.

Raul Fernando Zuleta from Colombia, Antonio Antunes from Portugal and Xu Kai from China won third prizes in the cartoon,

caricature and Poster categories respectively.

The winners were announced during a live TV program broadcast from IRIB's Ofoq Channel, which was attended by Art Bureau director Mohammad-Mehdi Dadman.

"No doubt that all the world's altruist people, including artists, do not tolerate the bullying of Palestinians by the Zionist regime, and they show their negative response to the oppression," he said during the program.

"The motto of the competition, that Palestine is not alone, was demonstrated in practice to everybody in the world; a free Palestine is our idea, which is not only limited to Iran," he added.

The artworks in various categories of the contest were judged by a jury composed of Luiz Carlos Fernandez from Brazil, Cristina Bernazzani from Italy, Izabela Kowalska from Poland and Balai Kartun Rossem from Malaysia.



Cartoon by Turkish artist Hicabi Demirci won first prize in the cartoon section of the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest in Tehran, Iran.

## Annecy festival picks Iranian animations "The Dragon's Treasure", "Divare Chaharom"



"Divare Chaharom" directed by Mahbubeh Kalai.

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian movies "The Dragon's Treasure" and "Divare Chaharom" will be screened in the various sections of the Annecy International Animation Film Festival, a

prestigious French event for the animation industry.

The festival will take place from June 14 to 19 in the town of Annecy.

"The Dragon's Treasure" by Ashkan Rahgozar will be reviewed in the Mifa Pitches section of the festival.

The animation is about an 8-year-old girl named Sayeh, who goes on an adventure in search of the dragon's treasure to save her grandmother's village from drought. But she doesn't know that the real treasure is water and she must fill up all the aqueducts.

It is a co-production of Hoorakhsh, Rahgozar's animation studio in Tehran, and Mystic House Production Ltd. based in the Canadian city of Toronto.

Rahgozar's previous movie "The Last Fiction" was screened in a non-competitive section of the Annecy festival in 2018.

The Mifa Pitches are designed to reveal the best original animation film projects in development.

## Swedish gallery Atchom showcases paintings by Sadeq Amirrahmani

**A R T TEHRAN** — A collection of the latest paintings by Iranian artist Sadeq Amirrahmani is currently on view in an exhibition at Atchom Gallery in Gothenburg, Sweden.

The exhibition named "Variation" opened on April 20 and will run until May 14.

"Before anything else, Sadeq Amirrahmani's works present forms and colors that engage us," the gallery wrote in a statement for the exhibit.

"There is no unified topic, and the lived experiences of the artist are directly presented to us in the form of watercolor paintings,"

the gallery added.

The statement also presents some comments made by Amirrahmani.

"If I want to paint something, I paint it right in the middle of the canvas or paper," he said.

"I don't understand why the composition should be determined based on a set of principles. I'm not deeming those teachings to be incorrect, but they come from another state of mind," he noted.

"Perhaps I'll experience them someday. I have always had colors in my work, but I never use colors to set the mood of my work.

"There are times that the work looks beautiful, but it isn't finished. These are the times that you should stop controlling the work and allow it to continue on its own way." He preserves his relation with the work until the end and does not attempt to control or embellish it.

As a result, his works have a tangible reality that even takes the audience to the moment they were created.

Atchom Gallery's next showcase, which will be held from May 18 to June 11, has been dedicated to Iranian artist Ali Vaziri.



A poster for Iranian artist Sadeq Amirrahmani's exhibition "Variation" at Atchom Gallery in Gothenburg, Sweden.

## Turkish, Iranian artists win top prizes at Palestine Is Not Alone contest

**A R T TEHRAN** — Turkish cartoonist Hicabi Demirci and Iranian artists Payam Vafatabar and Puya Sarabi won the top prizes at the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest, the organizers announced on Thursday.

Demirci took first prize in the cartoon section and Vafatabar and Sarabi won first prizes in the caricature and poster categories respectively.

The competition was organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization in solidarity with Palestine.

Submissions to the contest were showcased in an exhibition at the Abolfazl Aali Gallery of the bureau over the past two weeks.

Second prize in the cartoon section went to Mahmud Nazari, and Alireza Baqeri and Iman Mandegari, both from Iran, received second prizes in the caricature and poster sections.

In the cartoon section, the special jury award was given



Cartoon by Turkish artist Hicabi Demirci won first prize in the cartoon section of the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest in Tehran, Iran.

## "Portraits and Persons" published in Persian

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — "Portraits and Persons: A Philosophical Inquiry" by American philosopher Cynthia A. Freeland has recently been published in Persian. Gilgamesh is the publisher of the book translated by Hossein Azimi.

Freeland's discussion is remarkably free-wheeling. For example, in considering the

simple question of whether one can have a portrait of an animal, she ranges from Descartes and Darwin to William Wegman's "May Ray" and David Hockney's dachshunds, and she sheds light on such issues as whether or not animals possess soul, mind, or individuality of character.

Indeed, throughout the book, Freeland

addresses a whole host of fascinating philosophical problems posed by the art of portraiture.

How exactly have artists through the ages managed to depict the inner state of the subject being portrayed? Is it in fact possible for an artist to capture someone's individual "air", their unique aura? And how has science been used to help in this quest?

Featuring more than fifty halftones, this is an exhilarating philosophical exploration of portraiture that highlights its important contribution to the complex evolving discourse about human nature.

Cynthia is an associate professor of philosophy and director of Women's Studies at the University of Houston.

## Expert on art history Mehdi Aliakbarzadeh appointed to IIDCYA

**A R T TEHRAN** — Mehdi Aliakbarzadeh, an expert on art history, has been selected as the new director of Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).

His inauguration ceremony was held at the office of the institute on Thursday.

He replaces poet Fazel Nazari, the author of "Cries of

the Emperor", "The Minority" and "Book", who had held the position since December 2017.

Aliakbarzadeh was the former director of the East Azarbaijan branch of the IIDCYA. He is also the author of several books, including "Colors and Training", "Colors in Children's Painting", and the short story collection "Fragrance of Hope and Experience".



New director of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, Mehdi Aliakbarzadeh, in an undated photo.



# Normalization is only at the rulers' level, it has not influenced public opinion

BY ALI. A. JENABZADEH

Hossein Amirabdollahian, the former Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs in Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs tells the Tehran Times that hence most of the Arab regimes which normalized ties with Israel never had a significant role in supporting Palestine and Palestinian cause, their absence in Palestine equations due to normalization will not have any significant impact on the process of Palestine's liberation.

Elaborating Iran's initiative for a free referendum in Palestine, Amirabdollahian says, "The Islamic Republic of Iran suggested the plan for holding a democratic referendum among all the original Palestinians. When we say 'the original Palestinians' we mean that those brought to Palestine from Europe and elsewhere have no grace in the historical, civilizational, and religious land of Palestine".

Following is the full text of the interview:

**Today, with more than 70 years of occupation of the Palestinian land by Israel, we still see that the Muslim world has not made an effective move to deal with this occupation. What are the reasons for the divergence of the Muslim world against Israel?**

In the first years of the occupation of the Palestinian land, the feelings and enthusiasm of the Muslim world were very high. The anti-Zionist feelings were very identical while some Arab countries entered into a war called the 6-Day war with the Zionist regime. In those years, what had happened was that although the fake Israeli regime was weak, strong Arab armies failed to defeat it. After that, we saw that at the popular level and public opinion, there was no change in the people's enthusiasm in support of the Palestinian cause, but at the level of rulers, Anwar Sadat was the first to sign a deal to normalize relations with the Zionist regime. By 2006, two decades after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, a new passion emerged for support of Palestine. Imam Khomeini played an essential role in reviving the Palestinian issue. In the past three decades, also, the Leader at various levels in the Islamic Republic has given special attention to this issue. The support of the resistance, the dynamic movement of the resistance, seems to have shifted the equation in favor of Palestinians and to the detriment of the Zionist regime.

The Zionists inside Israel are facing dead ends and many crises today after 70 years. In the domestic scene of the fake Israeli regime, we see that the fourth election has been held. The officials came to a political stalemate that cannot forge a coalition. This is a flaw in the system. This is not a democracy. Netanyahu has employed every possible corruption and abuse of power inside the Zionist regime for many years as the hangman of the Zionists.

If the Zionists had real democracy, their prime minister wouldn't have passed through all the courts and grappled with embezzlement and all kinds of corruption. The stalemate in different areas is indeed recognizable. Regarding resistance, the Zionist regime needs to secure its safety, but incendiary kites to rockets and sophisticated missiles threaten their safety. Resistance is depicting itself as a strong pillar in Lebanon and Palestine behind Zionists' concrete walls. The resistance has taken extraordinary measures at different junctures in the 33-day war in Lebanon in the 22-day war, 51-day war, 8-day war, and two-day war of Gaza.

**In recent years, we saw that some Arab countries showed a willingness to forge relations with Israel. What causes this proximity?**

Nations are separate from the rulers. Those who suffer from a lack of legitimacy lie side by side with an illegitimate regime. First, when we speak of Arab rulers



today, we refer to those who take steps, normalize their relationship, and claim that it would cover only economic ties and tourism like Bahrain and UAE. In UAE, a family is ruling, and Bahrain has a ruling regime with a deep rift. Now you know the structure in the UAE and Bahrain politically. Therefore, while it is said that the Arab world is leading to divergence and approximates the Zionist regime, it is not an exact expression. Still, many exaggerate, for example, say that Iran's problem with the Arab world should be solved. We don't have problems with the Arab world, and the Arab world has no problem with us. Didn't we just come to support Syria for nearly a decade? Isn't Syria a part of the Arab world? Have we not stood by Iraq since 2003? In Saddam's time, I was on a diplomatic mission in Iraq. At that time, on the streets of Baghdad, Arab sentiments were extraordinary. Once, the current Saudi King Salman was quoted that he has expressed concern at a meeting of his close circle about the Arbaeen scenes and million-man march, saying that "I do not know what has happened to the Iraqis who have forgotten their origins as Arabs." The Iraqis did not forget their origins as Arabs. They are Arabs, and we have supported Arab Iraq. Is our support of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and Palestine the support of non-Arabs? Is our support of Lebanon the support of non-Arabs? Iran is supporting Arabs. They say Iran-Arab relations have been damaged. This is not true. It is "Iran-Saudi relations" that have faced difficulties due to the non-constructive role of Saudi Arabia in the region, not Iran-Arab relations. A new chapter is about to start. We hope that Muhammad Salman's statements would have operational support and witness positive steps by the Saudi officials to end unconstructive measures towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and the region.

Sometimes my students, or some diplomats, intellectuals, and think tanks, ask me why Iran has just one strategy for Palestine and Quds, which is resistance? Isn't there another option other than the missile? Isn't there another way other than fighting? Of course, there is. The Islamic Republic of Iran suggested the plan for holding a democratic referendum among all the original Palestinians. When we say "the original Palestinians," we mean that those brought to Palestine from Europe and elsewhere have no grace in the historical,

civilizational, and religious land of Palestine. But for them, we have democratic words. The Islamic Republic of Iran has developed a plan that the Leader has made some references to. The plan is registered in the United Nations and has been published in five official languages: Russian, Chinese, Arabic, French, and English. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, we believe that Palestinians must hold a referendum. All Palestinians, whether abroad, those living in the camps, and those who live in the Palestinian territory, have to use their right of self-determination.

They must form a democratically elected government. Who must participate in the referendum? The original Palestinians, including Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The vote of the same people must form the Palestinian government. And the government that is created must make decisions about the future of Palestine. How could it be managed? How must the unwanted visitor be dealt with? This has a political solution that the Islamic Republic has suggested. But the Zionists, who have ruled the occupied lands for the past 70 years and even have taken the Jews in captivity, are unwilling to accept such a plan. Today, many political leaders and world intellectuals who read the Iranian plan are surprised by how political and democratic it is. But the Zionists believe in the logic of war. Their rationale is to possess nuclear weapons. Their rationale is the logic of killing children and women. Those who face a stalemate in holding their own elections and cannot reach a consensus on making their government will not accept such a constructive plan.

**Does the Islamic Republic have a plan for occupied Palestine, such as what happened to South Africa's apartheid and the new system came to power and removed inequalities?**

We can't use the example of South Africa to describe the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. South Africa was a real country, not a fake one. It was not occupied land, but we are talking about an illegitimate, occupying, and fake regime when it comes to Israel, which is rotten in essence.

The political plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on the right to self-determination in international law and has been accepted by all. There is

a reference in the Holy Quran. You can also find its references in the Bible and the Torah. People have the right to determine their fate. But when we say that our views are not just about Palestinian Muslims, we mean that the historical inhabitants of Palestine, meaning Muslims and Christians, and Jews, must decide on their fate. The representatives of the people can determine the fate of these uninvited guests. Iran's plan has exact details. How the election will be held under the auspices of the United Nations, how it should be financed, all the details have been envisaged in the plan. It has been an effective plan that has been registered as Iran's initiative in the United Nations.

**The normalization of relations between some Arab countries with Israel today is regarded as a critical issue for the Muslim world and a severe blow. What is the reason behind this normalization when the Palestinians are facing the highest pressures and violations of rights by the Israelis?**

Today, in the Arab world, the influential countries are Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, even Saudi Arabia. Bahrain was once an Iranian island separated by the Shah of Iran's betrayal. Today it is a political unit.

Bahrain and the UAE have just begun to form in the last decades, almost from the 1970s. What's been the contribution of the rulers of these countries in supporting the Palestinian cause in these years? Have they played any role at all? What's their stance in the equation? Now, let's ask, what happens when they publicly announce their support for Israel?

I think nothing! They never had a significant role in supporting Palestine, so once they unveiled their relations with Israel, an insignificant role disappeared utterly. It doesn't make a significant change.

Bahraini or the Emirates rulers have never really played a role in helping the Palestinian people and resistance. So it's not accurate to say that the supporters of resistance are now supporters of the Zionist regime. Saudi Arabia may have had links to the Israelis in secret, but it will pay a massive price if it called for the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime. Therefore, this is very important. Remember the circus that

was launched on the balcony of the White House a few months ago and forced the foreign ministers of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain to sign an agreement. You saw Trump's behavior with them when he ordered them to sign an agreement with Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister of the Zionist regime. It was an absolute insult to the nation of Bahrain and the nation of the UAE. The foreign ministers themselves were ashamed of what they did. But what was the impact of this show on the Palestinian issue? Nothing! Because these countries have no place at all in the equations of the Palestinian cause.

On the contrary, Syria is an example of the Arab countries on Palestine's side. Syria helped Palestine during the realm of Hafez al-Assad as well as Mr. Bashar al-Assad. We also have the case of Lebanon and the Lebanese resistance against the Zionist regime. Lebanon has a compromise plan to deal with the Zionist regime. So does Syria and even Iraq. But countries like Bahrain and UAE playing on the balcony of the White House, and in practice, there will be no special surprises and no change in the Palestinian equation.

**Do you think the countries that have normalized ties with Israel or will do so will be in trouble with their nations internally? The normalization project is entirely in contradiction with the sympathy of their people with Palestinians. How are these rulers seeking to justify their public opinion?**

First, their structure is different. Second, in Bahrain, for instance, the government has problems with its people. There is a deep rift between the people of Bahrain and the Al-Khalifa. The challenge is so severe that you can see it on the streets of Bahrain right now. You can see it in cyberspace and the media. People react to this issue. What UAE and Bahraini officials did was stabbing Palestine in the back. No one can overlook their wickedness. But their impact on the Palestin's equations is zero.

**What is your opinion of the agreement known as the Abraham Accords between Israel and America?**

The Israelis and Americans have called the accords to sanctify their evil intentions. It is all but adherence to Abrahamian values line. They misused Abraham's name.

**Israel seems intent to portray Iran as a threat to the region by increasing ties with these Arab countries via this agreement. Its argument implies that since Israel and some Arab countries have normal relations and Iran doesn't comply with such relations, Iran is the destabilizing factor in the region. What is your analysis?**

To recognize a country as legitimate, it must be present in a series of our regional structures, such as in the Arab League or regional mechanisms relevant to the Muslim world. No one recognizes the Zionist regime as a legitimate country in the region.

Their people and public opinion challenged the countries that established relations with Israel. Egypt has established diplomatic ties with the Zionists for decades. Still, it is interesting that whenever I visited Egypt during these years, I witnessed how much attention is paid by media outlets, media figures, and the elites in Egypt to the support of Palestine by Iran.

That is what Iran did at the level of discourse and action. The Zionists have an embassy in Cairo. But the resentment of public opinion in Cairo against Israel and their support of Palestine is at its peak. Suppose you asked me about the factors behind Mr. Mohammed Morsi's failure

at the top of the government where the revolutionaries voted in favor. In that case, I will say that one reason for this was that Mr. Morsi wrote a letter to the President of the fake Israeli regime in the first few months. Because of this, 90% of the people and the revolutionaries turned against him since they did not expect Morsi to do what Hosni Mubarak did in the name of the Revolution and Islam. This is the Egypt we are talking about, a country with rich civilization and history. We're not talking about a country that's only 30-40 years old.

In Egypt, the Israelis have an embassy, but they have a complicated situation in public opinion. The slightest change in the regimes can disrupt everything. It shows that these relations have no depth. The governments have authority and power and have made connections in this regard. Zionists are certainly doing their most to divide the Muslim world. It must be a Trump card for them. Once they forge an agreement with a small country like Bahrain and its rulers, they think they've undermined the unity between the Islamic countries. But that's just a delusion.

Some of the leaders of the Arab world have a secret relationship with the Zionist regime. Recently, the UAE and Bahrain have also made their ties public. Still, there are ongoing discussions to establish embassy and other relations that the countries' public opinion does not allow so easily to happen. But these did not affect the Palestinian equation. It is a lie that Iran does not support peace and security. We will not support the illegitimate regime of Israel in any circumstances.

**So, what happened is only at the rulers' level, and it has not influenced public opinion. They are still behind the Palestinian issue.**

The Zionist regime, in its nature, seeks the initiative called "from the Nile to the Euphrates." It wants to conquer the entire land between the two rivers. The Islamic Republic of Iran can't sit at its borders to ensure maximum national security when a corrupted ideology like this exists in the region.

Today, the national security concept has become significantly complicated. That said, it is essential to consider:

1 - We defend Palestine for the sake of our national security.

2 - We defend Palestine for the sake of Islamic divine values that we must follow.

3 - We support Palestine, believing that it is the first Qibla of the Muslims.

The other fundamental point is that the Zionists do not understand any language other than resistance and power. Therefore, today, the existence of the illegitimate Israeli regime is linked to the security of the region and is tied to the safety of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its allies.

**Why Imam Khomeini named the Quds day?**

Imam looked for the creation of unity and Islamic solidarity to deal with the Zionist regime. Imam's famous sentence is that if each of the individuals in each Islamic country gets a bucket of water and pores it toward Israel, the flood will vanish this regime. Imam called Quds Day as a symbol for the unification of the Muslim world and not just the Muslim world but also human conscience at the support of the oppressed Palestinian people, and aimed to increase the unity between the countries of the world, especially Islamic countries, in support of the Palestinian cause and the liberation of the Quds.

The Islamic Republic of Iran recognizes only one country: the Palestinian state with Quds as its capital.

## This is a time of change in West Asia

BY PAUL LARUDEE

This is a time of change in West Asia, and it is having worldwide consequences. Israel is at the origin of the change because without it the U.S. would not have so many Zionists in its government and its foreign policy would be very different.

Israel will vanish, but in the present it is causing the problems that we see. It is a major cause for the aggressiveness of the U.S., and for the reactions of other countries. It is at the source of the neoconservative movement in the U.S., which is today almost synonymous with Zionism. This movement advocates constant war in order to crush every nation that fails to obey the U.S.

But the U.S. and Israel are going too far. The rest of the world is starting to push back. The sanctioned countries are an example. They are beginning to find ways to trade outside the sanctions, without using dollars. This includes Russia, but also China, which is not yet under sanctions.

Countries are lining up on different sides, with the West, Israel and the Arab monarchies on one side, and the sanctioned



countries, Russia and China at the center of the other side, under the threat of the U.S. and its allies. Other countries are choosing or will soon have to choose sides.

I believe that the U.S. and Israel are overextending themselves.

Military spending is already close to half all spending of both countries. The middle class is disappearing in the U.S. while the poor and homeless are multiplying. The infrastructure is crumbling. This is unsustainable.

What will happen when the U.S. fails? This is hard to say, but it could be very dangerous, and the U.S. will resist failure just as much as its victims will resist the U.S.

If we have reasonable people in power in the U.S., they will

**Countries are lining up on different sides, with the West, Israel and the Arab monarchies on one side, and the sanctioned countries, Russia and China at the center of the other side**

accept the change and try to adapt in a peaceful way. But reasonable leadership is not what the U.S. seems to want, and its people appear to be easily manipulated by powerful and wealthy interests.

I wish I could be optimistic, but at the worst end we must consider the possibility of nuclear war, which could unfortunately be too easily initiated by accident. Hopefully we will somehow avoid that. On the other hand, if the rest of the world shows enough strength, perhaps there will be an American Gorbachev, who will decide that it is time to make the best deal it can, and come to terms with the rest of the world. But the U.S. would probably have to liberate itself from its Zionist controllers in order to do that. Is that even possible, given their power? We can only hope.

*Paul Larudee is an Iranian-born American political activist who is a major figure in the pro-Palestinian movement. Based in the San Francisco Bay area, he is involved with the International Solidarity Movement and was a founder of the Free Gaza Movement and the Free Palestine Movement.*



# Anti-Israel cartoonists have always been under attack from Israel and its allies: Shojaei-Tabatabai



**BY SAMANEH ABOUTALEBI**  
TEHRAN – Artists from across the world showcased their artworks in a Tehran exhibit last week to express their solidarity with Palestine.

Submissions to the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest were selected for the exhibit, which was organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization.

“Nowadays, Palestine is really not alone as the people who are free from the tyrannies of the arrogant governments stand together with the oppressed Palestinians,” the director of the contest, Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai, told the Tehran Times.

Shojaei-Tabatabai, who is also a professional cartoonist and the director of the bureau’s Visual Arts Office, pointed to French magazine Charlie Hebdo’s cartoons insulting the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S), and said, “They have no problem with promoting hatred against Muslims by permitting such cartoons to be published, while citing it as freedom of expression.

“Meanwhile, the slightest doubt raised about the Holocaust is subject to penalties.

“Since we started running international cartoon contests about Palestine and the Holocaust, the Israeli media has stated that we are denying the Holocaust. However, we have never denied it. We simply have asked why the Palestinian people should be made to pay the price for the Holocaust.”

He said that Israeli officials have continuously lashed out against such events, while making their best efforts to normalize their presence in Occupied Palestine and

their relations with other countries, in particular, with Arab governments.

“However, artists from 66 countries, which almost represent one third of the world, show their people’s support for Palestine by their artworks on display at the exhibition,” he added.

Shojaei-Tabatabai expressed his concern about probable threats to the artists participating in the competition from the governments of their countries of origins, which have close relations with the Zionist regime.

He said that Naji al-Ali, a Palestinian cartoonist who was noted for his political criticism of the Arab regimes and the Israeli entity in his works, was assassinated in 1987 outside the London office of the newspaper, Al Qabas, by Mossad double agents.

Al-Ali is best known as the creator of the character Handala pictured in his cartoons as young witness of the satirized policy or event depicted. His character, a ten-year-old standing with his back turned and hands clasped behind his back, has since become an icon of Palestinian defiance.

Shojaei-Tabatabai noted that al-Ali’s death did not mean his end, and added, “There are now hundreds of artists from all over the world who stand with the Palestinians.”

“The character Handala has continued to appear in cartoons and posters related to Palestine, and can even be found in the artworks of our current exhibition,” he asserted

The exhibition is scheduled to move to eight countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Lebanon.

Palestinian cartoonist Haneen Taysier Al Amassie is among the most celebrated artists whose works were showcased at the exhibition.

Luiz Carlos Fernandes from Brazil, Cristina Bernazzani from Italy, Izabela Kowalska from Poland and Balai Kartun Rossem from Malaysia judged the submissions to the international competition.

As a symbolic deed the jury members had been selected from all corners of the world, to show the solidarity of the world with Palestine, Shojaei-Tabatabai said.

Shojaei-Tabatabai also said that he and his colleagues have always been under attack from the Israeli entity and its allies for organizing such exhibitions.

“However, their attacks just motivate us to keep going as people in Iran and other countries recognize our efforts,” he noted.

“The Israeli media accuse us of seeking a provocative solution to the Palestine issue, while the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has proposed a democratic solution a few years ago.”

“The Leader has called for a referendum in Palestine, which is fully in line with current world standards, but of course, the illegitimate regime of Israel will never agree to it, as they are fully aware of what would be the outcome,” he concluded.

The Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest announced winners on May 7 during International Quds Day, which falls on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan every year.

## Quds Day would perhaps develop into a new Intifada: analyst

**BY HAMID REZA AHMADIAN**

TEHRAN - A British political analyst, Robert Inlakesh, believes that Quds Day is important as it can mobilize the people in the occupied territories.

“This year’s Quds Day will be especially important, due to recent events in Jerusalem, which has led to a mass mobilization across the occupied territories and could perhaps develop into a new Intifada, an Intifada that would have again come from al-Quds,” Inlakesh tells the Tehran Times.

Tens of Palestinians were arrested this week after a protest against the planned eviction of families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood was suppressed by Israeli police.

Twenty people were injured in the crackdown on the demonstration against the evictions, with the AlQastal media group releasing a video showing one man with a bloodied face being taken away by police.

Dozens of Palestinians are facing imminent dispossession from their homes in the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, in what they say is a move to force them out and replace it entirely with a Jewish settlement.

The Jerusalem District Court ruled at least six families must vacate their homes in Sheikh Jarrah on Sunday, despite living there for generations.

Meanwhile, Quds Day may “amplify the Palestinian cause and for a show of solidarity to reach those suffering as a result of Israel’s policies,” Inlakesh predicts.

Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you assess Palestine’s position and importance in Western countries, for instance, in the UK?**

There are three aspects, I believe, to this question of the importance and position of Palestine in the West. The first is in Palestine’s popular support from the various populations composing ‘the public’ residing in Western countries and their impact through grassroots actions. The public support for Palestinian Human Rights has the limited ability to apply pressure on governments and corporations to change their policies towards Israel, so when the Palestinian cause is strong, this can translate to real-time pressure being applied upon Israel for their policies implemented against the Palestinian people. The second aspect is the positions of Western governments, which support Israel over the Palestinian people and their cause; Palestine

only becomes a factor when Palestinian resistance provides a problem for Israel that they are then forced to address as part of the International Community. The third is in the historic crime committed by Western Nations in their legitimization of Israel’s crimes and their handing over of the land of Palestine to the Zionist movement because the West were the ones to have manufactured Israel and are the ones whom to a large extent sustain it, they feel obligated to intervene in the situation and hence the question of Palestine is one they are forced to face.

**What is the impact of Quds day on immortalizing Palestine’s cause?**

The Palestinian cause for national liberation was built off of national and unifying symbols, days, anthems, and acts of self-expression. What eventually became Yasser Arafat’s PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) along with the ANM (Arab Nationalist Movement) of George Habbash, both focused on building the strength of Palestinian identity and struggle, placing a great enthusiasm on it as a way of spreading the cause and giving the Palestinian people a greater sense of pride in themselves following the Nakba - ethnic cleansing of 800,000 people from Palestine - from 1947-9 and the ensuing barbarism the Palestinians suffered at the hands of Zionist forces. The importance of Quds Day is for not only the Palestinians, a day which works to mark the importance of the struggle for Palestine and the liberation of Jerusalem, but also works to spread this message amongst the cause’s supporters around the world.

Such days as Quds day are important markers that work to amplify the Palestinian cause and for a show of solidarity to reach those suffering as a result of Israel’s policies. This year’s Quds Day will be especially important, due to recent events in Jerusalem, which has led to a mass mobilization across the occupied territories and could perhaps develop into a new Intifada, an Intifada that would have again come from al-Quds.

**How do you see Arab states’ role in defending Palestine?**

The Arab State’s role in defending the Palestinian people began in the wake of the conflict with the Israeli regime and even prior to its inception, as the Arab world was occupied and then divided up by their former colonial powers France and Britain, Israel was seen as very much part of this



European supremacist vision for the region. In the 1950’s, 60’s and even into the 70’s, the relevance of Arab nationalism to carrying the torch for the Palestinian cause was vital and made the issue of Palestine a prominent one in world politics. Following the Oslo Accords, signed by the PLO, which turned the Palestinian resistance group into an outright collaborator with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, which was to partially command control of Palestinians inside of the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza, eventually led to the isolation of the cause. After the Second Intifada ended in 2005, with Yasser Arafat’s death and the elections that saw Hamas elected democratically to power in Gaza, in 2006, the cause had become divided and largely isolated.

Unfortunately, the reactionary Arab regimes, as they were once described as, have almost all bowed to the commands of their U.S. superiors in the region, whilst those Arab States which sought to resist and stick with the Palestinian people have suffered immensely just like the Palestinians. Despite an attempt to shift focus away from Palestine, as a result of Western intervention, making the Arab cause for freedom a number of divided,

factional, tribal, and sectarian religious conflicts, the Palestinian people still command the support of their Arab brothers and sisters throughout the region at large, irrespective of what state leaders have to say. The problem now is with that popular support translating into State policy, which will take a revival of the Palestinian cause to win over.

**Do you think that the Abraham Accord was a successful measure taken by Trump? Could Israel create legitimacy among Arabs via such Accords?**

The Arab people do not support Israel, even from within those regimes which have normalized or which seek to normalize, their populations sympathize with the Palestinian plight, and the overwhelming majority not only does not accept Israel’s crimes but reject its legitimacy as a State entity according to all authoritative polling. The recent normalization deals between Israel and countries like the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco are largely symbolic. The only significant deal struck was with the UAE, which was the only regime to have willingly normalized without pressured into doing so and will go ahead with significant deals that could work to re-shape

Middle East (West Asia) trade.

These were not “peace deals”; however, all the regimes, with the exception of Sudan - which is now under the thumb of the UAE opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood previously - had maintained secret relationships with Israel for years, some allegedly as long as 40 years ago had been meeting with the Israelis.

The biggest aspect of these normalization accords was there the revelation of a dead “peace process” in that the Palestinian Authority no longer had the bargaining chip of Arab countries normalizing with Israel in order to reach a two-state solution. The single biggest bargaining chip the Palestinian Authority ever had was the incentive for Israel to gain legitimacy and trade ties throughout the Middle East (West Asia). These accords signaled that only a popular resistance from the Palestinians, both non-violent and armed, could bring about concessions from Israel and pave the way to peace.

**Why do some pundits compare Israel with Apartheid in South Africa?**

The comparison is valid; however, it does differ in some ways. Prominent South African leaders who fought against Afrikaaner imposed Apartheid have even said the situation in Palestine is worse, but the direct comparison to South Africa, whilst useful to demonstrate to the world the severity of the situation in Palestine, is not the argument being made legally. Through the Apartheid Convention and various definitions created of what constitutes Apartheid, it is now becoming the internationally excepted definition of what Palestinians face at the hands of Israel. The top international human rights organization, Human Rights Watch (HRW), has just released a report which concludes Israel is operating an Apartheid System in all the territories it controls, whilst Israel’s top human rights organization, B’Tselem, also concluded recently that Israel is an Apartheid Regime in all the land between the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan River.

Soon I suspect the United Nations Human Rights Council may even adopt a report concluding as such, so long as the HRW report stands, this will make the fact of Apartheid in Israel/Palestine undeniable internationally, but even without this, it’s already now a well-accepted fact.

## The majority of Arab regimes are betraying the Palestinian cause: human rights activist

The western powers continue to play the double standard role or fully support the Zionist occupiers of Palestine



**BY REZA MOSHFEGH**

TEHRAN - A human rights activist says that most Arab monarchies are betraying the Palestinian cause witnessing continuous Israeli oppression against the Palestinians.

“The majority of Arab regimes are betraying the Palestinian cause, and they have all witnessed years of continuous op-

pression and hate crimes against the Palestinians,” Firas Al Najim, head of Canadian Defenders for Human Rights, tells the Tehran Times.

Israel has normalized diplomatic relations with some Arab countries such as the UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan. Israel tries to portray normalization deals with these countries as an alliance with the Arab countries against Iran.

But the big problem is that Arab people disagree with this move supposing normalization of ties with the Zionist regime as a betrayal to Arab identity.

“In reality, they are truly betraying the Arab identity they claim to represent and care about, especially when many are normalizing with the enemies of Arabs, Muslims, Christians and all of humanity,” Al Najim emphasizes.

“Most Arab regimes are installed by the UK colonial system that helped establish the illegitimate Zionist regime inside the Middle East (West Asia) and holy lands.”

Following is the text of the interview:

**What is the position and importance of Palestine in the Islamic world?**

Holy Palestine has the first Qibla meaning the first direction where all Muslims prayed towards. It is the al Aqsa mosque and the unique land where prophet Muhammad the divine messenger of Islam, ascended to the heavens, a special event named the Isra and Mi’raj. It is the land where many prophets were born, lived, and also buried, such as the father of all prophets Ibrahim and Jesus that Muslims hold very highly and are also

waiting for his reappearance at the end of times when the world is full of oppression and corruption alongside a descendant of the prophet Muhammad named Imam Mahdi. Palestine is a very holy land for all Muslims from all different sects, and they all feel the oppression and the occupation of that beloved land, and they all feel a necessity to assist in liberating that land.

**How do you assess Arab regimes’ performance when it comes to Palestine?**

The majority of Arab regimes are betraying the Palestinian cause, and they have all witnessed years of continuous oppression and hate crimes against the Palestinians. In reality, they are genuinely betraying the Arab identity they claim to represent and care about, especially when many are normalizing with the enemies of Arabs, Muslims, Christians and all of humanity. Most Arab regimes are installed by the UK colonial system that helped establish the illegitimate Zionist regime inside the Middle East (West Asia) and holy lands.

**How do you see Western powers’ attitude towards Palestine?**

The western powers, unfortunately, continue to play the double standard role or fully support the Zionist occupiers of Palestine. They claim to care and fight for human rights, justice, equality and international law but Israel violated and continues to violate all international laws and principles that the western systems promote and Canada is included in this hypocrisy, unfortunately. The western systems have been exposed to the Palestinian cause as the problems in that land are constantly

developing, and the war crimes are apparent, and nothing is indeed done to punish the perpetrators and criminals in the UN or elsewhere.

**How is Palestine news reflected in Western media?**

Western media and mainstream media rarely cover detailed stories about Palestine or the actual pain and sufferings the Palestinian people live under with this 73-year-old brutal occupation. Many times, the media paints the Israeli occupiers as a victim and affected side. This is also why Western nations have been silent overall towards their governments’ weak stands towards this longstanding conflict. Otherwise, the western nations would have held their government officials responsible for not doing enough to help the Palestinian people reclaim their fundamental rights and sovereignty.

**What are the roots of Islamophobia in the West?**

Islam phobia in the west is mainly from the mainstream media that assisted in painting a defamed picture of Muslims that Always affiliated them with terrorist attacks or extremist groups such as al Qaeda or ISIS, and these are all Wahhabi indoctrinated groups that roots back to the Wahhabi Saudi regime that was established by the British colonialists and helped spread this deviant ideology in the name of Islam that spreads hate and intolerance. This was an old plan as they always feared Islamic influence that could spread and affect the world as valid and pure Islam is based on logic and proof, and this they found could destabilize their control of the world.





# Zionist lobby instigating ethnic and sectarian fault lines among Muslims: Turkish politician

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - leader of the Felicity Party in Turkey says that the Zionist lobby makes every effort to sow seeds of discord in the Muslim world.

"The Zionist lobby is trying to instigate ethnic and sectarian fault lines among Muslim countries and groups," Temel Karamollaoglu tells the Tehran Times.

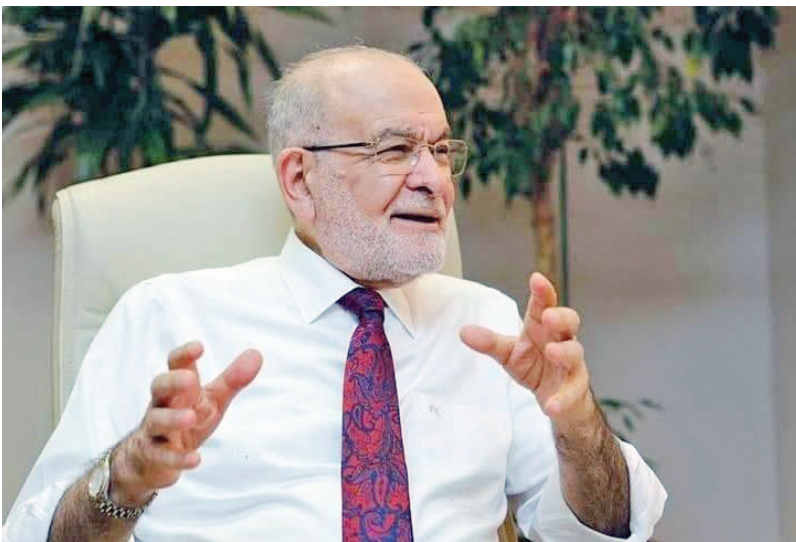
"The main purpose of the Greater Middle East Project is to allocate Israel the so-called 'promised land' which extends from the Euphrates to the Nile River," according to Karamollaoglu.

Following is the text of the interview:

**What is the importance and position of Palestine for the Islamic world?**

The importance of Palestine is unequivocal for the Islamic world. Masjid al Aqsa is our first Qibla; it is where Prophet Muhammed (saw) ascended to Mi'raj. Furthermore, we believe that Palestine is the keystone to world peace.

To understand what is going on in



Palestine today, we need to look into its recent history. The first step to establish Israel was taken at the 1st Zionist Congress,

which took place at Basel in 1897, followed by the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Finally, the global imperialist powers established

Israel in 1947 on Palestinian land.

Palestine has always been at the center of foreign politics of the Milli Görüş movement. We have carried out many rallies and organized meetings throughout the years to keep the Palestinian cause alive. When we were in government, we made every effort to prevent the oppression of the Israeli Zionist regime against Palestinians and their neighbours. The Rally of Al Quds, organized by Saadet Party (Milli Görüş) on September 6, 1980, was cited as one of the reasons for the military coup d'état in Turkey which took place on September 12, 1980.

**Why did Muslim countries fail to ally against Israel while we see Arab alliances against Yemen?**

The primary purpose of the Greater Middle East Project is to allocate Israel the so-called "promised land," which extends from the Euphrates to the Nile River. The Zionist lobby is trying to instigate ethnic and sectarian fault lines among Muslim countries and groups to achieve this goal.

Unfortunately, up to the current time, they have been successful. To overcome these hindrances, Muslim countries have to come together and take the initiative to create solutions and peace processes for countries like Yemen, Syria, Libya, etc., without falling into the trap of Zionism.

**How do you see Abraham Accord's repercussions on Palestine and the region? Are the U.S. and Israel seeking real peace?**

The so-called Deal of the Century is nothing more than an illusion. It is formulated to justify the occupation of the Palestinian land by Zionists.

Neither the U.S. nor Israel wants to achieve true peace. Their goal is to actualize the Greater Israel project on the so-called promised lands.

**Why can't UN and international bodies block Israel's expansionist plans?**

After WW II, the principles of the new world order were determined at a meeting by the three leaders of the war, namely

Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, which took place in Yalta, in the Soviet Union, in February 1945, prioritizing the protection of Israel under all circumstances and conditions. For this reason, the UN has remained silent to Israel's continuous expansion in violation of international law.

**How can Iran and Turkey form a bloc to defend the region's interests and confront Israeli meddling?**

Iran and Turkey are two friendly, neighbouring countries. They are two influential members of the D-8. These two countries had no conflict for over four centuries. In addition, Turkey and Iran have signed a non-aggression agreement among themselves. This step will break the sinister games against these two countries. This is the only way to stop the global powers from turning our geography into a catastrophic laboratory. Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Egypt, and other members of the D-8, must find ways to work together to prevent the global powers from turning our land into an operating table.

## Normalization is a process Arab nations will never embrace

In Egypt, after 40 years of normalization, people never agreed to have normal ties with the Zionists

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

Seyyed Hadi Seyyed Afghahi, an expert in West Asia affairs tells the Tehran Times that there are many puppet Arab regimes which were created by the colonialism and part of what we see today as so-called "normalization" of relations between these Arab regimes and Israel, is derived from the origins of those regimes.

Afghahi also believes that "this is a normalization between the rulers because there are profound contradictions between the Islamic world and the existence of the Zionist regime" because in Egypt, for example, after 40 years of normal relations of the government with Israel, people never agreed to have normal ties with the Zionists.

"So, normalization is, in fact, a ruler-based process, not a widespread and national one. In Bahrain, we witness the resistance movement against normalization has been formed. Demonstrations are held regularly", the expert notes.

Following is the text of the interview:

**Today, more than 70 years after the Israeli occupation of Palestine, we still see that the Islamic world has not taken effective action to counter this occupation. What are the reasons for the divergence of the Islamic world against Israel?**

From the beginning of 1948, armed uprisings took place inside occupied Palestine. But there were two all-out wars, one in 1967 led by the late Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser and one in 1973 under Anwar Sadat, who signed the infamous Camp David Accords. Many countries attended these two all-out wars to help to demolish Israel, but unfortunately, various reasons emerged and prevented the overthrow of this usurper regime.

Inside some of the armed forces of these countries, especially Egypt, some people betrayed. Unfortunately, some reactionary Arab countries, especially the country in the southern part of the Persian Gulf and the Shah of Iran, also, directly and indirectly, supported the Zionist regime. After the Islamic Revolution, a new hope was created to inspire the Palestinian resistance, the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian cause. Fortunately, by order of Imam Khomeini, the Quds Resistance Force was founded and the command of Gen. Soleimani formed an axis called the Axis of Resistance. Therefore, there was a conflict before the Islamic Revolution; There was a war between the Arabs and Palestine, but unfortunately, both the division between the Palestinians themselves and the betrayal of some Arab leaders caused the Palestinian problem to continue.

**In recent years, we have seen that some Arab countries have bowed against Israel. What caused this proximity?**

The most crucial factor is that many Arab puppet regimes were created by colonialism itself. Especially the sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, which unfortunately today we see in case of normalization of relations, how eagerly they rush towards establishing comprehensive ties with the Zionist regime.

The second problem is that within occupied Palestine itself, there is a deep fault between the two axes of the West Bank where the Palestinian authority led by Mahmoud Abbas is based and the Palestinian armed resistance and jihadist groups based in Gaza. For example, recently, it was announced that elections would be held after the closure of the Palestinian National Assembly for



15 years which made everyone satisfied. Meetings between various Palestinian groups were held in Cairo.

A national compromise was announced, but suddenly, unfortunately, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas postponed the election and then canceled it. This caused tension and disagreement between the jihadi groups and the Palestinian Authority. Thus, the colonial powers, the United States and its agents, and the Zionist regime itself, have penetrated the fabric of some of these systems to such extent that they do not want to help the Palestinian cause at all, let alone to get even close to the assistance that the Islamic Republic of Iran is currently providing. No state, not even some of the countries on the front lines, such as Syria, can support the Palestinian cause because they have internal problems. So,

there are two main factors; one inside the Palestinians that should be united sooner, and the second factor, the Arab countries, unfortunately, are in their weakest state today. We see that, in fact, the Arab countries in the Arab League never had any severe help or effective action on the issue of Palestine.

**The normalization of the relations currently exists between some Arab rulers of the region and Israel. Still, at the level of public opinion and Muslim communities, this cooperation is not seen. How can the rulers of the Arab countries justify their public opinion? The people themselves do not accept the normalization, and it is something between the rulers of these countries. What is your opinion?**

Egypt and Jordan signed a formal agreement before the UAE and Bahrain. Sudan and Maghreb recently began normalization. Egypt signed Camp David Accords. Jordan signed the Wadi Arabah treaty, but as you mentioned, this is a normalization between the rulers because there are profound contradictions between the Islamic world and the existence of the Zionist regime. Because after about 40 years, did the Egyptian people agree to normalize ties with the Zionist regime or Jordanian people to normalize relations? Never. Even during International Al-Quds Day, demonstrations against the Zionist regime are held in these capitals.

So, normalization is, in fact, a ruler-based process, not a widespread and national one. In Bahrain, we witness the resistance movement against normalization has been formed. Demonstrations are held regularly. Under a police regime, the UAE rulers hire some people to claim friendship, love,

proximity and normalization with the Zionist regime, while many rulers are mercenaries and puppets of global arrogance. But the people of the Arab and Islamic world never accept the justifications of their rulers and reject their excuses.

**What do you see as the long-term impact of this normalization on public opinion and the people's relationship with their rulers? What will the consequences be for the region?**

Arab and Islamic countries are divided into three categories. There are some in the axis of resistance, such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran, who are in every way opposed to normalization and resist against it. Some countries have remained silent in the face of normalization and have taken a neutral stance. Some of these countries may secretly show interest but are afraid of their nations, such as Algeria, Tunisia, and other countries. Some countries, because they are puppets of global arrogance, such as the sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, do not have the authority to decide. They must do whatever the United States tells them to do. For example, remember how did Trump deal with them. With an unprecedented tone, he called them "milking cows". They did not say a word and were forced to remain silent. The colonial powers impose any military contracts on these puppet countries, and the rulers of these countries have no choice but to sign these agreements. So, it is really surprising to see these countries sign another piece of paper under the command of U.S. and normalize ties with Israel? Therefore, despite the Arab countries are not united in their position regarding the normalization, fortunately the people of the Arab and Islamic world have not and will not accept this normalization in any way.

## The Arab-Israeli normalization is just a removal of masks

BY TIM ANDERSON

The so-called 'normalisation' process, catalysed by Trump, is really just a removal of masks. The UAE for example, has been working with Israel for many years. No resistance state or people has changed its position. Biden has yet to announce his position on Palestine. But his options are now highly constrained.

Trump adjusted the so-called 'Kushner Plan' of 2019 (really

just a package of bribes) to include the most minimal pretense of a 'Palestinian state' - tiny pockets on the West Bank which have no real status above that of a local council under Israeli authority, much the same as the role of the PA in 'Zone A' today; that is, the status quo, while Zionists steal more land. But Palestinians now comprise no less than half the population of historic Palestine.

One of the key US Democrat Party institutions, Human Rights

Watch, has now admitted that the crime of apartheid is being committed in occupied Palestine. However HRW boss Ken Roth claims that this report should be read not as an effort "to delegitimize Israel" but "as a wake-up call, and one perhaps most pressing for those most invested in Israel's future."

Notice how 'liberal Zionists' spin apartheid: this is an opportunity to rescue Israel and not dismantle it. The contradictions

are extreme. The Palestinian and regional resistance should present a united front to this house of cards.

*Tim Anderson is a distinguished author and director of the Sydney-based Centre for Counter-Hegemonic Studies. He has worked at Australian universities for more than 30 years. His most recent book is "Axis of Resistance: Towards an Independent Middle East."*

## Ordinary Arab people will never permanently accept Arab-Israeli normalization



BY KEVIN BARRETT

West Asia is currently bogged down in an apparent stalemate between the Zionist-imperialist aggressors and the forces of resistance. Neither side has been able to score a clear victory and eliminate or subjugate the other. The Zionists have not been able to erase the Palestinian question, nor have they succeeded in their efforts to neutralize the Axis of Resistance. So the fires are smoldering, and could blaze up into flames at any time.

The Zionists have successfully pursued the project they launched in the 1960s, which was to neutralize Arab rulers' resistance to the genocide of the Palestinians. At that time, the Zionists assumed that Arab nationalism was their biggest threat. Back then, Turkey and Iran were run by Western-puppet anti-Islamic regimes, so the Zionists assumed they would never be a problem.

Today the situation has evolved to the point that Arab nationalism is dead, Arab leaders openly prostitute themselves to the genocidal Zionists, Arab populations largely acquiesce in their own shameful humiliation, and only the Palestinians and the Axis of Resistance are proudly carrying forward the struggle. The forces of Resistance have increasingly carried the banner of Islam: Hamas and its allies, Hezbollah, the Ansarullah in Yemen, and patriotic forces in Iraq are all specifically Islamic resistance groups, and they receive moral and occasionally tangible support from the Islamic Republic of Iran and (we hope) the increasingly Islamic but not yet fully independent Republic of Turkey.

Meanwhile the Saudis and other Persian Gulf tyrannies are de-Islamizing themselves. The Saudis are now teaching the Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata in schools and promoting the concept of Hollywood-style "entertainment" as the solution to their problems with Wahhabism. (The Saudis created extremist takfiri Wahabbism under orders

from their Western masters, as Bin Salman has admitted, just as they are now secularizing and openly embracing Israel under orders from those same Western masters.)

The Zionists are hoping that so-called normalization will allow them to finish their genocide of Palestine without interference from the Arab nations. But as the Qur'an says, "They plot and Allah plots (plans) and Allah is the best of plotters (planners)." The Arab despots pushing through so-called normalization are not very popular with their people. The despots will likely fail to meet their people's aspirations, which could lead to a new round of revolutionary unrest that will discredit the despots' projects, including so-called normalization.

Just as the Egyptian people never accepted Anwar Sadat's treasonous "normalization," likewise the ordinary Arab people will never permanently accept the current versions being offered by Bin Salman and the other despots. There can be no peace without justice. Just as Sadat succumbed to the violence he unleashed by betraying the Palestinian cause, ultimately the current group of royal traitors will pay the penalty for their treason.

The Western-puppet secular Arab nationalist rulers will, sooner or later, be overthrown by Resistance forces raising high the banner of Islam. These Resistance forces recognize that Zionism represents Dajjal, the Antichrist, and that the

struggle for the Holy Land pits the forces of God against the forces of Dajjal. So while the Arab masses may pass through a period of confusion as their leaders openly embrace Dajjal, and misguided and brainwashed young people flirt with the temptation of secularism, that period will end with a rebirth of Islamic Resistance and the eventual liberation of Jerusalem al-Quds and the rest of Palestine.

Israel has been violating human rights in the case of Palestinians, including the recent Israel blockade of COVID vaccines from entering Gaza. Israel blocked COVID vaccines intended for frontline medical workers in Gaza as part of its overall blockade of Gaza, which has reduced the majority of Gazans to extreme poverty and prevented them from access to food, health care, and other infrastructure. The international community has been unable to summon the courage to force Israel to end its blockade because Zionists infest the top levels of the wealth and power hierarchies in the West, especially in media and finance. These Zionists brutally punish politicians who question or oppose their genocide of Palestine. The Western leadership, consisting almost entirely of moral cowards, repeatedly capitulates to Zionist pressure and allows the genocide to continue unimpeded.

The Zionists used Trump to push through their extreme headline policies, including forcing "normalization" on their client puppet regimes. Now they will use Biden to consolidate their gains, in

the same way the Zionists who blew up the World Trade Center on 9/11 pushed through radical policies under Bush-Cheney and then consolidated those policies under Obama. A high proportion of Biden's advisors are Jewish Zionists who will block and veto any meaningful efforts to reverse Trump's extremist policies—just as the same type of Zionist advisors controlled the Obama Administration and prevented the president from closing Guantanamo and ending the fake "war on terror" which is really a war on Islam for Israel.

The Western imperialists have been playing the divide-and-conquer game for centuries. Today they continue to play the same game by using all of their considerable resources to divide Muslims according to sectarian categories. In reality Muslims of all schools of thought, including but not limited to the five traditional universally-accepted law schools one of which is the Jafari (Shia) school, have the same interest in defeating the Zionist Dajjal and expelling the forces of Zionism and imperialism from the region. So the Axis of Resistance represents all Muslims and indeed all West Asian people seeking dignity and sovereignty for themselves and their people.

*Kevin Barrett is an Arabist-Islamologist scholar and one of America's best-known critics of the War on Terror. From 1991 through 2006 Dr. Barrett taught at colleges and universities in San Francisco, Paris and Wisconsin.*



# Agreements to bring peace, or agreements to sell more weapons?

**BY AMIR MOHAMMAD ESMAEILI**  
Brian Terrell, an Iowa-based peace activist who has spent more than six months in prison for protesting targeted assassinations at U.S. military drone bases, believes that peace accords between some Arab regimes and Israel not only has nothing to do with “peace”, but also doesn’t improve the lives of people in Palestine or anywhere else in the region.

“These are agreements not to bring peace, but to sell more weapons to the states involved. They are arms deals, not peace agreements. These pacts are not efforts toward reconciliation and justice made by diplomats, but are more like criminal gangs dividing territory and spoils among themselves”, Terrell tells the Tehran Times.

Calling the regimes that are normalizing relations with Israel “dictatorships and monarchies”, Terrell notes, “The agreements that these rulers make do not reflect the aspirations of their people”.

Following is the full text of the interview:

**Today, more than 70 years after Israel's occupation of Palestine, the Islamic world has yet to take concrete steps to fight this occupation. What are the reasons for this, as well as the Islamic world's divergence toward Israel?**

After the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the United Kingdom, France and the United States drew the maps of most of the Arabic nations for their own purposes, creating states without consideration of the welfare of people living in those territories and without their consent. After the Second World War and the creation of the state of Israel, the colonized states that surrounded it, created in the first place to serve the colonizers, were not capable of effective resistance. The United States came out of the war a major military and economic power and gave total support to the new state. With its veto power in the United Nations Security Council, the United States could block opposition from the world community, even after Israel occupied Gaza and the West Bank in 1967.

**We have seen in recent years that some Arab countries have been lenient against Israel. What is the reason for this closeness? & 3. The normalization of relations between certain Arab countries and Israel is regarded as a critical and dignified problem in the Islamic world today. What is the explanation for this normalization at a time when Israelis are putting the most pres-**



**sure on Palestinians and violating their rights?**

Brokered by the United States, relations between Israel and some Islamic states including Saudi Arabia have grown closer in recent years. In January 2020, in the last year of his administration, President Donald Trump unveiled a plan that he called “Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and

Israeli People” and that Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called “the deal of the century.” In August that year, the United States made agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain called the “Abraham Accords Peace Agreements”, establishing diplomatic relations between those nations and Israel. These agreements have nothing to do with Abraham, nothing to do with peace, or

with improving the lives of Palestinians or those of the people anywhere in the region. The lives of everyone in the region, the people of Israel included, will only be made less prosperous, less secure, by these developments.

These are agreements not to bring peace, but to sell more weapons to the states involved. They are arms deals, not peace agreements. These pacts are not efforts toward reconciliation and justice made by diplomats, but are more like criminal gangs dividing territory and spoils among themselves. As a side deal to the “Abraham Accords” for normalizing its relations with Israel, the United Arab Emirates was rewarded with \$23 billion in weapons sales, including F-35 fighter jets and armed Reaper drones. Bahrain was richly rewarded as a part of that deal, too. These deals and the arming of Israel, Egypt, Qatar and other countries in the region benefit only their rulers and the international weapons manufacturers. When President Biden threatened to stop supporting the Saudi war on Yemen, Raytheon Technologies CEO Greg Hayes reassured investors: “Look,” he said, “peace is not going to break out in the Middle East anytime soon. I think it remains an area where we’ll continue to

see solid growth.”

**The normalization of relations between certain Arab rulers in the region and Israel, despite the absence of empathy in public opinion and Muslim communities. How can the rulers of the countries that follow this practice justify their public opinion?**

The nations that are normalizing relations with Israel are dictatorships and monarchies that do not answer to public opinion or have to justify themselves to their people. The agreements that these rulers make do not reflect the aspirations of their people.

**What will be the long-term impact of normalizing relations with Israel on public opinion and their relationship with their rulers for the region?**

Fortunately, even as these arms deals disguised as peace agreements fuel the tensions in the region, global public opinion is turning, even within Israel itself. Even before Human Rights Watch named the condition of Palestine “apartheid” and a crime against humanity, and before the International Criminal Court claimed jurisdiction over the occupied territories, the Israeli human rights group, B’Tselem also labeled Israel an “apartheid state.”

## The normalisation will not make the Palestinian cause disappear: Political analyst

**BY EHSAN ETESAM**

Abu Ali al-Ansari, a political analyst and Islamic scholar based in London, tells the Tehran Times that the Arab–Israeli normalisation is a betrayal by Arab monarchies and it will not lead to the disappearance of the Palestinian cause.

“This normalisation is one of the final nails in the occupation of Palestine, and it will be one of the reasons for the final destruction of both the Arab and European Zionist project in the region,” notes Abu Ali al-Ansari.

He believes that the Arab people are not in favour of the normalisation, and he explains “the reality is that the Arab “monarchs” have very little to do with the Arab people; they are closer to their Zionist masters and to the Empire – be it the British or the U.S. Empires.”

Following is the text of the interview:

**How do characterize the current situation in West Asia?**

The situation in West Asia is at a pivotal stage in history at this time. Most of the so-called Arab monarchies, including those who consider themselves to be the “custodians of the two holy places”, are firmly in the pocket of the Empire and the forces of the real Axis of Evil.

However, with His grace, there is also a massive resurgence within the populations of the Arab and Muslim countries, and the Axis of Resistance, the forces who have fought against various Western and Zionist projects like DAESH and so-called “Israel” are stronger than ever.

While the propaganda mechanism against the Resistance Axis is in full swing, and working tirelessly, every move that the enemies make thinking they can harm the Axis of Resistance fails. It appears as if the Empire and its allies are stuck in quagmire after quagmire in the West Asia region (and elsewhere), and with the advent of the Coronavirus, their predicament becomes far worse.

I believe that we are living in a historic time, when soon we will see the demise of the Empire, and along with it its Axis of Evil, and the dawn of a new age in the region, with His grace.

**What is your thought on the Arab–Israeli normalization?**

This normalisation is an academic exercise. It is nothing new. These Arab “sheikdoms”, these oilfields and shopping malls with flags, run by the most corrupt of the corrupt people, have always

been partners with the Zionist entity. Some even reference entities such as so-called Saudi Arabia and the so-called UAE as the Arab Zionists.

They have only ever given lip service to the plight of the people of Palestine. Providing “charity”, but never actually providing any useful support – be it diplomatic or military to the Palestinians in their resistance to Zionist occupation.

The reality is that the U.S. has finally managed to get these Arab “leaders” to be honest, to express publicly that they are with the Zionists; and indeed, that the Palestinians need to give up the struggle for their rights and freedom from occupation.

This is a fatal mistake for these Arab “rulers” and given the way they have abused their own populations, it is but a matter of time till they are dealt the final and fatal blow.

These Arab “sheikhs” – who in reality are just DAESH but with formal attire – failed in Syria and Iraq, they are failing catastrophically in Yemen, and they should understand that the fire they have ignited in Yemen will burn them, and will be a means to the ultimate liberation of Palestine.

**Do you think the normalisation can lead to forgetfulness of the resistance and the Palestinian cause?**

I believe this is the intention of the Empire, this is exactly what they want. They want the Arabs to forget Palestine, to become taken in with the material “benefits” that they will allegedly obtain as a reward for the so-called “normalisation”. However, I have no doubt that this is a mistake.

Even if – sadly – the majority of the people of these Arab oil fields and shopping malls with flags support this “normalisation”; this normalisation will not make the Palestinian cause disappear.

It will in fact polarise and make clear those who are with the oppressed and those who are with the oppressors.

This normalisation is one of the final nails in the occupation of Palestine, and it will be one of the reasons for the final destruction of both the Arab and European Zionist project in the region.

**The resistance is stronger and more united than ever before**

**Basically, can the normalisation be generalized to Arab nations or it is considered a betrayal by Arab monarchies? In your view, will Arab nations come along with this betrayal?**

I believe that the normalisation is something for the Arab “monarchs” (who in and of themselves lack any real legitimacy, but that’s another discussion for another time), I do not believe the Arab people are in favour of this.

After all, if your brother’s home were stolen, his family killed, his daughters raped and his sons massacred, and then your brother is told he cannot fight back, would you expect your brother to accept this? Would you accept this? No person with any honour or dignity will ever accept this – regardless of which faith they follow.

The reality is that the Arab “monarchs” have very little to do with the Arab people; they are closer to their Zionist masters and to the Empire – be it the British or the U.S. Empires. They are servants of the Empire and only seek to occupy the Arab countries and peoples.

As I’ve said, this normalisation is one of the final nails in their coffins.

**As you know, the Israeli regime has been violating human rights in the case of Palestinians, including the recent Israel blockage of covid vaccines from entering Gaza. How do you assess this brutal decision? Why have international organizations, especially the UN, been playing a passive role there?**

Honestly speaking, this is not unexpected. There is little humanity when it comes to the Zionists, they are a fascist supremacist entity, who care little for anyone else.

For them to block the COVID vaccination from the people of Palestine is completely expected; as far as the Zionists are concerned the sooner all the Palestinians are removed from existence the better for the Zionists.

The real tragedy is that the Arab leaders – including organisations like the so-called Arab League – have done nothing to help the people of Palestine (aside from the customary lip service).

As for the so-called United Nations. The United Nations cannot be expected to do anything as long as it is owned and controlled by the masters and supporters of the Zionists, this is a reality. The

UN is the one that is responsible for the occupation of Palestine, by doing nothing, doing less than nothing to help the Palestinians, even after UNSC resolution after resolution condemning the Zionists and declaring their behaviour in cases as war crimes.

The UN is impotent and will remain impotent as long as the veto remains (especially while it remains with the U.S., UK, France who are known and strong allies and partners of the Zionist entity).

Sadly, to expect these “intentional” organisations to do anything that would counter U.S. foreign policy is wishful thinking.

**The Western media is trying to introduce the Axis of Resistance as a kind of expansion of the Shiite influence over the region. What do you think?**

This is nothing new. The Western media is not really a news forum that provides real analysis; rather it is a mouthpiece for the foreign policy – Zionist inspired and controlled – of the Empire. This needs to be understood.

The Western media is more interested in keeping the people comatose and in their happy little delusions, worrying about non-issues, than to educate the people on the reality that their so-called “elected officials” are committing, the crimes being committed in their names and so on.

The current line taken by the Western media is nothing new at all. It must be understood that the Islamic Republic of Iran, more so the Islamic Revolution Guard Corp, and more so its Quds Force,

**This normalisation is an academic exercise. It is nothing new. These Arab “sheikdoms”, these oilfields and shopping malls with flags, run by the most corrupt of the corrupt people, have always been partners with the Zionist entity.**

## The normalization is a betrayal by the Arab monarchies

The resistance is stronger and more united than ever before

**BY STEVEN SAHIOUNIE**

The current situation in West Asia is volatile and many-faceted. On the one hand, you have military conflicts and threats; while on the other hand, you have diplomatic negotiations proceeding. For example, there is tension between the Palestinian people and their Israeli occupiers and between Syria and Israel after the missile strike near Dimona nuclear reactor, and between Iran and Israel. On the side of diplomacy, there are the U.S. and international negotiations concerning a revival of Iran nuclear deal.

The normalization process between the Arab countries and Israel is not a new relationship, and the political, military, intelligence and economic relationships go back years, but it was not publically flaunted. However, after the occupation and destruction of Iraq, and the war on Syria, the relationship between the two sides came up to the surface and was exposed.

To prove the oil-rich Persian Gulf monarchies and Israel have historical coordination, we must remember their roles together in the 2000 and the 2006 war on Lebanon, and the 2003 war on Iraq, and the 2008 war on Gaza, and finally the destruction of Syria beginning in 2011.

The normalization between Arab countries and Israel



was made by royal families and regimes and was not backed by the people. The majority of the Arab people support the Palestinian cause. Also, the resistance has never been defeated and is stronger and more united than ever before,

such as Iran, Syria, Lebanese resistance, and Palestinian resistance movements.

The normalization between Arab nations and Israel is a betrayal by the Arab monarchies. Some Arab nations will follow along while under pressure from the U.S., and other nations have normalized their relations with Israel, but have not announced publically. However, some nations such as Syria and Algeria remain steadfast in their commitment to resistance.

Although the Western media is trying to introduce the Axis of Resistance as a kind of expansion of the Shia influence

**The normalization between Arab countries and Israel was made by royal families and regimes and was not backed by the people. The majority of the Arab people support the Palestinian cause.**

over the region, but it is not a real face of the resistance. For example, there is the Sunni resistance in Gaza, in Lebanon you have a strong and historical secular resistance (SSNP), and in Syria, there is a mix of 18 sects, but yet the majority of Syrians are committed to resistance. These examples are proof that the Western media accusations are false and are propaganda.

In addition, the Israeli regime has been violating human rights in the case of Palestinians, including the recent Israel blockage of covid vaccines from entering Gaza. International organizations, such as the UN, WHO, and others are held hostage to U.S. and EU policies which are detrimental to the Palestinians. Moreover, the U.S. foreign policy for West Asia remains consistent regardless of who holds the oval office, or which U.S. political party is in power. The U.S. foreign policy West Asia is written in Tel Aviv; unless AIPAC is prevented from controlling Washington, DC. This situation will remain.

Steven Sahiounie is a Syrian American award-winning journalist, two-time winner of the Serena Shim award for honesty and integrity in journalism. He also serves as the chief editor for the media MidEastDiscourse. Sahiounie lives in Latakia Syria and has been covering the war on Syria since 2012.