

German silence on Gaza and the West Bank ‘has been loud’: Philippe Sands

TEHRAN – Philippe Sands, a professor of law at University College London and human rights lawyer at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, has criticized Germany’s “silence on crimes committed on the territory of Palestine, in Gaza and in the West Bank.”

Writing an article on Voxeurop published on October 12, he said Germany’s silence about Israel’s crimes in Gaza and the West Bank “has been loud.” ► [Page 5](#)

The weapon shifting Yemen’s frontlines

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – While Yemeni missile attacks on Riyadh airport capture global headlines, another tactical weapon has shifted the frontlines near Bab al-Mandab.

Recent military developments on Yemen’s southwestern fronts have introduced a new and significant tactical shift in the course of the confrontation between Sanaa and Riyadh. This came after the Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) announced that the Shawaz drone had entered operational service for the first time.

The drone was used to target Saudi-backed forces advancing from the direction of Lahij governorate toward the areas of Al-Waziriyah district (Taiz governorate) and Kahhub (strategic high ground), both adjacent to the international shipping lane at Bab al-Mandab. ► [Page 5](#)

Majidi dedicates Busan premiere of “Midday Meal” to martyred children of Minab, brave people of Iran

TEHRAN – Majid Majidi’s latest film “Midday Meal” premiered at the 31st Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) and the director dedicated it to the brave people of Iran and the martyred children of Minab.

Prior to the screening of the film in the festival’s main competition section on October 9, the director said in brief remarks: “I would like to dedicate the screening of this film, on my own behalf, to the brave and courageous people of Iran and the martyred children of Minab. As you have heard, 168 children were massacred on the first day of the war (the US and Israel imposed on Iran), yet the people continue to stand firm and resist.” ► [Page 8](#)

UN official: Environmental protection must be integral to post-war recovery

TEHRAN – UN Resident Coordinator in Iran Christine Weigand has stressed the far-reaching and long-term environmental consequences of war, saying environmental protection must be incorporated into both emergency response measures and long-term recovery plans, as protecting the environment ultimately means safeguarding human health, livelihoods and the future.

Weigand made the remarks in Tehran on Sunday at a conference on the environmental consequences of war and human rights.

Referring to the loss of human lives, the displacement of families and the destruction of homes and infrastructure, ► [Page 7](#)



Footage circulating on social media showed firefighters extinguishing a fire on the damaged Saudia aircraft.

Yemen Leaves Riyadh Grounded

Repeated strikes close Riyadh airport and shatter Saudi air defenses as Ansarallah enforces its ‘blockade for blockade’ doctrine

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Riyadh’s airport has been hit five times since Tuesday, October 6, by Saudi authorities’ own count, and the government cannot promise a sixth will not come.

On Saturday, a missile struck King Khalid International Airport, killing at least 13 people and wounding more than 300, according to the kingdom. On Sunday, another projectile set Terminal 4 on fire. On Monday, the Saudi civil aviation authority extended the shutdown.

A wealthy kingdom that spent a decade selling itself as the Persian Gulf’s safe harbor cannot keep its capital’s runway open.

Cirium reported that 99.7 percent of scheduled flights at King Khalid were canceled on Sunday. Flightradar24 showed no aircraft over a city of roughly eight million. Lufthansa Group grounded its Riyadh service through October 16, Air France-KLM through the end

of the month, and Etihad stretched its Saudi cancellations again.

The FAA warned American carriers about Saudi airspace, and Washington, London, Berlin, and Madrid told their citizens to stay away from the airport. Riyadh’s schools moved online. The metro stopped serving two airport stations.

The defenses are thin. Saudi officials have told the Wall Street Journal they are running low on interceptors.

The kingdom is shuffling air defense batteries between palaces and increasingly vulnerable energy sites and desperately search-

Vision 2030 asks visitors and investors to believe Riyadh is safe. A shuttered airport answers that question for them.

ing the world for more.

Sanaa’s equation

Brigadier General Yahya Saree laid out the terms in his October 11 statement. Yemeni forces, he said, carried out four operations in 24 hours: three waves against King Khalid, a direct hit on King Fahd Airport in Dammam, and fires at Aramco’s Sheddum and Tanajib facilities in the Eastern Province. He told airlines, airport staff, and travelers that Saudi airports and airspace are unsafe, exempting only Mecca and Medina, and put responsibility for any failed interception on Riyadh.

Sanaa’s rule is “airport for airport, blockade for blockade, and escalation for escalation.”

Ansarallah did not invent this logic out of a vacuum. There were documented Saudi strikes on Sanaa airport on July 13, with three munitions landing on its only working runway. That airport is the front door for aid to the area where most Yemenis live. ► [Page 5](#)



Pezeshkian opens new academic year, urges universities to lead Iran out of problems

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian inaugurated the universities’ new academic year in Tehran on Monday, calling on academics, elites and students to help resolve the country’s challenges.

He said overcoming the current difficult situation is possible by relying on universities and empowering capable and faithful talents. Stressing self-belief, Pezeshkian added: “We can solve these problems. We must move from I cannot to we can.” With such conviction, he said, Iran can powerfully overcome all existing problems.

US claims do not match what we see on the ground: Baqaei

TEHRAN— Iran has dismissed US assertions that maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has returned to normal, saying Washington’s continued naval blockade and economic sanctions are incompatible with restoring security to the strategic waterway.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei made the remarks at his weekly press conference in Tehran on Monday, addressing the situation in the strait, the latest exchanges between Tehran and Washington through mediators, US sanctions, regional tensions and remarks by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio invoking ancient Greek and Persian history. ► [Page 3](#)

Parliament vice-speaker warns regional states: Siding with US will not bring security

TEHRAN – Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Ali Nikzad warned neighboring countries on Monday that placing their territory and facilities at the disposal of the United States will not create security for them.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Nikzad said regional states must counter foreign interference, adding that Iran seeks the welfare, comfort and progress of its neighbors.

He said Iran had warned before the war that if the land, airspace or waters of regional countries were used for aggression against Iran, they would face a crushing response. ► [Page 2](#)

Exports continue through alternative routes: TPO head

TEHRAN– The head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), referring to the effects of trade restrictions and a 34 percent drop in the weight of the country’s foreign trade in the first six months of this year, said: At the same time, part of exports is still being carried out by sea, and another part through corridors and land and rail routes. He also called rumors about the closure of some of the country’s borders incorrect.

According to ISNA, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, at a press conference on the 30th National Export Day ceremony and honoring national exemplary exporters, which will be held on October 21, stated: Given the importance of economic and trade diplomacy in the current situation, appropriate cooperation has been established with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of trade diplomacy, ► [Page 4](#)

Dozens of possible dinosaur footprints emerge in Iran, researcher urges urgent documentation

TEHRAN – A rock surface bearing dozens of possible dinosaur footprints has been exposed in Iran following a landslide, prompting a paleontologist to call for urgent scientific investigation and documentation to protect the traces from weathering and erosion.

Erfan Khosravi, a paleontologist and zoologist, announced the discovery in a post on his personal account on the social media platform X, the Iranian Students’ News Agency (ISNA) reported on Sunday.

Khosravi said the footprints had emerged from beneath sediment deposits after a section of a mountain collapsed. He warned that exposure to the elements could damage or destroy the traces if they were not documented promptly. ► [Page 6](#)

The Persians return to Athens



By Xavier Villar

MADRID – Standing before the Acropolis of Athens, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio traced the history of ancient Greece all the way to the rise of American industry in a speech delivered on Wednesday, in which he presented Western civilization as threatened by decline.

Rubio called for a return to the “classical conception of politics and the art of governing that the Trump Administration hopes to recover, not only for our country, but for our civilization as a whole.”

This seemed to include a renewed claim to national pride, which, he said, the ancient Greeks had embraced, but which the West had abandoned upon feeling “ashamed that our achievements set us apart from the rest of the world.”

The chosen setting is no accident: the pride he champions is anchored precisely in that foundational place. The West, understood as a discourse rather than a geographical location, is a historical sequence, the famous narrative running from Plato to NATO, in which classical Greece plays a foundational role.

Within this narrative, the Western refers to a developed, modern, secular and capitalist society, the result of a specific set of historical processes. Any society sharing these characteristics is considered part of the West. Discourses about the West produce and represent certain bodies in ways that are all too familiar to us. Civilized and barbarian, the West and the rest. The key to all of this is that the West cannot exist without its opposite: without that backward East, without that rest of the world it defines as such.

Finally, to be Western means to be democratic, though this claim conceals the impact of colonialism and racism in subverting any meaningful notion of democracy. In this case, its identity derives from the negation of despotism. The elements that constitute democracy acquire their meaning by being set against those considered constitutive of despotism — a boundary with a long history.

According to the hegemonic view, democracy was born in Greece. The identification of democracy with the Greeks does not derive from an enumeration of the forms of government of the various Hellenic communities, but from the perception the Greeks themselves had of themselves as free, in contrast to the enslaved subjects of the Persian Great King. Greek freedom versus Persian slavery constitutes one of the earliest examples of a trope of Western political thought, reproduced as a variation on the theme of democracy versus Oriental despotism.

Later, many authors took this division seriously, to the point that the dichotomy has

come to be regarded as one of the great dividing lines between the West and the non-Western world.

But as several scholars, such as Michael Mann, have pointed out, ancient Athens was a far more strictly disciplined society than the one subject to the Persian King of Kings. The King of Kings could command a permanent administration, a standing army, and resources drawn from regular tributes; yet in every case, the demands of imperial control required cooperating with local elites and depending on them. In other words, against the hegemonic idea that presents the West as the cradle of democracy, one could just as easily have presented Athens and, by extension, classical Greece as the cradle of totalitarianism.

Other traditions offer equally participatory models of government. Critical Muslim Studies, for example, formulate alternatives to the Eurocentric narrative that establishes a privileged relationship between the idea of the West and the democratic form. The government of the Prophet Muhammad is seen from this tradition as a manner of governing that was benevolent, just, and participatory. Another example is the government of Imam Ali, also characterized by its justice, benevolence, and attentiveness to the demands of the community.

This demonstrates that the supposed connection between democracy and “the West” is part of a narrative, not something natural. The same applies to the signifier “fanatic,” used by Marco Rubio in his address to describe Iran’s current leaders, whom he called “fanatics who lead a cult of death and use martyrdom as an instrument to achieve their political objectives.”

The accusation of fanaticism directed at Muslims in general, and at the leaders of the Islamic Republic in particular, is once again part of Western discourse that creates a division between a supposed rational self and an “irrational and violent” Islamic other, with whom dialogue and agreement are impossible, and who therefore can only be subdued militarily.

By once again deploying a luminous West against a dark and dangerous East, represented by the Islamic Republic, Rubio’s speech falls within a strategy aimed at justifying a possible new attack and presenting it as inevitable, given Iran’s “irrational and violent” tendencies.

As Edward Said wrote in his book *Orientalism*: “Every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric.”

The exact definition of Marco Rubio’s speech.

Iran pledges stronger deterrence, asserts sovereignty over Strait of Hormuz



TEHRAN— Iranian military officials have reaffirmed the country’s determination to strengthen its defense capabilities, protect its maritime interests and oppose efforts to restore a US-dominated security order in West Asia, arguing that regional stability must be based on national sovereignty and cooperation among neighboring countries.

The statements by senior military figures and defense officials address several interconnected issues, including Iran’s military preparedness following recent hostilities, the strategic management of the Strait of Hormuz, the future of regional security arrangements and the growing controversy over Washington’s use of historical and civilizational rhetoric in its confrontation with Iran.

Military preparedness and deterrence

Iranian military officials say the country has drawn lessons from recent conflicts and strengthened its ability to respond to potential threats.

Rear Admiral Bemani, deputy commander of the Iranian Army’s Navy, said Iran had studied its adversaries’ weaknesses and developed new weapons and tactics considering recent military confrontations.

He said the Iranian Army’s Navy, working alongside Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy, had inflicted significant blows on US forces at certain stages of the fighting. According to Bemani, US forces are now operating farther from Iran’s maritime borders than in previous periods.

He warned that any renewed miscalculation would prompt a response from Iran’s Navy and could force hostile forces to move farther away from the country’s maritime borders.

Bemani also distinguished between the responsibilities of the armed forces and those of the government in addressing the US naval blockade. While the government handles its political and economic dimensions, he said, the military remains focused on resistance, defense preparedness and responding to threats.

Caretaker Defense Minister Brigadier General Majid Ebn al-Reza has likewise emphasized the importance of strengthening Iran’s scientific, industrial and defense capabilities. He said national security requires the means to defend the country’s sovereignty and ensure that the armed forces are adequately equipped to protect Iran.

The emphasis on domestic capabilities reflects the Iranian military leadership’s stated position that deterrence depends not only on weapons and operational readiness but also on scientific advancement, industrial capacity and the ability to adapt to evolving military threats.

Strait of Hormuz: Strategic management and maritime sovereignty

The Strait of Hormuz remains another central element of Iran’s security calculations, given its geographical position

and importance to global energy supplies.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, head of the Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani Research Institute of Sacred Defense Sciences and Teachings, has identified the strategic management of the waterway as a key component of Iran’s approach to countering the US naval blockade.

Safavi said Iran’s geographical position and rights as a coastal state underpin its authority to safeguard its interests in the strait and surrounding waters. He stressed that exercising sovereignty should not automatically be interpreted as an intention to escalate tensions.

He also distinguished between closing the waterway and managing maritime traffic, arguing that these are fundamentally different approaches. In his assessment, the transport of military equipment that directly threatens Iran’s national security could make the management or restriction of maritime traffic a strategic necessity.

Safavi added that alternative pipelines do not eliminate the Strait of Hormuz’s importance to international energy markets.

According to the US Energy Information Administration, approximately 20 million barrels of oil and petroleum liquids passed through the strait daily in 2022, accounting for roughly one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption. The waterway is also a major route for liquefied natural gas shipments, making its security a matter of international economic significance.

Iranian officials maintain that maritime security cannot be separated from the wider political and military circumstances in the region. From their perspective, the management of the strait must take account of Iran’s sovereignty, the security threats it faces and the need to protect vital national interests.

Safavi has also presented Iran’s approach as part of a broader response to maritime pressure and sanctions, while arguing that regional security should be pursued through the participation of countries in the area.

Tehran rejects a US-led security order

Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesperson for Iran’s Armed Forces, has said Iran will not allow the regional order envisaged by the United States and Israel to be restored in West Asia.

Shekarchi called on neighboring countries to reconsider their

reliance on an ineffective US security umbrella. He argued that recent conflicts had demonstrated the risks of depending on Washington for regional protection.

He accused the United States of fuel smuggling, maritime theft and psychological warfare surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, adding that political statements and media messaging could not change realities on the ground. He also questioned Washington’s ability to guarantee regional security and urged neighboring governments not to base their security calculations on the policies of US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Shekarchi said Iran’s armed forces were more capable than before and remained prepared to defend the country against threats.

The statements reflect Tehran’s long-standing emphasis on regional participation in security arrangements. Iranian officials argue that countries sharing West Asia’s geographical and strategic environment should play the leading role in maintaining its stability rather than relying on military structures dominated by outside powers.

In this view, regional cooperation is not merely a diplomatic preference, but a security requirement shaped by geography, shared interests and the consequences of military confrontation.

Civilizational confrontation and Washington’s historical rhetoric

Alongside the military and strategic debate, Iranian officials have strongly criticized the use of historical and civilizational references in contemporary political disputes.

Caretaker Defense Minister Ebn al-Reza condemned remarks by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Athens that invoked the ancient conflicts between Greece and Persia. He warned against turning historical and cultural differences into a basis for present-day political or military confrontation.

“Civilizational confrontation is playing with fire,” Ebn al-Reza said, cautioning that those who ignite such tensions may not be able to control their consequences.

He stressed that Iran possesses an ancient civilization and a distinct national identity that do not depend on external recognition. He also argued that the country must strengthen its scientific, industrial and de-

fense capabilities to safeguard its independence.

Brigadier General Ali Balali, an adviser to the commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, offered a broader ideological interpretation of the confrontation. He said the United States and Israel sought to exploit the wealth and resources of Eastern countries while preventing the emergence of a new Islamic civilization.

“Civilization belongs to the East, and they have no civilization of their own,” Balali said.

He urged neighboring Muslim countries to be aware of efforts by Washington and its allies to prevent the peoples of the East and the Muslim world from becoming more capable and prosperous. Balali also criticized the historical record of Western powers, citing the mass killing of Indigenous peoples in the Americas and violence against populations in Africa.

He maintained that Western powers would ultimately fail to prevent the emergence of a global order shaped by Islamic civilization.

The controversy has also drawn attention to Trump’s statements during the war against Iran. On April 1, he threatened to bombard Iran and said US forces would “bring them back to the stone ages,” while also threatening Iranian power plants and other infrastructure. On April 7, he warned that “a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again” if Iran failed to meet his demands.

The remarks have become part of the wider dispute over the language used to describe the conflict and its potential consequences. Iranian officials have argued that such rhetoric cannot be separated from threats against the country’s infrastructure, population and sovereignty.

The exchange has also revived historical references on both sides. Iranian political figures have invoked episodes from the country’s past, including the capture of Roman Emperor Valerian by the Sasanian king Shapur I in 260 AD, in response to Washington’s references to ancient Greco-Persian wars.

For Iranian officials, the issue extends beyond competing interpretations of history. They frame it as a broader question of who has the authority to define civilization, determine the political future of other societies and shape the emerging international order.

Taken together, the statements by Iran’s defense and military officials present a unified message: the country intends to strengthen its deterrent capabilities, safeguard its sovereign interests in strategically important waters and resist external efforts to determine the future of West Asia. In their assessment, lasting regional stability requires respect for national sovereignty and a greater role for regional countries in shaping their own security arrangements, rather than renewed dependence on outside military powers.

Parliament vice-speaker warns regional states: Siding with US will not bring security



TEHRAN – Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Ali Nikzad warned neighboring countries on Monday that placing their territory and facilities at the disposal of the United States will not create security for them.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Nikzad said regional states must counter foreign interference, adding that Iran seeks the welfare, comfort and progress of its neighbors.

He said Iran had warned before the war that if the land, airspace or waters of regional countries were used for aggression

against Iran, they would face a crushing response.

“The land and authority these countries placed at the disposal of global arrogance, America and other foreigners brought them neither dignity, nor development, nor strength,” Nikzad said.

Inviting regional and neighboring states to strengthen relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said Tehran wishes them well, adding they should revise their approach of siding with foreigners before they become further indebted before the Iranian

nation and their own peoples in history.

Stressing that Iran has never initiated a war nor attacked any country, Nikzad said it is unacceptable for countries to claim they have no authority while hosting American bases.

He pointed to the attack on the Minab school, saying it is unacceptable that warplanes took off shamelessly from bases in these countries and struck the school — where there was no one but students — not once but twice. “This will remain in Iran’s history, and we will not forget which coun-

tries sided with Iran’s enemies,” he said.

Nikzad warned that such cooperation would not bring security, noting that if their soil is used today to attack Iran, those countries themselves could be targeted tomorrow.

Citing the US presence in Iraq, he said Washington entered Iraq claiming to bring freedom but left in humiliation after inflicting great oppression, adding that regional countries should not allow foreigners to interfere in the region.

US claims do not match what we see on the ground: Baqaei

From Page 1 ► Baqaei said the situation in the Strait of Hormuz was a direct consequence of the US-Israeli war against Iran, which began on February 28, and rejected assertions that Iran had lost its strategic leverage.

“The Americans’ claims do not match what we see on the ground,” he said. “They can continue to claim that the Strait of Hormuz no longer matters and that Iran has lost its leverage, but we will continue to do our job.”

He added that developments in international markets and efforts by countries to secure fuel supplies demonstrated the continuing importance of the waterway.

Hormuz security linked to an end to US pressure

Baqaei stressed that Iran had not introduced maritime controls to gain leverage over other countries, arguing that the measures taken in the strait were a response to the security circumstances created by the US-Israeli attacks.

“What we have been witnessing in this waterway since February 28 is the direct result of actions by the US and the Zionist regime in attacking Iran,” he said. The waterway, he added, had been used to launch attacks against Iran, prompting Tehran to adopt measures that it considers consistent with international law.

The spokesperson said security would not be restored while Washington continued its naval blockade and economic pressure against Iran. He described these measures as acts of aggression that had consequences extending beyond Iran to the wider region and international markets.

“We are not pleased with this situation, as the security of the Strait of Hormuz is necessary for us more than anything else,” Baqaei said. “However, the United States’ aggressive actions have caused trouble for itself, the region, and the world.”

The remarks also addressed



Washington's claims that the waterway was under US control. Baqaei said such assertions bore little resemblance to the situation on the ground and questioned why the United States would seek assistance from Russia to address its oil supply needs if, as Washington maintained, the situation in Hormuz had been resolved.

Responding to Russian President Vladimir Putin's stated readiness to supply oil and petroleum products to international markets, including the United States, Baqaei said each country was entitled to make decisions according to its national interests. He nevertheless described Washington's reported interest in Russian supplies as significant in light of its assertions about the strait.

Iran reviewing US response to seven-point proposal

Baqaei said Iran was still examining Washington's response to Tehran's seven-point proposal, with communications between the two sides continuing through intermediaries.

He said the proposal, discussed on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, addressed Iran's demands, including the lifting of the naval blockade, an end to the war on all fronts and the release of Iranian assets. According to the spokesperson, these issues were also covered by a memorandum of understanding previously agreed upon.

Iran would convey its position to the mediators once the review was complete, he said, adding that the new US sanctions imposed during the process must also be lifted.

Pakistan and Qatar, he said, remained the principal mediators between Tehran and Washington. Iran also welcomed the good offices of friendly countries, including Russia.

Addressing remarks that the US response had fallen short of Iran's expectations, Baqaei indicated that Tehran was still assessing the points raised by Washington before communicating its position through the intermediaries.

Baqaei also addressed the nuclear issue, questioning Washington's continued emphasis on Iran's nuclear program after US officials had repeatedly asserted that it had been destroyed. He argued that attacks on peaceful nuclear facilities and the lack of an effective international response had prompted debate inside Iran about the benefits of continued membership in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

He said the international non-proliferation framework faced challenges in all three of its principal areas: nuclear disarmament, preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and ensuring countries' access to peaceful nuclear technology.

Iran seeks dialogue to ease

regional tensions

Turning to regional developments, Baqaei said Iran remained deeply concerned about escalating tensions between Saudi Arabia and Yemen and was ready to use its good offices to facilitate dialogue.

He said Tehran opposed continued conflict between two Muslim countries, arguing that further escalation would undermine regional stability and create opportunities for Israel to exploit divisions.

Iran had repeatedly supported the implementation of understandings previously reached between the parties, he said, urging them to return to dialogue and prevent further deterioration.

Baqaei also welcomed the prospect of stronger relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, reiterating Iran's support for greater cooperation among regional countries. Tehran had previously proposed meetings involving Persian Gulf littoral states, including Iran and Iraq, and continued to support initiatives aimed at strengthening regional trust.

“Strengthening relations and trust among regional countries is the foundation and prerequisite for creating a secure region, free from the destructive interference of foreign actors,” he said.

On reports alleging that the United Arab Emirates was providing intelligence, financial or logistical support to terrorist groups operating in eastern Iran, Baqaei said Iranian security, military and law-enforcement agencies were monitoring such activities.

He described efforts to destabilize Iran's borders as part of a US-Israeli plan, while emphasizing that Tehran was in continuous consultation with its land and maritime neighbors to prevent terrorist groups from exploiting the regional situation. He did not identify a specific neighboring country as responsible for supporting the groups.

Pezeshkian condemns US complicity in Israeli genocide in Gaza, slams Western double standards



TEHRAN — Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has condemned Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza, accusing the United States of complicity and denouncing the silence of Western governments that profess to champion human rights while continuing to support Israel with weapons and other resources.

Speaking at a ceremony marking World Post Day on Monday, Pezeshkian said the international community had stood by as a silent spectator to the atrocities in Gaza, where genocide was being perpetrated with US complicity.

He described the global silence in the face of the bloodshed as shameful, criticizing those who portray themselves as defenders of humanity and human rights for not only turning a blind eye to the crimes but also helping sustain them through military and material support for Israel.

The president also denounced the ‘West's glaring double standards’ on human rights, pointing out that governments remained largely silent over the killing of Palestinians while readily voicing accusations against Iran whenever it suited their political interests.

“You place no value on any human life other than your own, your inner circle, and your own interests,” Pezeshkian said, rebuking those who claim to uphold universal human rights but apply them selectively.

Turning to the broader regional situation, Pezeshkian condemned ‘US-Israeli expansionist ambitions,’ accusing them of seizing territory and openly expressing their desire to control the region's oil and appropriate its resources while the international community

looked on.

He said powerful actors had developed mechanisms to subjugate nations and plunder their wealth and assets, concealing these practices behind the language of democracy and human rights.

“Disgusting slogans,” he said of such rhetoric, arguing that the professed commitment to humanitarian principles stood in stark contrast to the violence and exploitation unfolding across the region.

Pezeshkian questioned the conduct of Israel and its supporters, pointing to the devastation in Gaza and elsewhere in the region and challenging the moral credibility of those responsible for producing and supplying weapons used against civilians.

He questioned how those who manufacture weapons capable of turning entire areas into scenes of mass slaughter could simultaneously present themselves as advocates of humanity, science and knowledge on the international stage.

Paying tribute to those killed in the US-Israeli war and expressing condolences to the bereaved families, the president said aggressors were willing to target innocent people in pursuit of their objectives while continuing to invoke humanitarian values at the United Nations.

Pezeshkian also addressed ‘ongoing efforts to undermine Iran and force the Islamic Republic into submission.’ He said such efforts had failed to achieve their objectives, adding that neither the war nor the martyrdom of the Leader and military commanders had broken the Iranian nation's resolve.

Senior MP: Countries backing militant groups should await Iran’s response

TEHRAN – Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Ebrahim Azizi has warned regional countries providing resources to counter-revolutionary groups that Tehran possesses documented evidence of their support and will confront them decisively.

Speaking about security conditions in southeastern Iran, Azizi pointed to Sistan and Baluchestan province's 1,300-kilometer border with Pakistan and Afghanistan and its security implications, saying the counter-revolution's operations room has moved toward hybrid warfare with the support of certain regional states and currents aligned with the enemies of the Iranian nation.

“This is not an intelligence analysis, this is an intelligence document,” Azizi said. He added that in recent meetings with relevant officials it became completely clear and evident that groups long based in those two neighboring countries have carried out actions with the backing and support of certain states.

Azizi said the Quds Headquarters of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Ground Force, the Islamic Republic Army and the Law Enforcement Command have implemented firm and serious measures. He expressed confidence that with combined actions underway in border security and border closure, as well as development and domestic defense, remaining concerns in the region will be resolved.

The Americans should know, and certain regional countries should know, that the countries which have provided heavy resources to counter-revolutionary groups in this province and supported them should

know that all intelligence documents exist, he said. Just as the Islamic Republic defeated the United States and its allies in the combined war, it will also confront these proxies and groups seeking to assert themselves in line with American actions.

Azizi said some regional countries feeling defeated have joined this trend out of alignment with the Americans, stressing that the Islamic Republic is vigilant, awake, monitoring, prepared and powerful. He praised the readiness of the Quds Headquarters observed during his recent visit.

He emphasized that the Islamic Republic has for years brought all its capacities to serve border residents, particularly in the southeast in Sistan and Baluchestan and South Khorasan. Claims of discrimination and injustice in the province stem either from lack of knowledge or ill intent, he said.

Iran's armed forces, security forces, Intelligence Ministry, police and all pillars of the Islamic system will not allow insecurity to continue, Azizi said, condemning recent blind, brutal and inhumane acts, including the martyrdom of a female officer of the province's police social affairs deputy who was serving the people. He said such crimes show that counter-revolutionary groups neither know the people of Sistan and Baluchestan nor correctly understand the authority of the Islamic Republic.

Azizi said border closure is a serious priority, urging the government to urgently complete full border blockage with approved funds, accelerate smart border technologies, and dismantle insecurity chains to pave the way for development and prosperity of border areas.

New Iranian ambassador presents credentials to South Korean president

TEHRAN — Iran's new ambassador to South Korea presented his letter of credence to President Lee Jae-myung during a ceremony at the presidential palace in Seoul.

Ambassador Ahmad Erfanian, in a brief conversation after presenting his credentials, conveyed the greetings and message of respect from the president of Iran and stressed the importance of friendly relations between the two countries and the need to strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Referring to existing capacities in bilateral ties, he expressed hope that during his mission new grounds

would be created for expanding relations and enhancing understanding and cooperation between Tehran and Seoul.

Lee welcomed the new Iranian ambassador and wished him success in carrying out his diplomatic mission.

Erfanian, a senior diplomat at Iran's Foreign Ministry, began his tenure as ambassador to South Korea on Sept. 24, 2026. With more than three decades of diplomatic experience, he has served in various political and managerial posts at the ministry and in a number of Iranian embassies abroad.



LATEST NEWS

■ Aref warns adversaries of stronger response to any misstep

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref has warned adversaries that any miscalculation would trigger a stronger response, highlighting Iran's scientific and defense achievements. Speaking to scientific and technological elites, he criticized regional governments for excessive concessions to Western powers and rejected attempts to exploit the region's resources. Aref said scientific advancement was essential to national strength, adding that Iran's experience in the Ramadan War demonstrated the strategic value of domestic defense technology.

■ IRCG Navy says third violating tanker hit in Strait of Hormuz

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy said a third oil tanker was struck and caught fire in the Strait of Hormuz on Monday, following two similar incidents over the previous two days. According to the force, the vessel had switched off its navigation systems and ignored warnings

before attempting to leave the strategic waterway. The IRCG Navy warned that cooperation with US forces in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz would draw a decisive response.

■ Iran offers to facilitate Saudi-Yemeni dialogue

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has expressed Tehran's readiness to help initiate dialogue between Saudi Arabia and Yemen and facilitate a political settlement to the crisis. In a telephone conversation with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan on Sunday evening, the two officials discussed regional developments. Araghchi warned that escalating tensions and reliance on military solutions would further complicate the situation, stressing that the region's crises required political solutions rather than force.

■ Iran's interior minister arrives in Baku for security talks

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni arrived in Baku on Monday for talks with

senior Azerbaijani officials on bilateral cooperation, particularly security and border affairs. He was welcomed by Azerbaijani Interior Minister Vilayat Eyvazov, who had invited him for the visit. Momeni is accompanied by a delegation including senior officials from Iran's disaster management organization, the governors of Ardabil and Gilan provinces, and a member of parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission.

■ Rezaei says US response to Iran's seven conditions remains insufficient

Iran's Supreme National Security Council Chief Mohsen Rezaei has described Washington's response to Iran's seven conditions as insufficient, saying the United States has accepted some requirements but left others unclear. In social media posts, Rezaei said Iran's diplomatic approach had changed and would not revert to its previous position. He also accused US President Donald Trump of resorting to smuggling after Washington's efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz by military means failed.

‘Using petrochemical capacities to strengthen national economy required’

TEHRAN- The acting minister of oil, emphasizing the need to strengthen the governance role of the National Petrochemical Company, said: The capacities of the petrochemical industry must be used to create employment, increase production, generate income, and strengthen the country's economy.

According to a Shana, Hamid Bovard, in a meeting with the CEO and senior managers of the National Petrochemical Company, emphasized the importance and significant position of the petrochemical industry in the country's economy and stated: This industry has considerable capacities for creating added value and generating income.

Referring to the need to strengthen the regulatory and governance role of the National Petrochemical Company in the petrochemical industry, he stressed: This issue must be pursued seriously in various dimensions and clarified, and in this path, I support you in every way.

The acting minister of oil, stating that with cooperation from various sectors, the market situation, product prices, and supply mechanism must be carefully reviewed and managed, emphasized: This approach provides the ground for proper use of the industry's capacities.

Bovard, recalling that petrochemical products play a role in producing various goods for people's lives, said: Therefore, the petrochemical industry's activity is not limited to the production and export of base products; it also supplies an important part of the needs of the country's downstream industries.

Emphasizing the need for greater attention

Housing Foundation announces allocation of 70,000 rural land plots to applicants

TEHRAN- The head of the Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution said: Under the Housing Foundation's legal mandate in the Seventh Plan, 70,300 land plots in villages have been allocated, and information on 320,000 units has also been uploaded to the relevant system.

According to an ISNA report, Manouchehr Khajeh-Dalouei, during the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Resalat Bank to finance “Home of Hope” housing, stated: Under the Housing Foundation's legal duty to provide land and rural housing in the Seventh Development Plan, so far 70,300 land plots in villages have been allocated, and information on 320,000 units has also been uploaded to the relevant system.

Stating that in some villages we face restrictions in providing land, he added: In a significant portion of villages, sufficient land is not available from natural resources, and to provide the land needed by applicants, action must be taken through agreements with owners.

The head of the Housing Foundation, stating that the foundation had drafted a directive for reaching agreements with owners, said: The Court of Administrative Justice has raised ambiguities about this directive, and as a result, implementation of this part has been suspended.

Khajeh-Dalouei continued: Follow-ups are underway to resolve these ambiguities and redraft the legal framework so that it becomes possible to reach agreements with owners and allocate the residential share of the agreed lands to rural applicants.

He expressed hope that with the drafting of a new legal framework, it will be possible to provide land for housing applicants in the vast majority of villages.

In another part of his remarks, the head of the Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution, while explaining the details of the Home of Hope plan, said: Under this plan, construction of 200,000 residential units for disadvantaged groups has been envisaged, and so far executive operations for about 105,000 units have begun.

Referring to the conditions for benefiting from the Home of Hope plan, he stated: Applicants must belong to disadvantaged groups and must not have previously used government housing facilities; meaning their Form “J” must be green.

According to the head of the Housing Foun-

to the petrochemical industry's capacities, he added: Existing capacities must be used to create employment, increase production, generate income, and strengthen the country's economy. The development of the petrochemical industry can bring significant economic and social effects, and from this perspective, attention to its development is very important.

The acting minister of oil, referring to solutions for ensuring sustainable feedstock for petrochemical industries, stressed: The petrochemical industry's entry into the development of the country's oil and gas fields with the aim of ensuring sustainable feedstock must be on the agenda and pursued seriously.

Bovard, emphasizing the need to take fundamental measures to maintain the continuity of petrochemical product exports and foreign currency generation for the country, said: Efforts must be made, by strengthening exports, to return the foreign currency from petrochemical exports to the country's economic cycle.

He emphasized the importance of pursuing reconstruction programs for petrochemical units damaged in the third imposed war and added: The issue of reconstruction must be pursued seriously, and all existing capacities must be used to accelerate it.

The acting minister of oil, appreciating the efforts of managers and colleagues in the petrochemical industry, stated: In this industry, a collection of experiences and expertise has come together, and all actors are expected to work with doubled motivation to advance the country's goals.

dation, eligible applicants across the country can use the capacities of this plan, and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development is responsible for providing land in existing cities and new cities. The required land is also provided to applicants free of charge.

Khajeh-Dalouei, referring to the planning carried out for the construction of 200,000 units under Home of Hope, added: Based on the report received up to Saturday, executive operations for about 105,000 units have begun, and the plan is progressing at an appropriate pace.

Regarding measures taken to provide the land needed for the plan, he said: The Housing Foundation has concluded a memorandum of understanding with the National Land and Housing Organization to provide land for 50,000 residential units, of which 25,000 units will be built in new cities. Land provision and allocation are being carried out under these memoranda.

The head of the Housing Foundation considered the direct participation of applicants in the construction process to be one of the main features of Home of Hope and explained: In this plan, unlike some centralized housing projects, the people themselves participate in the process of constructing residential units, and the Housing Foundation has taken responsibility for following up on matters related to permit issuance and other executive stages.

Khajeh-Dalouei continued: In the design and technical matters, measures have also been taken in cooperation with the Construction Engineering Organization, and specific structural systems have been designed for the construction of the units so that applicants can use these models if they wish.

In another part of his speech, the head of the Housing Foundation referred to support for households covered by support institutions and said: For eligible applicants covered by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee or the State Welfare Organization, a 400 million toman non-repayable grant for housing construction has been envisaged.

He stated: In this regard, agreements have been concluded with the Relief Committee and the State Welfare Organization. According to him, for the current year, agreements have been made regarding the provision of housing for 52,000 units, and under the agreement with the Relief Committee, the provision of housing for 44,000 units has been considered.

TEHRAN- The head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), referring to the effects of trade restrictions and a 34 percent drop in the weight of the country's foreign trade in the first six months of this year, said: At the same time, part of exports is still being carried out by sea, and another part through corridors and land and rail routes. He also called rumors about the closure of some of the country's borders incorrect.

According to ISNA, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, at a press conference on the 30th National Export Day ceremony and honoring national exemplary exporters, which will be held on October 21, stated: Given the importance of economic and trade diplomacy in the current situation, appropriate cooperation has been established with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of trade diplomacy, because to resolve the problems caused by restrictions and blockade, we need this area to be highly active. Talks with neighboring countries, important trade partners, and friendly countries are essential so that we can make greater use of our communication capacities and partially replace the capacities that have been lost. Good measures have been taken in trade diplomacy, and major steps have been taken that have largely improved the problems.

The head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, referring to the effects of trade restrictions and the maritime blockade on the country's foreign trade, said: Despite the decline in trade weight, the use of alternative transport routes and import management has kept a significant part of foreign trade going. Given the country's special conditions, public release of the details of trade statistics comes with considerations, but reviewing the available statistics can provide a picture of the foreign trade situation.

He said that about 75 percent of the weight of the country's foreign trade last year was carried out by sea, adding: The bulk of these exchanges took place through the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman; therefore, maritime restrictions affected a large part of the country's exports and imports.

Dehghan Dehnavi, referring to foreign trade statistics in the first half of this year, said: Estimates show that the weight of the country's foreign trade has decreased by about 34 percent. However, part of exports is still carried out by sea, and another part through corridors and land and rail routes.

He continued: The use of alternative routes has increased transport costs, because land and rail transport are more expensive than sea transport even under normal conditions. In addition, increased demand for road and rail routes has led to congestion at some borders.

The head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, referring to the difference between the decline in export weight and value, stated: While the weight of foreign trade has decreased by about 34 percent, the drop in export value has been about 20 percent. This difference shows that goods with higher unit value have been able to bear higher transport costs and their exports have continued.

He explained: Paying \$50 in transport costs per ton may make the export of low-value goods uneconomical, but for goods worth several thousand dollars, bearing such a cost is more feasible. For this reason, part of the goods whose exports have stopped have lost their economic justification due to increased costs.

Dehghan Dehnavi also spoke about the import situation, saying: The weight of the country's imports has decreased by about 20

Exports continue through alternative routes: TPO head



percent. A significant part of imports consists of essential goods, which, despite their lower unit value, account for a large share of import volume. A review of the statistics shows that essential goods have been supplied well. At the same time, the value of imports has decreased by about 35 percent, which indicates a greater decline in import value than in weight.

The head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, referring to the policies of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade in import management, stated: From the beginning of this year, restrictions were imposed on the import of some goods, and for some other goods, including production machinery, demand management was put on the agenda so that foreign exchange resources would be allocated to essential needs and raw materials. This approach caused the decline in import value to be greater than the decline in weight; meaning less foreign exchange was consumed, while imports of essential goods and raw materials continued.

Decline in trade is costly, but there is no serious cause for concern

Dehghan Dehnavi, stating that the country's foreign trade has been managed under current conditions, said: This does not mean the situation is desirable; a decline in exports and imports imposes costs on the economy and can affect economic activities and production.

Referring to the fact that about 85 percent of the country's imports consist of raw materials and intermediate goods, including machinery, he added: A decline in imports of these goods affects production; therefore, we are trying to continue supplying them by using alternative resources and routes. We hope that with facilitating measures and greater support for exports, part of the declines created will be compensated in the rest of the year and the sustainability of the country's foreign trade will be maintained.

We support exporters

In another part of his remarks, the head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization referred to the importance of developing non-oil exports and stated: The 29th of Mehr every year is designated as National Export Day so that, while honoring exemplary exporters, an opportunity is provided to express their issues, problems, and solutions, as well as to create national consensus among government bodies and the private sector for the development of non-oil exports.

He said that the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, as the main custodian of this event, has tried in recent years to hold the National Export Day ceremony in the best possible way, adding: The purpose of holding this ceremony is to declare support for the country's exporters and provide a basis for expressing problems and finding solutions for export development.

Dehghan Dehnavi, referring to the initiative of holding National Export Week since last year, said: Since export development is a diverse issue and various bodies influence it, all relevant sectors

must participate to achieve this goal. Accordingly, this year, from today until Tuesday next week, seven working days have been dedicated to the issue of exports, and programs have been planned for each day.

The head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, referring to the dedication of the first day of these programs to the issue of infrastructure and trade corridors, stated: Trade corridors have always been important, but this year, due to the conditions that have arisen for the country and the issue of the maritime blockade, they have become more important.

He continued: In recent months, much has been done to make corridors that can compensate for restrictions created in other sectors more active. The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and other responsible bodies have made great efforts in this regard. The program related to infrastructure and trade corridors will be held with the presence of the Minister of Roads and Urban Development at the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, and a memorandum of understanding will also be introduced in this program to make the continuation of the path, especially in the rail sector, smoother.

Referring to the programs of the coming days, he said: On Tuesday, the issue of value-creating trade with the export of knowledge-based goods and services will be pursued, and the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy has been invited to this program. This year, we have tried to hold more programs in partner agencies so that, while appreciating their actions, the message is conveyed that all agencies have come to support the development of non-oil exports. On Wednesday, the issue of exporting technical and engineering services will be pursued with the presence of companies exporting these services and representatives of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and the Ministry of Energy.

He said that export management companies are among the important tools for the country's export development, stating: For Saturday next week, a program has been planned with the cooperation of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce so that the issue of export management companies and their capacities is given attention. On the same day, the issue of legislation and an export leap will also be raised, and with the presence of the heads of some parliamentary commissions, legislative issues in the field of exports will be examined so that the parliament's support for export development is also considered.

Referring to the program for Sunday next week, he said: On this day, the issue of facilitation in exports will be pursued, and exporters who have fulfilled their foreign exchange obligations on time will be honored. Exports play an important role in the country's economy due to their impact on GDP and employment. Fulfilling foreign exchange obligations and repatriating export earnings, alongside export activity, is a worthy action, and on this occasion, with the presence of regulatory officials,

companies that have had exemplary performance in fulfilling their foreign exchange obligations will be appreciated.

He continued: On Monday, the issue of associations and trade events in the field of exports will be pursued with the cooperation of the Iran Chamber of Commerce and with the presence of associations and the Export Confederation, so that the ground is provided for greater activity by private sector associations in exports. Tuesday is dedicated to trade diplomacy, and this program will be held with the participation and presence of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During these seven days, a diverse range of executive bodies, peer organizations, public sector institutions, and representatives of the private sector and chambers of commerce will participate in holding the National Export Day programs.

According to him, the message of these programs is that, given the country's special need for foreign exchange generation this year, all agencies will cooperate to help the private sector, remove obstacles, and grow the country's exports so that the losses caused by war and blockade are compensated to a large extent. The main ceremony of National Export Day will be held on Wednesday next week, the 29th of Mehr, and we will try to hold this ceremony with the presence of the president and according to the procedure of previous years.

43 exemplary exporters and 13 national distinguished exporters selected

The head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization then presented a report on the process of selecting exemplary exporters and said: This process began several months ago in the Trade Promotion Organization, and after the call was announced, companies that applied to be selected as exemplary exporters participated in this process. The selection of exemplary exporters is carried out based on specific guidelines; in total, 365 companies registered in this process, and after reviews, 275 files were finalized because some applicants did not complete their files or did not meet the necessary conditions to obtain the required points.

Dehghan Dehnavi continued: One of the positive actions this year was making the process of selecting exemplary exporters systematic, such that the selection was carried out without the interference or personal taste of individuals and based on scored criteria. Finally, 43 individuals or legal entities were selected as national exemplary exporters, and 13 companies were selected as national distinguished exporters.

The head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, explaining the criteria for selecting distinguished exporters, said: Distinguished exporters are exporters who have been selected as exemplary exporters in five consecutive periods. Medal-winning exporters are also companies that have obtained the distinguished title for three consecutive periods; however, this year no company qualified for this category. Alongside exemplary and distinguished exporters, in other sections, including export management companies, cooperative companies, free zones, provinces, and the printing and packaging field, selected parties will be introduced as exporters worthy of appreciation, and a government organization will be introduced as an exemplary export-supporting organization for the first time; an organization that has had the greatest role and help in the field of exports in its area of activity will be introduced in this section.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

German silence on Gaza and the West Bank ‘has been loud’: Philippe Sands

Winner of German Book Trade’s Peace Prize insists on ‘excavating matters that some wish to hide’

From page 1 ▶ The Franco-British lawyer who was awarded the German Book Trade's Peace Prize on Sunday also said Germany's restrictions on those who speak loud against crimes committed against Gazans are “troubling”.

“To silence those who seek to call out the crimes is indecent,” he wrote.

On Sunday, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier praised him as a humanist “who, despite growing resistance, fights tirelessly for human rights, justice and mutual understanding.”

“Inappropriate silence”

In his acceptance speech while receiving the award, Sands criticized Germany’s “inappropriate silence” regarding Israel’s actions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

On November 21, 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Some argue that the war on Gaza is a clear example of genocide but some others disagree.

“Whatever the rulings, the debate about labels is, I fear, an unhelpful distraction. There is no hierarchy among the various international crimes. To kill as a war crime or a crime against humanity is not less grave than a genocide. These are all terrible crimes,” he wrote.

Sands said those who “demand accountability” for crimes “should not be silenced or excluded or punished, merely for exercising a freedom of expression.” He suggested that “writers and journal-



ists, songsters and poets, filmmakers and others must be able to tell their stories.”

“Germany has called out and acted on many horrors, from the Yazidis to the Uighurs, from Syria to Sudan and Ukraine, but it has been silent about the crimes committed against Palestinians in Israel since October 7, 2023,” he explained.

“On Gaza and the West Bank, the German silence has been loud. Relatedly, the restrictions on debate are troubling. This is all the more so after the ICJ’s clear advisory opinion of 2024, on the Palestinian right of self-determination. Britain, Canada, France and others have since recognized a Palestinian state. In recent days they have imposed sanctions. The British Foreign Secretary has characterized conduct in the occupied territories as ethnic cleansing.”

He stated that Germany “knows about ethnic cleansing” in Gaza but why it is silent is a matter of

question.

However, he said, some German officials have taken a departure from Berlin’s policy and began strongly criticizing Israel for its behavior toward Palestinians.

“Some German leaders have begun to speak more sharply in their criticism of Israel’s actions. That is right, even if so tentative and limited. It is not anti-Semitic. It is not ‘anti-Israel’. It is truth.”

Sands suggested that the Berlin government must break its silence about the crimes that Israel has been committing against Palestinians.

“Eighty years after Nuremberg, (Germany) must surely be to break silences about international crimes, wherever they occur and by whomsoever they are committed, even friends, especially friends.”

He said, “Silence is not the way. Not for a family. Not for a community. Not for a country.”

Sands insisted on “bringing truth to power, confronting prejudice and double standards, excavating matters that some wish to hide.”

While the U.S. has imposed sanctions on the ICC and threatened its judges, Sands said, “Let us protect the writers and the jurists, so they may be free from threat, attack or sanction.”

Sands concluded his remarks by citing pomes from his favorite Canadian poet who says:

Let us run no more, with the lawless crowds, whoever they may be.

Let us hold to account the killers in high places, even as they say their prayers aloud.

Let us ring the bells, that still can ring.

Let us not forget there is a crack, a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in

Yemen leaves Riyadh grounded

Repeated strikes close Riyadh airport and shatter Saudi air defenses as Ansarallah enforces its ‘blockade for blockade’ doctrine

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Riyadh’s airport has been hit five times since Tuesday, October 6, by Saudi authorities’ own count, and the government cannot promise a sixth will not come.

On Saturday, a missile struck King Khalid International Airport, killing at least 13 people and wounding more than 300, according to the kingdom. On Sunday, another projectile set Terminal 4 on fire. On Monday, the Saudi civil aviation authority extended the shutdown.

A wealthy kingdom that spent a decade selling itself as the Persian Gulf’s safe harbor cannot keep its capital’s runway open.

Cirium reported that 99.7 percent of scheduled flights at King Khalid were canceled on Sunday. Flight radar24 showed no aircraft over a city of roughly eight million. Lufthansa Group grounded its Riyadh service through October 16, Air France-KLM through the end of the month, and Ethad stretched its Saudi cancellations again.

The FAA warned American carriers about Saudi airspace, and Washington, London, Berlin, and Madrid told their citizens to stay away from the airport. Riyadh’s schools moved online. The metro stopped serving two airport stations.

The defenses are thin. Saudi officials have told the Wall Street Journal they are running low on interceptors.

The kingdom is shuffling air defense batteries between palaces and increasingly vulnerable energy sites and desperately searching the world for more.

Sanaa’s equation

Brigadier General Yahya Saree laid out the terms in his October 11 statement. Yemeni forces, he said, carried out four operations in 24 hours: three waves against King Khalid, a direct hit on King Fahd Airport in Dammam, and fires at Aramco’s Sheddum and Tanajib facilities in the Eastern Province. He told airlines, airport staff, and travelers that Saudi airports and airspace are unsafe, exempting only Mecca and Medina, and put responsibility for any failed interception on Riyadh.

Sanaa’s rule is “airport for airport, blockade for blockade, and escalation for escalation.”

Ansarallah did not invent this logic out of a vacuum. There were documented Saudi strikes on Sanaa airport on July 13, with three munitions landing on its only working runway. That airport is the front door for aid to the area where most Yemenis live.

Saree said Saudi jets flew 124 raids in a single day, bringing the total of this escalation to 2,058. The World Food Programme says three-quarters of families in parts of Yemen are going hungry.

Eleven years of bombing and port restrictions taught Yemenis what a closed airport means. Riyadh is learning it now. Ansarallah’s warnings were repeated and ignored.

Washington stays out

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman asked for urgent American help, according to multiple news reports in American media outlets.

He pledged around \$1 trillion in U.S. “investment” this year and was embraced at the White House. What he has received in his war on Yemen so far is intelligence, targeting support, and military advisers.

Trump called the airport attack “very bad” and said of joining Saudi strikes: “We may. We’re going to look at it.” Secretary of State Marco Rubio offered “condolences.” Condolences do not intercept missiles.

The reasons for restraint are plain. The war on Iran has already consumed American munitions and attention, closed and disrupted the Strait of Hormuz, and pushed fuel prices high. Midterm elections arrive on November 3, and a Republi-

can Party facing angry drivers has no appetite for another unwinnable quagmire.

Trump himself has said that the Yemenis contacted Washington to say they do not want to fight the United States. The American president certainly remembers the high costs of “Operation Rough Rider” from March to May 2025, when a massive multi-week air assault spectacularly failed to blunt Sanaa’s strategic capabilities.

Ansarallah announced a maritime blockade of Saudi Arabia in July and has the range to successfully strike American ships in the Red Sea. It has not fired on one.

So far it has held back, as Riyadh realizes that Washington dreads the cost of a wider regional war far more than it dreads a weakened Saudi ally.

The bill for Vision 2030

The World Petroleum Council Energy Congress opened in Riyadh under security, but BP pulled out, and the chief executives of ExxonMobil, TotalEnergies, Shell and Chevron vanished from the program.

The Finance Ministry expects the economy to shrink 3.6 percent this year. Foreign investment fell in each of the first two quarters.

Riyadh dropped the 2029 Asian Winter Games in January, and Neom and other showpieces sit stalled or under review. An effective attack on the East-West pipeline in September cut the kingdom’s route around Hormuz.

Vision 2030 asks visitors and investors to believe Riyadh is safe. A shuttered airport answers that question for them.

Expo 2030 and the 2034 World Cup now carry a plain logistical doubt, and so do the data centers meant to make Saudi Arabia an “AI hub.” Billions spent on golf, football, and festivals sought to buy an image, and Yemen’s punishing strikes have thoroughly damaged it.

Furthermore, as the kingdom prepares to host the 2027 AFC Asian Cup across venues in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Khobar, the unfolding security crisis and shuttered transport infrastructure cast an immediate shadow over the tournament, turning what was intended as a grand showcase of soft power into a stark reminder of Saudi Arabia’s extreme vulnerability.

MBS’ war

Mohammed bin Salman launched the war on Yemen in 2015 expecting victory after mere weeks. He got a stalemate, a 2022 truce and, this summer, a resumed war he is losing.

When Ansarallah pushed down the Red Sea coast in August, Riyadh held back its air power, and Mokha fell. The coalition’s “Dawn of Yemen” counteroffensive, with 100 jets in its opening phase, has not stopped missiles reaching Riyadh, Dammam, Abha, Jazan and Najran. Sanaa has released footage of Saudi-backed fighters surrendering.

The crown prince now moves between bunkered palaces under a handpicked guard, the WSJ reports. His last public appearance was October 6, when he gave blood for a donation drive.

Saudi officials are quietly weighing a diplomatic exit. Sanaa has already named its price: stop the aggression and lift the siege.



The weapon shifting Yemen’s frontlines



From page 1 ▶ Over the past week, the YAF’s War Media division has released footage documenting operations to repel and pursue Saudi-backed forces and their vehicles using this type of drone. The footage shows substantial losses among those fighters at their field positions, creating an obstacle to attempts to break through in this strategically vital sector.

The YAF has succeeded tactically in turning attempted breakthroughs into mobile killing zones that consume Saudi manpower and equipment. This type of weapon, the Shawaz drone, along with preemptive operations, may have played a decisive role in that success. As a tactical weapon, the Shawaz drone has transformed both the battlefield equation and the battle of competing narratives.

Characteristics and capabilities

Shawaz drones represent a model of low-cost, highly maneuverable tactical weaponry. They are remotely operated and provide live video feeds of the battlefield. Their significance extends beyond carrying out offensive strikes; they also provide real-time reconnaissance and intelligence on enemy deployments and the scale of their movements. This gives field commanders the ability to manage engagements according to the principle of proportionality while minimizing human losses along the front lines.

The footage released by the War Media division shows that Shawaz operations should not be dismissed as another set of battlefield images. By analyzing the footage, several functions of this tactical weapon can be identified.

Direct pursuit and attack

The Shawaz drone’s role is not limited to pursuing and targeting military vehicles, armored vehicles, fortified positions, and barricades. The footage has also demonstrated its ability to pursue individual personnel on the battlefield, as seen in the recent operations in Kahbub and Al-Wazi’iyah.

Dual offensive and intelligence-gathering

The Shawaz performs two military functions: offensive operations and intelligence-oriented reconnaissance. It enables the YAF to monitor enemy mobilizations, deployments, numbers, weapons, and other relevant details. This allows the Sanaa government to apply the principle of proportionality in accordance with the demands of the battlefield.

Remote observation and engagement

The drone provides the ability to observe and engage targets remotely, thereby reducing the potential human losses among YAF personnel in direct confrontations.

Psychological impact and the changing battlefield equation

Psychologically and perceptually, the documented footage has created an atmosphere of fear and deterrence among the YAF’s foes on the ground. Its effects have extended beyond the immediate battlefield, influencing the wider environment surrounding Saudi-backed forces.

These drones have established a new battlefield reality, forcing Riyadh’s forces to abandon their customary displays of strength through large military convoys and adopt dispersed positions and defensive concealment out of fear of this weapon.

Yet these measures have neither protected them nor prevented them from being targeted. This is evident in the footage

of the Kahbub and Al-Wazi’iyah operations, in which Shawaz drones pursued individual personnel and military vehicles in multiple directions, while those targeted were gripped by fear and panic.

The recent footage of Shawaz drones and their operations also brings to mind the attack drones used by Hezbollah against the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) in southern Lebanon. Those drones became a source of terror and an enduring nightmare for the regime’s occupying troops. Their impact was not confined to those on the battlefield; their psychological effects extended to political and military decision-making circles, as well as field commanders.

There is little doubt that Yemeni drones exert a similar psychological impact on Saudi-backed forces operating on the Yemeni battlefield.

Battlefield implications and the battle of competing narratives

An examination of recent developments suggests that the latest offensive operations have inflicted substantial attrition on Saudi-backed forces between Lahij governorate and Bab al-Mandab. These operations have come alongside earlier missile and aerial strikes that inflicted extensive losses on Saudi forces, their vehicles, and their modern armored equipment, whether American-made or Saudi-made.

The footage recorded by Shawaz drones, together with material documented by Yemen’s War Media division, has made a significant difference in the media battle over competing narratives. The visual evidence, captured by both the Shawaz drones and War Media cameras, has refuted claims promoted by Saudi news outlets and some Arab television channels that Saudi-backed forces had “established full control over Bab al-Mandab” or were “advancing toward Al-Mokha.”

The Shawaz footage, by contrast, showed that these forces are suffering military attrition, including casualties and equipment losses, while operating under severe psychological pressure. It also showed these forces retreating rather than occupying positions from which they could launch an offensive and establish control.

In the battle of narratives and competing accounts, the YAF’s documented operations, filmed both from the air and on the ground, have demonstrated a consistency between the battlefield situation and the account presented to the public. When the YAF or military sources announce an operation or achievement and substantiate their claims with footage, their account becomes more convincing.

This visual documentation has played a central role in dismantling opposing media narratives and has reinforced the YAF’s claimed operational and psychological advantage in managing the battlefield.

The opposing side, by contrast, has gone beyond propaganda. It now lies more often on the falsification of facts and the construction of reality through crude, repetitive, and theatrical claims unsupported by any visual evidence.

This was evident last week when Saudi outlets claimed to have “secured control over Bab al-Mandab and advanced toward Al-Mokha.” Within hours, however, those claims, and those promoting them, had been discredited because they lacked elements of credibility, as well as tangible evidence from the battlefield.

Peace must remain at the heart of UNESCO's mission: Iran

TEHRAN –Secretary-General of Iran's National Commission for UNESCO Hassan Fartousi has underlined the importance of preserving peace at the heart of UNESCO's mission, and urged National Commissions for UNESCO to play a more active and responsible role in sustaining lasting regional and global peace while delivering a talk at the Traditional Meeting of UNESCO National Commissions.

The meeting took place on October 8 and 9, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, on the sidelines of the 225th Session of the Executive Board. Fartousi addressed the meeting online, IRNA reported.

Referring to the devastating impacts of war in Iran, the official said that wars affect education, scientific cooperation, and common heritage of humanity. He also highlighted that UNESCO's fundamental vision is to build lasting peace in the minds of women and men through education, culture, science, communication, and dialogue.

Hence, UNESCO and its national commissions bear a great responsibility for fostering regional peace, Fartousi noted.

Underscoring the unparalleled role of national commissions in aligning UNESCO's global priorities with national realities and capacities, the official said strengthening national cooperation with UNESCO and its National Commissions is among the top priorities of the Iranian National Commission.

The Traditional Meeting of UNESCO National Commissions was opened by UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany and Assistant Director-General for Africa Priority and External Relations Lidia Brito.

The discussions centered on reaffirming the role of National Commissions as a bridge between UNESCO and Member States, enhancing intersectoral cooperation, and increasing field office synergy.

Iran urges UNESCO to help restore scientific infrastructure damaged in war



On October 1, the head of the National Committee for Management of Social Transformations (MOST) called for UNESCO to play an effective role in safeguarding knowledge, ensuring uninterrupted access to learning, and rebuilding academic centers damaged during the US-Israeli imposed war against the country.

Highlighting the destructive impact of conflicts on educational institutions and human capacities, Seyyed Ziae Hashemi said the international community needs to pay close attention to these outcomes, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks while addressing the extraordinary session of the Intergovernmental Council of MOST Program, which took place at UNESCO headquarters on October 1 in Paris; the official and the Secretary General of Iran's National Commission for UNESCO attended the session online.

Referring to the impacts of the US-Israeli war against Iran, and the damage inflicted on certain educational and scientific institutions, cultural heritage and civilian infrastructures, he called for UNESCO to utilize its capacities for rebuilding scientific and educational capacities, strengthening international cooperation, and supporting sustainable development.

"International responses must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each crisis, while simultaneously placing the fundamental principles of protecting human lives, safeguarding knowledge, and ensuring the continuity of learning at the heart of these efforts," he added.

"The catastrophic dimensions of war in Gaza have inflicted irreparable damage on civilians, educational centers, cultural and scientific activities; the international bodies have to make it clear what they can do within the frameworks of BRIDGES and MOST to protect knowledge, sustain education and research," he added.

The restoration of the right to education for Afghan girls and women was another issue raised by the official.

Fartousi, for his part, emphasized that science is not merely a driver of industry or technology, but an essential part of human life and a factor that enhances our understanding of the world. Access to knowledge, equal learning opportunities, and universal participation in research are fundamental rights in human society.

Referring to UNESCO's approach to open science, he called for the establishment of specific mechanisms that prevent the monopolization of knowledge,

ensure the free flow of knowledge, and strike a balance between supporting researchers and universal access to science.

Highlighting the challenges faced by researchers due to unilateral and coercive measures, the official noted that BRIDGES frame work needs to propose practical solutions to remove barriers to scientific cooperation, prevent concentration of knowledge and power, and consolidate the concept of knowledge as a shared heritage and asset of humanity.

The Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of the MOST Program was established by UNESCO Member States in 1994. It is composed of 35 Member States elected by the General Conference, whose representatives meet every two years to guide and oversee the planning and implementation of the MOST Program. The IGC defines the MOST Program's broad priorities, reviews its activities and achievements, and helps strengthen the link between social and human sciences research and public policy.

Through its work, the IGC provides a platform for Member States to exchange on contemporary social transformations and to promote more inclusive, evidence-based policies aligned with national priorities.

UN official: Environmental protection must be integral to post-war recovery

TEHRAN – UN Resident Coordinator in Iran Christine Weigand has stressed the far-reaching and long-term environmental consequences of war, saying environmental protection must be incorporated into both emergency response measures and long-term recovery plans, as protecting the environment ultimately means safeguarding human health, livelihoods and the future.

Weigand made the remarks in Tehran on Sunday at a conference on the environmental consequences of war and human rights.

Referring to the loss of human lives, the displacement of families and the destruction of homes and infrastructure, she said the environment and valuable ecosystems were also among the victims of war, warning that the damage inflicted on them could persist for generations.

Conflicts and environmental degradation, she noted, reinforce one another, deepening human suffering, undermining livelihoods and food security, and making reconstruction and the achievement of sustainable development more difficult.

Weigand also referred to the United Nations' designation of November 6 as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict in 2001. She noted that contaminated water resources, damaged agricultural land and degraded ecosystems have consequences that extend far beyond the immediate destruction caused by war, undermining communities' ability to rebuild their lives.

Citing examples of environmental damage in the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, the UN official addressed the consequences of attacks on oil facilities and water infrastruc-

ture in Iran. She said attacks on oil facilities had released smoke containing hazardous substances into Tehran's atmosphere, while damage to a desalination facility on Qeshm Island had reportedly disrupted water supplies to more than 25 villages.

Weigand also warned of the possibility of oil pollution reaching the mangrove forests on Qeshm Island, emphasizing that such contamination could threaten sensitive coastal ecosystems along the Persian Gulf.

Recalling her own experience of air pollution in Tehran following the attacks on oil facilities, she said that, for millions of people, the issue was not merely an environmental concern but one that directly affected the air they breathed every day.

The UN Resident Coordinator cautioned that the disappearance of visible smoke does not necessarily mean the danger has passed. Burning oil can release hazardous compounds, she explained, and the resulting pollution can contaminate soil and water, affect agricultural produce and threaten human health. These consequences may persist long after a conflict ends, with children and future generations particularly vulnerable.

Emphasizing that investment in environmental protection is an investment in people and their future, Weigand said healthy ecosystems sustain community livelihoods, provide clean water and safe food, and strengthen societies' resilience to crises. Conversely, the degradation of these systems increases vulnerability and makes recovery more difficult.

She identified evidence-based assessments, stronger national environmental management capacities, cooperation among



Christine Weigand: Conflicts and environmental degradation reinforce one another, deepening human suffering, undermining livelihoods and food security.

different sectors and national and international institutions, and investment in climate change adaptation as essential measures for protecting and restoring the environment in conflict-affected countries.

Weigand also highlighted the longstanding cooperation between the UN Country Team in Iran and national partners in areas including climate resilience, sustainable water resource management, biodiversity conservation and pollution reduction. She reaffirmed the UN's commitment to continuing this cooperation and its readiness to support national efforts to address emerging environmental needs.

Concluding her remarks, the UN official stressed that commitment to protecting and restoring nature must remain unwavering in the face of global environmental challenges.

"Our shared responsibility is to protect what remains, restore what has been damaged, and invest in building a more sustainable and peaceful future for all," she said.

Iran to expand nuclear technology applications in healthcare



TEHRAN – The Ministry of Health and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) have signed a memorandum of understanding to expand the application of nuclear technology in the healthcare sector.

Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi and AEOI chief Mohammad Eslami signed the agreement, which primarily aims to control Aedes mosquito populations and combat dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses through the sterile insect technique (SIT), IRNA reported.

The initiative is an environmentally friendly pest control method; male mosquitoes are mass-reared and sterilized using irradiation. The release of sterilized male insects significantly declines the insect population.

Accordingly, both parties will utilize the scientific, research, and technological capacities of the country to launch a center for Aedes aegypti mass-rearing, and conduct pilot and field studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the technology.

The AEOI will help supply gamma or X-ray irradiation equipment, train personnel, provide specialists in the fields of irradiation and dosimetry, and guarantee the performance and maintenance of the delivered equipment.

Mosquitoes only need a small amount of water to lay eggs. Bowls, cups, fountains, tires, barrels, vases, and any other container storing water make a great nursery.

Dengue is a viral infection transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. The disease is transmitted through the bite of Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquitoes. These mosquitoes also transmit the Zika and Chikungunya viruses, making them a significant threat to public health.

Dengue disease has different infectious phases, including the fever phase, critical phase,

and recovery phase.

Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus have been recorded in the country. Aedes aegypti is a more invasive mosquito that is more common in Iran. Due to the physiology of this mosquito, people in contaminated areas are told to wear clothes that cover most parts of their bodies for the first two hours of the morning and two hours before evening.

Transmission occurs two days before symptoms and two days after the fever. The disease can spread from mosquitoes to humans, from humans to mosquitoes, and from humans to humans through blood transfusion, organ transplant, and mother to child in pregnancy.

The lifespan of Aedes mosquitoes is between one and 4 weeks; they take blood meals every 1–2 hours, accounting for 40 to 50 meals throughout their lifespan.

About 40 to 80 percent of patients with dengue have mild or no symptoms. By adhering to sanitation practices, dengue fever cases can be reduced by 70 percent.

Aedes aegypti was first reported in Hormozgan province in 2019. Now, the mosquito is found in Hormozgan, Sistan-Baluchestan (Chabahar and Konarak), Bushehr, and Fars provinces.

The other species, Aedes albopictus, has been observed in the northern and northwestern provinces, including Gilan, Mazandaran, Ardabil, East Azerbaijan, and Zanjan.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about half of the world's population is now at risk of dengue, with an estimated 100–400 million infections occurring each year.

Prevention and control of dengue rely on vector control. There is no specific treatment for dengue/severe dengue, and early detection and access to proper medical care greatly lower fatality rates of severe dengue.

Mustafa Prize laureate donates award money to support young scientists

TEHRAN – Turkish Professor Mehmet Toner, a 2025 laureate of the Mustafa Prize, has pledged his share of the prize money to support the development of the Rasul Medal and provide research grants for young scientists.

Toner was named one of three laureates of the Mustafa Prize in 2025. Under the prize's regulations, the \$500,000 cash award was divided among the three recipients.

The biomedical engineering scientist has now pledged his share of the award to jointly support young scientists through the Rasul Medal and fund research grants for early-career researchers.

Before Toner, Professors Ugur Sahin, Omid Farokhzad, and Wahab Mirrokni, laureates of the Mustafa Prize in 2019, 2023, and 2025, respectively, had also donated their prize money to establish and sustain the Rasul (PBUH) Medal.

Born in 1958, Toner is a professor of biomedical engineering at Harvard Medical School. He received the sixth Mustafa Prize in 2025 for developing nanomicrofluidic systems. The technology isolates circulating tumor cells from the bloodstream, enabling earlier disease detection, monitoring of treatment progress, and the development of more precise therapies.

The Rasul Medal is presented alongside the Mustafa Prize to young scientists from the Islamic world under the age of 40.

The initial list of nominees for the second edition of the Rasul Medal, has been finalized.

The shortlist comprises four nominees in engineering sciences, four in mathematics, four in computer science, eight in biological and medical sciences, two in chemistry, and two in phys-

ics. The award ceremony for the final winners is scheduled to be held in December.

The initial list considered for the Rasul Medal included more than 100,000 candidates across seven scientific fields. The biological and medical sciences category accounted for 55,878 candidates, followed by 4,675 in physics, 7,897 in chemistry, 1,965 in mathematics, 5,589 in computer science, and 26,377 in engineering sciences. In addition, 14 candidates in the field of nanotechnology met the required criteria to be included in the initial list.

In order to appreciate prominent scientists and provide the ground for scientific cooperation and development worldwide, the Mustafa Prize was established in 2012 as a symbol of scientific excellence at the international level.

The Mustafa Prize, a top science and technology award, is granted biennially to the top researchers and scientists of the Islamic world in three categories: "Life and Medical Science and Technology", "Information and Communication Science and Technology", and "Basic and Engineering Sciences".

The Prize is granted to works deemed to have improved human life, have made tangible and cutting-edge innovations on the boundaries of science, or have presented new scientific methodology.

One of the objectives of the Mustafa Prize Foundation is to establish a scientific network. The goal is not merely to introduce the prize laureates, but also to connect scientists, enabling them to be identified while creating an environment conducive to synergy, collaboration and mutual scientific exchange.



OCTOBER 13, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who remembers the length of the journey, prepares himself for it.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:51 Evening: 17:50 Dawn: 4:46 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:10 (tomorrow)

Tehran theater to host reading performance of “The Star-Spangled Girl”

TEHRAN- On Saturday, the Simorgh Theater Hall in Tehran will be hosting a reading performance of the acclaimed American playwright Neil Simon's comedy “The Star-Spangled Girl”.

The reading performance will be directed by Mehrshad Moradi, based on a Persian translation by Shahram Zargar.

The play will be read by a cast composed of Erfan Sepehr and Reyhaneh Keyhan.

“The Star-Spangled Girl” is a romantic comedy, set in San Francisco during the 1960s. Blending romance, political disagreement and situational humor, the play follows two young men whose radical ideals and unconventional lifestyle are challenged by the arrival of a patriotic woman.

Andy Hobart and Norman Cornell are room-mates and political activists who run a small magazine called “Fallout” from their apartment. Dedicated to challenging the American establishment, the publication reflects their opposition to the prevailing political and social order. However, their commitment to the cause has brought little financial success. Struggling to keep the magazine afloat, they face unpaid bills, pressure from their printer and overdue rent. Andy, the more practical of the two, tries to manage their financial difficulties while finding ways to keep their landlady from demanding payment.

Their lives change when Sophie Rauschmeyer, a friendly young woman from the American South and a former Olympic swimmer, moves into the apartment next door. Her charm immediately captivates Norman, who falls head over heels for her. His feelings, however, are not returned. As Norman's infatuation grows, Andy decides to hire Sophie to help with the magazine, partly to please his lovesick roommate and partly to support their struggling publication.

Sophie initially suspects that the magazine's

activities are dangerously subversive, reflecting her patriotic outlook and sharply contrasting with the men's radical politics. Yet the situation takes an unexpected turn when she develops feelings for Andy instead of Norman. Andy, who shares her attraction, finds himself caught between his growing affection for Sophie and his political convictions.

The emerging romance threatens to undermine the partnership between the two friends. Norman must confront his unrequited love, while Andy faces a conflict between his personal desires and ideological commitments. As romantic misunderstandings and political disagreements collide, the three characters become entangled in a comic struggle that tests their friendship, loyalties and beliefs.

Simon reportedly drew inspiration from a lively political exchange he witnessed between writer Paddy Chayefsky and René Carpenter, the wife of astronaut Scott Carpenter. The encounter explored the humorous possibilities of political disagreement between people whose apparent identities and convictions seemed incompatible.

Although the play featured Simon's characteristic witty dialogue and comic situations, its reception was mixed. Some critics found its humor entertaining, while others considered the story comparatively lightweight and less effective than his earlier successes, including “Barefoot in the Park” and “The Odd Couple”. Simon himself later expressed reservations about the play, suggesting that it lacked the substance of his stronger comedies.

In 1971, the play was adapted into a film directed by Jerry Paris, with Tony Roberts as Andy, Todd Susman as Norman and Sandy Duncan as Amy, the character renamed from Sophie. The film retained the central romantic conflict and political contrasts but received largely unfavorable reviews.

President Pezeshkian joins children at “Smile of the Homeland” ceremony

TEHRAN- Iran's “Smile of the Homeland” ceremony was held in Tehran on Sunday, bringing together President Masoud Pezeshkian, Education Minister Alireza Kazemi and more than 600 children and teenagers, including children with special needs, to mark National Children's Week.

Organized by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IID-CYA), the event featured a variety of cultural and artistic programs aimed at promoting friendship, solidarity and a sense of belonging among young participants.

The program included poetry recitals, a choir performance, a dramatic patriotic chant, video presentations and a ceremony honoring educators working in the institute's mobile libraries.

Addressing the children, Pezeshkian used the example of several sticks tied together to illustrate the strength that comes from unity. He said that when family members, neighbors, and people in a city or country stand together, they become stronger and are less likely to be divided.

The president encouraged the children and teenagers to build friendships, help one another and remain supportive of their peers, saying that cooperation among them could contribute to building a strong and progressive Iran.

Kazemi, meanwhile, highlighted the theme of this year's National Children's Week, “Children's Smiles, the Alphabet of the Homeland,” emphasizing the need to protect children's rights and provide equal opportunities for their growth and development.



He said no child should be deprived of the opportunity to develop their abilities because of poverty, individual differences or family circumstances. The minister stressed that efforts should be made to ensure that every child's talent is recognized and that no child feels overlooked or unheard.

Kazemi also underscored the roles of families, schools and cultural institutions in children's upbringing, describing the IID-CYA as an important national resource for identifying and nurturing the talents of children and teenagers.

The artistic program included a poetry recital by Sara Goudarzi, a member of the institute's Qaf youth poetry and literature club. The institute's choir performed the song “We Must Rise” in the presence of the president and education minister.

Sarina Seifi, a member of the institute, also presented a patriotic chant as part of the event. In another segment, Pezeshkian met with 10 children with spe-

cial needs from the institute's Inclusive Center No. 40 in Tehran Province.

Video presentations focusing on children's smiles, a meeting with the martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and a promotional clip for National Children's Week were also screened during the festival.

A special segment was devoted to recognizing the work of educators serving in the institute's mobile libraries. Ali Nadi, representing the mobile-library educators, received a certificate of honor and a commemorative statuette from the president.

The institute's mobile libraries travel to different areas to provide children and teenagers with access to books and cultural activities. They also help promote reading and engage young audiences in underserved communities where access to cultural resources may be limited.

The festival concluded with children and teenagers gathering for a commemorative pho-

tograph with Pezeshkian and Kazemi at the Behnam Hall of the institute's Cultural and Artistic Center.

In Iran, National Children's Week is an annual observance held in early October to highlight children's rights, well-being, education and creative development. The week features cultural, artistic and educational programs organized by schools, cultural institutions and organizations such as the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IID-CYA).

Activities often include book-reading sessions, art workshops, performances and events promoting children's participation in social and cultural life. The observance also provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the need to protect children, nurture their talents and ensure equal opportunities for all, including those living in disadvantaged circumstances and children with disabilities.

Majidi dedicates Busan premiere of “Midday Meal” to martyred children of Minab, brave people of Iran



A scene from “Midday Meal” by Majid Majidi

TEHRAN – Majid Majidi's latest film “Midday Meal” premiered at the 31st Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) and the director dedicated it to the brave people of Iran and the martyred children of Minab.

Prior to the screening of the film in the festival's main competition section on October 9, the director said in brief remarks: “I would like to dedicate the screening of this film, on my own behalf, to the brave and courageous people of Iran and the martyred children of Minab. As you have heard, 168 children were massacred on the first day of the war (the US and Israel imposed on Iran), yet the people continue to stand firm and resist”.

“We salute these courageous people who have not bowed their heads and will not. We will rebuild all that has been destroyed. The Iranian people are resilient; they stand against oppression and maintain their independence. The only crime of the Iranian people is that they wish to be independent,” he emphasized.

A production of 2026, the 133-minute family social drama, which deals with children and human rights, marks Majidi's first visit to the festival, Honaronline reported.

Funded by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the film was shot exclusively in southern Iran and features an entirely local cast, with no established stars, including Mohammad Rahimi, Kheyri Zakeri, Rahim Bakhsh Pira, and Heybatmorad Damani.

A rural schoolteacher loses sight of his own morality and sanity as he questions the divergent needs of his young (and old) charges in “Midday Meal,” Majidi's 11th feature film. A slow-burning bonfire of moral vanities unfold-

ing in a land beset by poverty and bureaucracy, the Iranian auteur's moving drama bows in competition in Busan, where he and lead actor Mohammad Rahimi can expect to take home awards.

In a parched badland village that looks like the end of the world, Solan is the only teacher. After years of enduring the poorly-paid temporary job, he holds one modest dream - to become a full-time teacher and to live in a proper house with his mother. But everything begins to unravel with the death of the benefactor who had funded the school's meal program. If the meals stop, most of the students will stop coming, and the school's closure becomes inevitable. The education office offers no real help, only an order to keep the classes running. Desperate, Solan withdraws his rental deposit, moves into the school, and begins a precarious double life as a teacher by day, and oil smuggler by night. And through it all, his mother stays by his side, quietly trusting him.

In “Midday Meal,” master filmmaker Majidi shows this world with unflinching rawness, and his direction reveals a gift for capturing layered emotions that resist easy words. His camera runs close to the characters' emotions, then falls still at key moments, heightening the drama through that very still-

ness. Do Solan's ends justify the means? Are choices driven by pure goodwill, or are they nothing more than self-interest masquerading as virtue?

Within its own running time, the film can only project a single facet of reality, but how far today's conscience might take root for generations to come is left to the audience.

With “Midday Meal,” Majid Majidi doesn't seek to replicate the success of the films that made him famous. He returns to the concerns that have spanned his career, but places them within a more mature, grittier, and complex narrative. Poor children are still present, injustice still subtly permeates lives, but this time, we witness the tragedy through the eyes of an adult - one who understands what is right but cannot always do what is right.

This year's edition of BIFF is the first since the International Federation of Film Producers Associations designated Busan as one of its 17 A-list festivals. The winner of the Busan Award for best film now also qualifies for submission to the Oscar for best international feature. The distinction puts Busan alongside the five other Oscar-qualifying festivals: Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Sundance and Toronto.

Now in its second year, the best film competition brings to-

gether 14 Asian films, 12 of them world premieres. Four are from first-time directors, and four are by women filmmakers.

In addition to “Midday Meal,” the lineup includes “Beach Fictions” by Korean newcomer Lim Hayeon, “Between Two Lovers,” from Hirokazu Kore-eda protégé Hirose Nanako, and “The First Taste of Loneliness,” by Chinese director Gu You. Also included in the line-up are entries from Uzbekistan, Indonesia, and Taiwan.

Majid Majidi, 67, is an Iranian filmmaker and producer. His films often feature child or adolescent protagonists, explore themes such as childhood innocence, family bonds, poverty, social issues, and solidarity, and are characterized by a humanistic sensibility.

His important films include “Children of Heaven” (1997), “The Color of Paradise” (1999), “Baran” (2001), and “The Song of Sparrows” (2008). “Children of Heaven” was nominated for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film.

More recently, Majidi directed “Muhammad: The Messenger of God” (2015), an epic film dealing with the childhood of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The Busan International Film Festival, held annually in Haeundae District, Busan, South Korea, is one of the most significant film festivals in Asia.

The main focus of the BIFF is to introduce new films and first-time directors, especially those from Asian countries. Another notable feature is the appeal of the festival to young people, both in terms of the large youthful audience it attracts and through its efforts to develop and promote young talent.

The 31st Busan International Film Festival will run until October 15.

Cartoon of Day

THUTH BE TOLD

I could say the stupidest things and you'd clap!



Trump
Cartoonist: Kike from Puerto Rico