

## Israel Targets Iran's National TV, Journalists Say No 'Giving Up'



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TEHRAN – The Israeli regime bombed the main building of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) while journalists were still in the complex covering the ongoing Iran-Israel war that began with the regime's unprovoked aggression in the early hours of Friday.

One anchor was still delivering news when an Israeli bomb landed on the studio she was in. She returned to live broadcast minutes later at a different location, vowing to continue her job as a journalist as long as she is alive. "If I die, others will take my place and reveal your crimes to the world," she said, maintaining a calm demeanor while looking directly at the camera.

The IRIB owns the biggest news outlet in the country. It has been actively covering Israeli attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, which could be one reason it was targeted, as its reporting challenged the Israeli regime's attempts to draw a wedge between the government and the people.

On the scene, one journalist standing outside an IRIB building engulfed in flames with smoke billowing above stated he did not know how many colleagues had been killed, but affirmed those still alive would not stop



working. "If this is your way of silencing our voice, let me tell you that it will not work," he said, his palms visibly bleeding.

### Israel's old tactic of targeting of journalists

The deliberate targeting of journalists and media infrastructure constitutes a war crime under international law. The Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court explicitly protect civilians, including journalists performing their work in conflict zones, from direct attack.

Israel has a long history of targeting journalists and media outlets across the region. In its ongoing war in Gaza, the regime has deliberately murdered over 170 Palestinian journalists – killing some in refugee tents, some in their cars while on duty, and some alongside their entire families in single strikes.

The regime targets journalists despite the existing prohibition for several reasons: to control the narrative and suppress damaging information, to silence critical reporting that exposes violations or challenges its legitimacy, to intimidate other media outlets into self-censorship, and to obscure its own actions by eliminating witnesses and independent reporting from the battlefield. Such attacks could create an information vacuum, allowing the Zionist regime to operate with less accountability.

### Israeli strike came when Iran was in middle of diplomatic track with US: Tehran

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei says the Israeli strike has effectively sabotaged indirect nuclear negotiations with the United States.

Addressing reporters at a weekly press briefing on Monday, he said: "We were in the middle of a diplomatic track when this regime launched its aggression—an act that could not have occurred without coordination or at least tacit approval from Washington."

Baghaei dismissed recent U.S. statements as "contradictory and evasive," calling for a clear stance from Washington. "This is not a time for ambiguity. The U.S. must choose between its professed commitment to diplomacy and its apparent support for a regime engaged in war crimes." ▶ Page 2

### Religious minority leaders in Iran condemn Israeli strikes, reaffirm national unity

Tehran – In a powerful display of national solidarity, leaders and representatives of Iran's religious and ethnic minorities gathered today at a Zoroastrian fire temple in Tehran to condemn recent Israeli attacks and affirm their unwavering support for the leadership, independence, and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During the event, held in response to Israel's recent airstrikes on Iranian soil, participants from the Zoroastrian, Christian, Armenian, Assyrian, and other religious communities denounced what they called "barbaric and inhumane" acts of aggression against the Iranian nation and called for international accountability. ▶ Page 4

### Iranian music artists condemn Zionists' attacks on homeland, emphasize on unity, dignity

TEHRAN – Many Iranian musicians, singers, and composers have reacted to the Zionist regime's attacks on Tehran and several other Iranian cities, on the social media, condemning the brutal attack and emphasizing on the same themes: unity, dignity, and the inviolability of Iran's soil, ISNA reported.

In the early morning hours of June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked, large-scale armed attack against Iran. This was an egregious act of aggression by every definition. Through coordinated air, missile, and drone strikes, it targeted residential neighborhoods, civilian infrastructure, ▶ Page 8

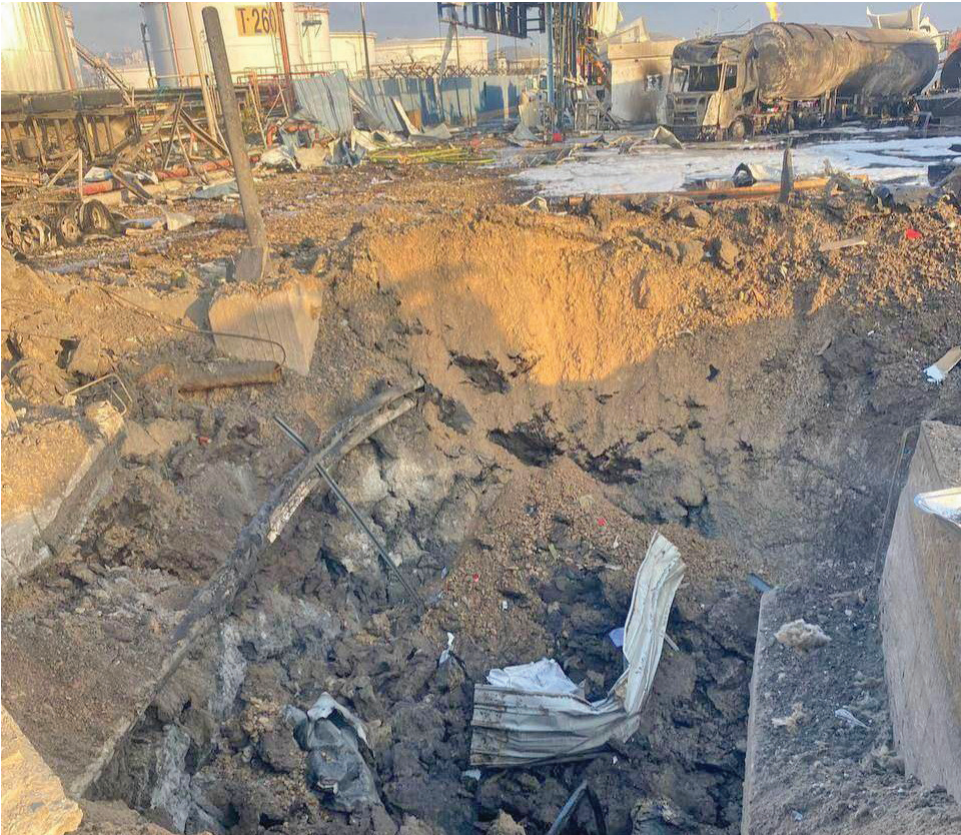
## If Israel doesn't target civilians, who are these victims, Katz?







Israeli casualties higher than publicly acknowledged numbers: IRGC chief



Aftermath of Iran's airstrikes in the occupied territories

TEHRAN – Commander-in-chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Mohammad Pakpour says Israeli casualties are significantly higher than what has been publicly acknowledged.

“In one of the buildings we targeted — which was completely destroyed — 70 Israelis had taken shelter,” he noted. He also stated that Iranian forces have successfully struck and destroyed “critical areas” within Israeli territory and vowed that the campaign will continue.

General Pakpour also declared that Iranian operations will continue regardless of any potential Israeli de-escalation. “Even if Israeli attacks stop, we will carry on until the end,” he said.

General Pakpour's words came following recent Israeli attacks on Iranian targets and Iran's subsequent retaliatory operation under Operation True Promise III, which involved missile and drone strikes on strategic Israeli positions in the occupied territories.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei appointed Major General Pakpour as the new commander-in-chief of the IRGC following the assassination of Major General Hossein Salami.

The resilience of the Axis of Resistance against Zionist-American aggression

By Najah Mohammed Ali

LONDON – The ongoing escalation between Iran and the child-killing occupying entity and its backers highlights Iran as a central pillar of the Axis of Resistance, leading an existential battle against Zionist and Western-American aggression. This confrontation is not merely a military conflict but a struggle for dignity and independence, embodying the will of the Islamic nation to defend its sovereignty and sacred values.

In this article, we explore Iran's role and that of its allies in the Axis of Resistance, analysing the strategic context of the current confrontation, focusing on the following points: Iran's restoration of strategic deterrence, rejection of any settlement without guarantees to halt Zionist aggression, the entity's targeting of Iran's comprehensive capabilities, the ultimate Zionist-American goal of regime change and partitioning Iran, the fruitless (Arab) mediation efforts, Iran's reluctance to expand the war, and West Asia's challenges that bring unforeseen surprises.

Iran: The pillar of the Axis of Resistance

Since the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has made the Palestinian cause the cornerstone of its foreign policy, founding the “Axis of Resistance,” which includes its strategic allies: Hezbollah in Lebanon, Ansarullah in Yemen, the Palestinian Resistance (Hamas and Islamic Jihad), and Resistance factions in Iraq and Syria. This axis is not just a military alliance, but a strategic vision aimed at confronting Zionist-American hegemony and liberating Palestine.

Iran has supported its allies with weapons, training, and funding, enabling them to achieve historic victories, such as Hezbollah's resilience in the July 2006 wars and the 2023 “Al-Aqsa Flood” operation that humiliated the occupying entity. In return, Iran has made significant sacrifices, from economic sieges to the assassination of leaders like Major General Qassem Soleimani in 2020, scientists like Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, and subsequent assassinations. These sacrifices confirm that Iran is not merely a supporter of resistance but its leader, resisting aggression with all its might to protect the Islamic nation, with its slogan: “The blood of our martyrs is not more precious than the blood of Gaza's oppressed children.”

Strategic context: Restoring deterrence and rejecting humiliating settlements

It is likely that the coming days will not witness a ceasefire between Iran and the occupying entity, as the time for de-escalation has not yet arrived. There is no room now to discuss a ceasefire, with Iran's equation based on “a blow below the belt for a blow below the belt,” and no initiative from Tehran for calm is in its calculations. Iran realizes that any halt in fighting without binding guarantees will allow the occupying entity to regroup and repeat its aggression.

Iran is working to restore strategic deterrence to prevent becoming a violated state that the occupying entity strikes whenever it pleases. Operation “True Promise 3” on June 13, 2025, which involved launching 300 ballistic missiles and 200 drones, including “Arash-2,” proved Iran's ability to penetrate the “Iron Dome” defenses and hit sensitive military targets in occupied Jaffa and Haifa. This response followed Zionist attacks on Iranian nuclear sites, confirming that Tehran will not allow aggression to be repeated without a heavy price.

Any ceasefire settlement that does not include binding international guarantees to prevent the recurrence of Zionist aggression will not be acceptable in Tehran. Iran refuses to compromise its sovereignty or military capabilities under the pressure of aggression, a stance reflecting its strategy to preserve national dignity and its position as a regional power, rejecting any agreement that shackles it before the occupying entity or Washington.

The ultimate goal of the occupying entity and the United States is not merely to weaken Iran militarily or economically but to change the regime of the Islamic Republic and partition Iran into small, weak entities, ending its role as a regional power supporting the Axis of Resistance. This goal goes beyond targeting nuclear facilities, encompassing:

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Iran crushes Mossad cells in nationwide sweep; Seizes missiles, drones after Israeli aggression



TEHRAN – In a blow to the Israeli regime's espionage apparatus, Iranian security forces have dismantled multiple Mossad sabotage networks across the country, seizing Israeli-made Spike anti-tank missiles, suicide drones, and explosives destined for attacks on critical infrastructure and residential areas.

The operations, which included Monday's execution of convicted Mossad agent Esmail Fekri, demonstrate Iran's unwavering resolve following Israel's unprovoked aggression in the early hours of Friday that has martyred over 224 Iranian nationals, including top military commanders and nuclear scientists.

Fekri, arrested in December 2023 after a complex intelligence operation, was hanged after Iran's Supreme Court upheld his death sentence.

Judicial authorities confirmed he had gathered “classified national security intelligence, including strategic site locations and internal organizational missions” for Mossad handlers using encrypted communications and cryptocurrency payments.

His execution—the third in re-

cent weeks—follows the April elimination of Mossad operative Mohsen Langameshin, linked to the 2022 assassination of IRGC Colonel Hassan Sayyad-Khodaei.

Simultaneously, security forces launched precision strikes against Mossad's operational cells.

In another counter-intelligence victory, Iranian security agencies struck a major blow by unmasking an operational cell linked to the terrorist apparatus of the Israeli regime in Tehran.

In a meticulously coordinated operation—with intelligence gathered through persistent field surveillance and strategic countermeasures—28 operatives have been detained in connection with espionage activities.

These suspects, identified across 15 separate cases, have been formally introduced to the Tehran Security Prosecutor's Office, underlining Iran's unwavering commitment to protecting its national integrity.

In Rey County near Tehran, police raided a terrorist safe house after community tips revealed suspicious activity.

Authorities confiscated over 200 kilograms of explosives, 23



suicide drones, launchers, and remote-control equipment from an apartment functioning as a clandestine drone assembly facility.

“Security forces raided the residence based on community intelligence, discovering explosives, handcrafted bombs, and suicide drones,” stated the regional police commander.

In Isfahan Province, intelligence units dismantled a micro-drone workshop and arrested four Mossad assets, seizing large volumes of manufacturing equipment.

The operations extended to Alborz Province, where two Mossad agents preparing bombs and electronic devices were captured in Savojbolagh County. The raids revealed sophisticated Israeli efforts to infiltrate Iran's defenses.

Spike missiles—designed to destroy air defense systems and armored vehicles—were smuggled into Iran and controlled remotely via encrypted networks.

This aligns with Mossad admissions to Western media about establishing “drone bases” inside Iran.

Dramatic footage released Sunday showed Iranian intelligence officers intercepting a truck trans-

porting advanced Israeli drones through Tehran's streets.

An officer fired precise shots to disable the vehicle, exposing a cache of weaponry. Police spokesperson General Sa'ed Montazer al-Mahdi emphasized these operations reflect Iran's strategy to “intercept sabotage acts before execution,” citing arrests in Fashafuyeh (Tehran) and Savojbolagh (Alborz), where agents modified vehicles for bombings.

Officials have also asked citizens to report any suspicious activities, particularly regarding trucks and vans.

Mossad's operations in Iran are nothing new; the heinous acts have included assassinations of scientists and officials, alleged nuclear archive theft, and embedded agents near air defense sites. The regime's intelligence agencies have actively funded and armed terrorist groups, including Jaish ul-Adl (referred to as Jaish ul-Zolm in Iran), the Komala terrorist organization, and ISIS-K elements. Over the past two decades, these groups have been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Iranians and the injuries of thousands.

Israeli strike came when Iran was in middle of diplomatic track with US: Tehran

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei says the Israeli strike has effectively sabotaged indirect nuclear negotiations with the United States.

Addressing reporters at a weekly press briefing on Monday, he said: “We were in the middle of a diplomatic track when this regime launched its aggression—an act that could not have occurred without coordination or at least tacit approval from Washington.”

Baghaei dismissed recent U.S. statements as “contradictory and evasive,” calling for a clear stance from Washington. “This is not a time for ambiguity. The U.S. must choose between its professed commitment to diplomacy and its apparent support for a regime engaged in war crimes.”

Asked about remarks made by the U.S. President Donald Trump and other U.S. officials regarding potential negotiations, Baghaei said talks under the current circumstances were meaningless. “If the United Nations Charter means anything, then the aggression must be condemned unequivocally and countered with firm international measures,” he stated.

‘Countries backing Israel are complicit in its acts of aggression’

Baghaei condemned the recent Israeli strikes on Iranian territory, warning that countries supporting or justifying Israel's actions are effectively complicit in what he described as a blatant act of aggression against the Iranian nation.

Baghaei emphasized the significance of the timing of the Israeli attack, which came as Iranians prepared to celebrate a major national holiday. “We are now in the fourth day of our national resistance against a flagrant assault,” he stated. “While our people were



Photo shows the Iranian delegation that engaged in five rounds of indirect talks with US

preparing for celebration, the Zionist regime launched a coordinated attack on our soil using a range of advanced weaponry, much of it manufactured in the United States.”

He extended condolences to the families of those killed, referring to them as “martyrs of the nation,” and paid tribute to their memory, which he said would be eternally preserved in the annals of Iran's proud history. “To the Iranian people and to all those across the world who seek freedom and justice, we say: the blood of these martyrs will not be shed in vain.”

Baghaei issued a stern warning to countries providing political, military, or rhetorical support to Israel. “Any government that supports this regime in any form—whether through weapons, intelligence, or public statements that seek to justify its crimes—is a direct accomplice in this aggression,” he said. “Their silence or support does not go unnoticed.”

He described Iran's response as a legitimate act of self-defense conducted in full accordance with international law. “We rely solely on our own strength. Our resis-

tance is lawful, proportionate, and grounded in both international norms and human decency,” he added.

‘Israeli aggression is part of a broader pattern’

Highlighting the broader context of Israel's military actions, Baghaei drew attention to ongoing violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. “This attack did not occur in a vacuum. The Zionist regime continues to commit atrocities in the West Bank and Gaza. It is crucial we do not lose sight of the systematic occupation and brutality against the Palestinian people,” he said.

He criticized the international community's failure to act, particularly the United Nations Security Council, which he accused of double standards. “Calls for restraint that attempt to place the aggressor and the victim on equal footing are nothing short of disgraceful. This is not diplomacy—it is complicity,” Baghaei stated.

He further noted that Israeli strikes had deliberately targeted civilian areas and sensitive nuclear sites in Natanz and Isfahan. “This regime has assassinated our mil-

itary personnel during peacetime, murdered scientists, and struck our people in their homes. It is an outlaw regime emboldened by global silence.”

‘Not just a war on Iran—a war on civilization’

Baghaei called on the international community, especially major powers like China and Russia, to take decisive action. “This is not simply a war against Iran. It is a war on global stability and civilization itself. This is not a conventional conflict between two states—it is an attack by a nuclear-armed, apartheid regime against an ancient nation with a rich and peaceful heritage.”

“This regime's actions violate the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and the basic principles of the international system. Every country that values international norms must work to stop this aggression and hold the perpetrators accountable,” he said.

He urged the United Nations and its member states to adopt binding resolutions that clearly condemn Israel's actions. “This is a test for the entire world: will you stand against aggression, or will you once again enable lawlessness through inaction?”

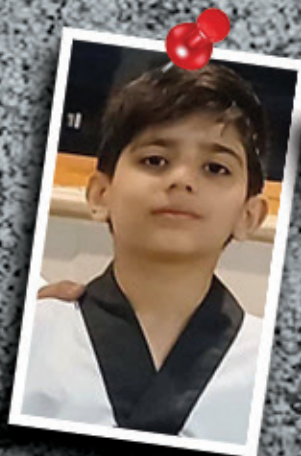
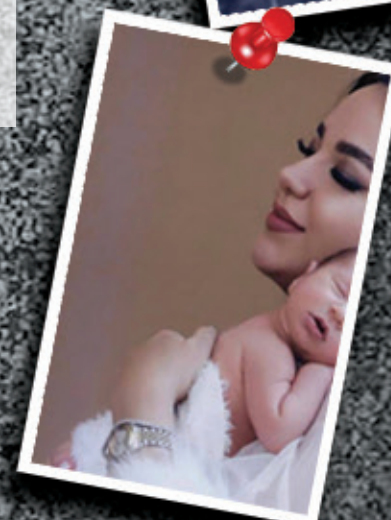
‘Regional response does not require Iran's approval’

Responding to questions about possible coordination with regional states, Baghaei clarified that other countries do not need Iran's permission to respond to Israeli aggression. “However, we remain in constant communication with regional and Islamic nations to align our perspectives and share intelligence,” he said.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))



# If Israel doesn't target civilians, who are these victims, Katz?



TEHRAN - Israeli War Minister Israel Katz attempted to walk back his earlier remarks on Monday, claiming in an X post that, contrary to his initial Hebrew statements, the regime has no intention of harming Iranian civilians.

Katz's initial comments, made after Iran's eighth strike on the occupied territories since the war's outbreak, declared that the "residents of Tehran" would "pay the price" for the successful offensive. The Hebrew statement, seemingly aimed at Israelis who had been spending hours in bomb shelters, soon circulated on Persian social media. This further undermined Israel's hopes of inciting coordinated unrest among Iranians, forcing Katz to take to X again, this time to "clarify" his position in English.

"I wish to clarify the obvious:

there is no intention to physically harm the residents of Tehran," he wrote.

That assertion, however, rings hollow against a backdrop of repeated attacks on residential buildings and civilian infrastructure that have left at least 224 Iranian civilians dead since Israel's unprovoked killing campaign began on Friday.

On this page, The Tehran Times has provided the names and pictures of only a few of the ordinary citizens killed in Israeli attacks in the city of Tehran.

The victims are from all walks of life: a poet, an athlete, a teacher, a banker, a housewife, an engineer, a doctor, and a cleric. Among them are, multiple children, who were killed because they are Iranian, and because the regime needs blood in order to

continue expansionistic and colonial policies in the region.

Israel has already been accused of war crimes due to its 20-months killing campaign that is ongoing in Gaza and has so far resulted in the deaths of over 50,000 civilians. The majority of the regime's victims there are women and children, with rights bodies and legal organization characterizing the regime's actions as constituting genocide.

Thousands more have been killed in Lebanon in the past 1.5 years. The regime's killing of civilians and the carnage it is leaving behind across the region is not accidental. It reflects a broader strategy pursued over many years to consolidate control in the region. Israel wants everything in West Asia, and in reaching that goal, its easiest and primary target is civilians.





## Not in battlefield nor in battle dress; they were women targeted by Zionist missiles

TEHRAN—Following evil attacks of Zionist regime to Iran, many unarmed, civilian women and girls who were outside every battlefield were directly targeted by military weapons and martyred.

Official news has always said that war knows no borders. But some bullets are too accurate to be fired aimlessly.

Missiles that target a roof of a house, a wall behind which a woman has stood, with hands busy with life, Mehr news agency wrote.

They were not in enemy's soli nor in battlefield. They were in their houses, cities, homelands busy with routines which made the life more beautiful: a woman who painted, a woman who exercised, a woman who narrated, a woman who was just a mother. None of them wore military uniforms.

In a world where some eyes are still willfully closed and some tribunes are afraid of the truth, you should shout out loud: Zionist regime is an ominous structure; it is a regime that has kept itself alive with blood and displacement of helpless children and women.

This evil regime is not only occupier but also anti-human.

Its crimes are so widespread and shameless that even the word "war" is insufficient to describe it. This is no longer war, it is genocide: a calculated crime against everyone

## IRCS recommendations for mental support for children in crisis

TEHRAN—Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) on Monday gave recommendations for caring the mental health of children given the current situation following aggression of Zionist regime to Iran.

It said that parents' peace is the first step toward calming the child, IRNA wrote.

Maintaining a calm manner and controlling parents' emotions has a direct impact on children's sense of security, it added.

IRCS mentioned that parents should use true and simple language to give information to children.

Children need to understand the situation as a whole, not with worrying details, it added.

Reducing exposure to violent images



TEHRAN - Mansoureh Alikhani, an Iranian visual artist and painter was martyred in the recent Israeli airstrikes targeting residential

who simply lives.

Today, how bitter is to see women who fall before even finding a chance to stand. Women who were not in battlefield and had no weapon. Women who had only selected the life.

Taking to the official podiums and even fake accounts on social media, the Zionist elements have claimed for years: "We have nothing to do with civilians."

But every Iranian who is martyred, shows that this war does not distinguish between those who have the power to defend themselves and those who were just living.

What cry is louder than blood of a woman who has never been to the trenches but her name has been registered on lists of war martyrs!

Maybe for this reason, we should narrate their names, images, unfinished stories so that they remain in public memory as a document of truth. From Hadis Fakhari and her daughter, Maryam Minaei, who was the mother of a baby, to Mansoura Alikhani, who was a painter and artist; From Najmeh (Zahra) Shams, Masoumeh Shahriari, Niloufar Qalehvand, Parnia Abbasi, Mehrnoush Haji Soltani to Fereshteh Baqeri, the journalist who was a true storyteller, and Marzieh Askari, a pediatrician and mother.

and news, prevents more anxiety and fear. Activities like having meals, sleeping and playing promotes feeling of stability and confidence.

It is necessary to create a secure atmosphere for child to express feelings such as fear, sadness or anger. Parents should hear their child actively and without judgement.

Painting, storytelling, and puppet show are proper tools to help children express their feelings.

Physical contact like hugging, kind words and active presence of parents, are reassuring and reinforces a sense of security.

In case of observing any persistent symptom like frequent nightmares, bedwetting, isolation or aggression parents should take child to therapist.

## Painter Mansoureh Alikhani martyred in Israeli airstrikes on Tehran

areas in Tehran.

Born in 1967, Alikhani was among the most respected painters working for the Art Bureau (Hozeh Honari) of the Islamic Revolution.

She studied painting at Al-Zahra University and later earned a master's degree from Sooreh University.

A disciple of the celebrated artist Kazem Chalipa, she dedicated her life to promoting Iranian-Islamic art and culture through teaching, exhibition, and research.

In her final days, Alikhani was working on a

# Religious minority leaders in Iran condemn Israeli strikes, reaffirm national unity

TEHRAN - In a powerful display of national solidarity, leaders and representatives of Iran's religious and ethnic minorities gathered today at a Zoroastrian fire temple in Tehran to condemn recent Israeli attacks and affirm their unwavering support for the leadership, independence, and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During the event, held in response to Israel's recent airstrikes on Iranian soil, participants from the Zoroastrian, Christian Armenian, Assyrian, and other religious communities denounced what they called "barbaric and inhumane" acts of aggression against the Iranian nation and called for international accountability.

Addressing the attendees, Sharli Envieh, representative of the Iranian Assyrians at the Parliament, strongly criticized international organizations for their silence in the face of Israeli atrocities, especially those affecting civilians.

"If these bodies truly believe



in the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the rule of law, and collective security, they must act immediately," Envieh said. "Iran's response to these aggressions has been, and will remain, legitimate self-defense within the bounds of international law."

He added that the Iranian people, including their religious minorities, remain united under the leadership of the Leader [of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei] and they are committed to preserving na-

tional unity.

Arakel Kadehjian, speaking on behalf of Archbishop Sepuh Sargsyan, firmly condemned "Israeli atrocities" on Iranian civilians.

"Iran is not just our place of residence -- it is our sacred homeland," he said. "We condemn the attacks on Iranian soil and declare our full support for the Iranian people and leadership."

Quoting from the archbishop's

recent message during a gathering at Tehran's Saint Sarkis Cathedral, he added: "The Iranian nation has overcome fire and sword for a thousand years. With God's help, it will emerge victorious from this crisis too."

A Zoroastrian Mobed expressed condolences for the victims and confirmed that special prayers were held in churches across Tehran, Urmia, and other cities.

"We firmly believe that our beloved nation, Iran, will prevail against this unjust aggression. We will continue to pray for our leaders and armed forces, as taught by our holy scriptures," he said.

Other religious people at the event also emphasized their shared identity as Iranians and their unwavering dedication to Iran's sovereignty.

The gathering closed with a unified call for national cohesion and international condemnation of what was described as "clear violations of human rights and international norms."

## Family members martyred in Israeli strike on residential complex in Tehran

TEHRAN - A devastating airstrike on a civilian residential building in northern Tehran on Sunday, carried out by Israeli forces, claimed the lives of three members of a family.

The victims - Saeid Mousavi, 65, his wife Fatemeh, and their 37-year-old daughter Ameneh, known as Hadiseh -- were inside their second-floor apartment in a three-story building on Mohebbi Street near Seyyed Khandan Bridge when the attack occurred at approximately 3:40 p.m. local time, a close relative Bitam Mousavi, who is a cultural journalist, told Persian media on Monday.

The blast brought down parts of the structure, trapping them beneath the rubble. According to eyewitnesses and local reports, the explosion left the bodies severely unrecognizable, requiring DNA testing for identification.

The couple had retired from a private company. Their only sur-

living family member, 31-year-old Mohammad, was at work at the time of the explosion. He rushed to the scene after a neighbor alerted him about an incident in their area. Unable to reach his parents or sister by phone, he arrived to find the building in ruins. Witnesses described him screaming in anguish as he recognized his sister's lifeless body under the debris.

Mousavi, Mohammad's aunt, arrived at the site after being contacted by her nephew. Initially blocked by emergency personnel due to safety concerns, her cries eventually moved authorities to let her approach the scene. She waited for hours in confusion and desperation until one of the responders confirmed that all three of her relatives had perished in the explosion.

Late Sunday night, Mousavi and other surviving family members traveled to the Kahrizak forensic medical center on the



Tehran-Qom Highway, seeking information. With no immediate answers, they joined other grieving families at the center's closed gates. Eventually, an employee confirmed that the bodies of Saeid, Fatemeh, and Ameneh had been brought to the facility.

By Monday morning, June 16, close relatives submitted DNA samples for identity verification, while remaining unaware of the fate of other residents in

the same building. According to Mousavi, her niece Ameneh had survived a serious illness just last year, only to lose her life under the rubble in this tragic event.

The strike is one of the most significant incidents in Tehran and many other Iranian cities involving civilian casualties in recent memory, raising renewed concerns about the targeting of non-military places.

## FDA: Don't worry about medicine, supplies are enough

TEHRAN—Medicine as a strategic commodity can be a safe issue during crisis time. According to Mehr news agency, in recent days that Iran has witnessed attacks of Zionist regime in some parts, the issue of supplying vital drugs is of high importance. The patients are worried that the medicine will not reach them.

In this regard, Special Measures Taskforce has been launched at Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Senior officials of this administration are monitoring the medicine market in joint sessions with managing directors of pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies.

Referring to the enemy's goals of hybrid warfare to create psychological insecurity and disrupt the supply chain, Mehdi Pirsalehi, Head of Food and Drug Administration, said: "Maintaining the flow of distribution of medicine and health products is

part of passive defense and rendering services in line of people's health security."

Saying that no interruption is acceptable in providing services to the public, he mentioned that FDA will do its duty in safeguarding the society's health in any circumstance with cooperation of all sections of the supply chain.

Salman Es'haqi, Spokesman of Majlis Health and Treatment Commission, said, "Fortunately, we can inform the people of our country that today, the stock of medicines, equipment, and medical supplies is in a very good condition. With the wisdom of the Leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, at the end of last year, we witnessed the improvement of the stock of medicines and medical supplies by allocating one billion euros in foreign exchange, and this measure has had a

great impact on increasing the stock of medicines."

He also said that all medical equipment is available across the hospitals and support areas for normal and critical conditions.

After visiting medical centers and assessing the health sector, members of Majlis Health and Treatment Commission have concluded that the situation is being managed very well, and it can be said with confidence that the country's health sector is fully prepared, he added.

Meanwhile, Pirsalehi emphasized on necessity of preserving full readiness of staff management and Food and Drug Departments for urgent supply of medicine, medical equipment and other health-related items. He urged all respected managers to constantly monitor the medicine supply and report any possible drug

deficiency to Food and Drug Administration.

Constant and sustainable supply of medicines and vital products, preventing any shortage in medical center, and responding immediately to patients' needs are main focuses of the order of the head of the Food and Drug Administration to the relevant managers.

Hadi Ahmadi, member of presiding board of Iranian Pharmacists Association, said medicine supplies are enough and there is no worry in this regard.

The only issue is the liquidity of pharmacies, which unfortunately are not in good condition.

Referring to the delay of insurance companies in paying pharmacies' claims, he added: "Basic insurance companies are at least four months behind in paying pharmacies' claims."



As can be concluded from the remarks of health managers, we should not worry about medicine shortages. Because, over 97 percent the country's medicine needs are secured domestically.

Necessary measures have been taken for imported drugs. We are witnessing stockpiles of vital medi-

cines.

What can be worrying is the rush of some people to pharmacies to stock up on medicines that may not even reach the consumption stage and only cause public anxiety and concern. Therefore, the provision of medicines should not exceed the actual needs.



# Peak of cruelty: Israel attacks hospital in western Iran



TEHRAN – On Monday morning, the Zionist regime carried out a missile attack on Farabi hospital in the border city of Kermanshah, west of the country.

Parts of the hospital have suffered serious damage. Much of the hospital's equipment was damaged, and windows were broken, which caused injuries to patients hospitalized in different wards.

Late Friday night, an Israe-

li-launched projectile struck the perimeter of Hakim Children's Hospital in southern Tehran.

Iranian health authorities and humanitarian organizations have denounced the strike as a flagrant violation of international law and medical neutrality, emphasizing that targeting healthcare facilities constitutes a war crime.

Hossein Kermanpour, spokesperson for the Iranian Ministry of Health, announced on Sunday



that the consequences of the “false slogan” claiming that “Israel targets only military sites and has no quarrel with the Iranian people” have proven to be tragically unfounded.

A total of 1,481 individuals have been killed or injured in the Israeli attacks over the past 65 hours.

Out of these, 1,277 people have been hospitalized across the country's university-affiliated medical centers, with over 90%

of the victims being civilians, Kermanpour stated.

“So far, 522 individuals have been discharged, while 224 men, women, and children have lost their lives as a result of the attacks,” he added.

The Health Ministry emphasized that the human cost of these strikes clearly contradicts claims of “precision targeting” and underlines the indiscriminate nature of the Israeli aggression.

## We stand with Iranians in this difficult, uncertain time: UN office

TEHRAN – Following the recent Israeli terrorist attacks on Iran, the United Nations office in Iran has announced that it stands with the people of Iran in this difficult and uncertain time.

“The military escalation poses grave risks to civilians, regional stability and global peace,” wrote the UN office on X, IRNA reported.

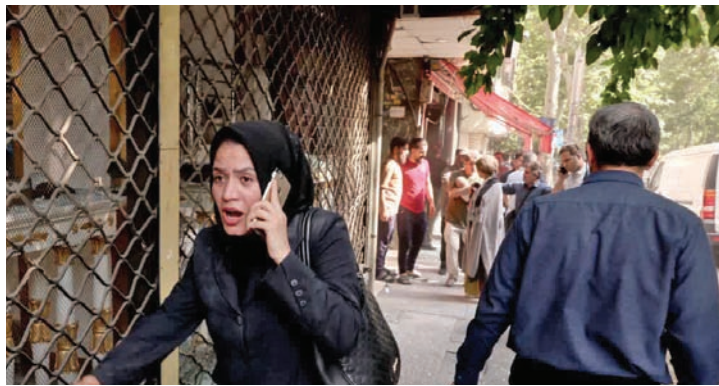
The message further voices the UN's profound concern over the reported death toll of civilians, condemning the brutal acts of the Zionist regime.

“Civilians must not be targeted, and international laws have to be respected and observed.

Attacks on nuclear facilities are unacceptable and violate international law, including the principles of the UN Charter and IAEA frameworks, and risk irreversible harm to people and the environment. They must be stopped.”

According to the UN office, choosing diplomacy over confrontation is the only way to end the conflicts. “De-escalation and dialogue, grounded in international law and the spirit of the UN Charter, are the surest way to protect lives and preserve much-needed peace.”

As Antonio Guterres has said, “Enough escalation. Time to stop. Peace and diplomacy must pre-



vail.” The United Nations continues to urge all actors to step back from confrontation and choose the path of dialogue.”

After Israel killed dozens of civilians, military officials, and nuclear scientists in recent strikes across Iran, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) launched multiple waves of ballistic missiles at the occupied territories.

Reports show that the United States, France, Britain, and NATO assisted Israel in attempting to thwart the Iranian missiles, but their efforts fell short of expectations.

The attacks coincided with a speech by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who vowed that Iran's Armed Forces would render Israel “helpless.” “The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic will definitely

deal a great blow to the evil enemy,” the Leader declared.

Israel's deadly military campaign against Iran, framed as a “pre-emptive” measure, began with the assassination of high-ranking military personnel and nuclear scientists. It targeted at least five IRGC generals and nine scientists in their homes, killing them along with dozens of civilians who were asleep in the same buildings.

The regime believed these assassinations would “decapitate” Iran's military leadership, preventing retaliation—or at least delaying it for the foreseeable future. The scientists were killed to ensure that, after Israel destroyed Iran's nuclear facilities, the country couldn't quickly rebuild its program. Yet neither of the regime's predictions came

true.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, swiftly replaced the fallen generals. In a firm video message, he assured the Iranian people that the armed forces would leave the regime “helpless.” And that's exactly what's happening.

Iran launched Operation True Promise 3 the same day its military leaders were killed. Since Friday, Iranian missiles have pummeled dozens of military and spy bases across Israel every night, with most evading interception—despite Western and Arab support for the regime. Today, an Iranian lawmaker stated on national TV that the operation will continue until the regime collapses.

While Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear sites caused some above-ground damage, they failed to penetrate the fortified underground facilities. In a statement published after the massacre of the nuclear scientists, academics and university students said they would show Israel and the world what Iran's true nuclear capabilities “really is”.

Meanwhile, at least three Israeli fighter jets have been shot down, and two pilots are now held captive in Iran.

## Defending Iran's right is defending the UN Charter: lawyer

TEHRAN – Defending Iran's right [to respond to the Israeli aggression] is defending the United Nations Charter and the principle of prohibiting the use of force, IRIB quoted Hamid-Reza Mohammadi, a lawyer, as saying.

If this principle is sacrificed for political gain, no other state will be secure tomorrow, he added.

When the international system and its organizations fail to defend basic human rights, the military capacity of any state would ensure the implementation of international law to deter and defend its national interests, he stressed.

A weak response to a gross violation of international law violates a country's national sovereignty, threatens the lives of millions of civilians, and undermines the credibility of the entire international legal system, Mohammadi added.

Referring to Iran's right to self-defence against Israeli attacks, he said, from the perspective of public international law, the Israeli's military attack on the territory of Iran, without authorization from the UN Security Council,

is a clear violation of international peremptory norms, also known as jus cogens, and contemporary international laws.

According to Article 2, paragraph 4 of the UN Charter, using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state is prohibited. This principle is established as a fundamental rule and a peremptory law in customary international law.

The use of military force by a state against the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state, without legitimate legal grounds, is considered military aggression according to UN General Assembly Resolution 3314, adopted in 1974.

Particularly, cases such as bombing the territory of another country, dispatching armed forces, or any direct or indirect aggression, including targeted cyber operations, are clear examples of aggression, Mohammadi said.

Aggression, under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 8bis), is one of the four core international crimes



that can lead to criminal responsibility of high-ranking officials and military commanders.

Being attacked, the target country (Iran) will have an inalienable right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. This self-defence must be carried out within the framework of recognized principles of international law, including necessity, proportionality, and urgency; principles that have been emphasized by the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice, in cases like Nicaragua v. United States (1986).

Wounding civilians, killing dozens of children and women, and in-

vading residential areas are violations of international humanitarian law. The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) and its First Additional Protocol (1977) emphasize the principle of distinction between military and civilian targets.

Attacking civilians or using weapons that cannot distinguish military and civilian targets is a war crime, defined and criminalized in Article 8 of the Rome Statute.

Hence, the Islamic Republic of Iran has the right to defend itself proportionate to the threat, provided that this defense act as a deterrence and would not exceed legal boundaries.



## Latin American states denounce Israeli attacks on Iran, express solidarity



Brazilian citizens held demonstrations in support of Iran, demanding the severance of diplomatic and trade relations between the Brazilian government and the Zionist regime.

TEHRAN –Various Latin American heads of state and political groups have condemned the Zionist regime's terrorist strikes against Iran, expressing solidarity with the Iranian nation.

Tel Aviv's unprovoked strikes since Friday, killing many Iranians, including revered military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians, have brought widespread condemnation around the world, including Latin America.

Cuban Leader Miguel Diaz-Canel, in a statement on X, has said “We strongly condemn the Israeli attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which irresponsibly escalate tensions in the Middle East, endangering international and regional peace and security with unpredictable consequences,” IRNA reported.

The official went on to call for an end to this violence and urge respect for international laws.

The Venezuelan foreign ministry has also condemned illegitimate, unjustifiable, and illegal attacks on Iran.

The Venezuelan diplomatic service announced on its official channel on Telegram, “This is an act of war that adds to the long history of crimes of the [Benjamin] Netanyahu's regime, whose machine of destruction operates beyond any law.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro condemned Israel's recent airstrikes on Iran, calling Netanyahu the Hitler of the present time.

The Nicaraguan government also strongly condemned “the reckless aggression of Israel against the people and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” as well as illogical and dangerous military escalation.

With this cowardly attack, which violates all laws and norms of coexistence and international treaties, Israel goes on to irresponsibly expose the world to a war of incalculable dimensions and consequences.

The Mexican Foreign Ministry has also expressed deep concern, rejecting “escalation of the ongoing violence in the Middle East.”

The Mexican government also proposed to abstain from actions that could endanger the lives of civilians.

The Brazilian Foreign Ministry, in response to Israel's aggression, has recently announced that the government of Brazil firmly condemns Israel's action, expressing concern over Israeli airstrikes carried out on Friday morning, which is a clear violation of Iran's sovereignty and international law.

These attacks pose a menace that could drag the entire region into wider conflict, and a grave threat to peace, security, and the global economy.

Brazil urged the two nations to exercise restraint and avoid military confrontation.

The Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) has condemned Israeli attacks on Iran, as well.

The Chilean Communist Party, in a statement, condemned the Israeli strikes on Iran and expressed deep concern over targeting residential buildings and civilian nuclear infrastructure in Iran, which is a violation of international law.

The Alba Union, the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America, has recently issued a statement condemning the military aggression of the occupying regime against Iran.The Speaker of the National Assembly of Nicaragua, Gustavo Porras Cortés, has also denounced the Israeli attacks on the Islamic Republic of Iran in a message to the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mana-

gua, Ramin Zare, expressing condolences to the people and government of Iran.

Over the recent days, people from all walks of life have held rallies in different countries, condemning Israeli strikes on Iran, which led to the killing of many civilians, scientists, and prominent figures, as well as top military commanders.

Turkey, Slovenia, England, Pakistan, the United States, Yemen, South Korea, and India were among the countries that censured Israel's aggression.

According to Balkan Insight, Balkan countries have voiced dismay over the implications of Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear sites and senior security officials – amid fears that the crisis will deepen.

“Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government is trying to drag our region and the entire world into disaster with its reckless, aggressive and lawless actions,” Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday.

Erdogan also called on the international community to end the conflict.

Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar accused Israel of “escalating” the situation.

“The Israeli attacks on Iran represent an escalation of the already tense and difficult situation in the Middle East and are leading nowhere,” she wrote on X.

Husein Kavazovic, Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, condemned the attack on Iran.

“While there's no end in sight to the suffering of the people of Gaza, and while we all hope for the success of international mediations to achieve peace and end the blockade and starvation of innocent civilians, irresponsible politicians are further escalating violence and dragging the world into a new spiral of violence,” Kavazovic said in a press release.

Gathered on Saturday afternoon, protestors at London's Parliament Square chanted ‘stop bombing Iran’, ‘stop arming Israel’, and ‘stop genocide’.

Demonstrators also called on Western countries, particularly the UK, to stop supporting Israel and take immediate action to end war crimes against Iran and other nations in the region.

Thousands gathered in the main provinces of Pakistan, including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and other cities on Friday afternoon, condemning Israel's aggression against Iran while expressing solidarity with the country, Hawzah News reported.

People in Chicago reacted to ongoing strikes, urging the government to end its support for Israel.

Demonstrators were holding Iranian and Palestinian flags, as well as placards saying, ‘hands off Iran’, ‘why is it OK for Israel to have nuclear weapons (up to 300), & not for Iran?’, ‘Netanyahu is a war criminal’, and ‘NO Iran war’.

Yemenis also took to the streets of the capital, Sana'a, offering support for the Iranian people and condemning Israel's aggression.

In South Korea, the supporters of Iran protested outside the Israeli embassy.

Moreover, a delegation of social and political Indian activists, in a meeting with the Iranian Consul General Hasan Mohseni Fard at the Iranian consulate in Mumbai, discussed and condemned the recent Israeli aggression on Iran and supported the right of Iran to defend itself.



## Madani-Zadeh confirmed as Iran’s new economy minister

TEHRAN – Iranian lawmakers on Monday approved Seyed Ali Madani-Zadeh as the country’s new Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, making him the second person to hold the post in President Masoud Pezeshkian’s administration.

During the open session of parliament on June 16, 2025, Madani-Zadeh received 171 votes in favor, 67 against, and eight abstentions out of 246 lawmakers present. He succeeds Abdolnasser Hemmati, who was dismissed by parliament through an impeachment vote on March 2.

President Pezeshkian formally nominated Madani-Zadeh for the role on June 1.

Born in 1982, Madani-Zadeh is an economist and associate professor at Sharif University of Technology, where he currently heads the School of Management and Economics. He earned a bronze medal at the International Mathematics



Olympiad 25 years ago.

His previous roles include Head of the Modeling Department at the Central Bank’s Monetary and Banking Research Institute, Economic Advisor to the Planning and Budget Organization, and Director of national projects on Central Bank law reform and structural budget overhaul.

## OPEC secretary-general condemns Israeli attack on Iran, offers condolences

TEHRAN – The Secretary General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has condemned Israel’s recent attack on Iran, expressing solidarity with the Iranian government and people in a message to Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, who also serves as President of the OPEC Conference in 2025.

According to the Oil Ministry, Haitham Al Ghais conveyed the following message:

“With deep concern, I have followed the tragic news of the recent aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On behalf of myself and the staff of the OPEC Secretariat, I express our solidarity with Your Excellency, the Government, and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During this challenging time, we convey our

heartfelt condolences and sorrow over the tragic loss of life and the destruction that has ensued.

Our prayers and deepest sympathies go out to you, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the families of the victims, and all those injured or affected by this horrific act of aggression.”

According to IRNA, the Israeli regime carried out a terrorist attack in the early hours of Friday, June 13, targeting Tehran and several other cities. The assault resulted in the deaths of several military commanders, scientists, and civilians.

In response, Iran’s Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said in a message to the nation:

“The regime must await a severe punishment. The powerful hand of the Islamic Republic’s armed forces will, God willing, not let it go unanswered.”

# Iranian banks disburse \$22.5b in loans in 2 months

TEHRAN – Iranian banks issued a total of 1.127 quadrillion rials (approximately \$22.5 billion) in loans during the first two months of the Iranian year 1404 (starting March 21, 2025), marking a 51.7 percent increase compared to the same period last year, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced.

According to the CBI, of the total loans issued, 8.4663 quadrillion rials (75.1 percent) were granted to business entities—both legal and natural persons—while 2.8055 trillion rials (24.9 percent) went to final consumers, including households.

The CBI added that loan figures for the same period last year were initially reported at 7.2196 quadrillion rials but were later revised to 7.4281 trillion rials after adjustments by the banking network.

Iranian banks disbursed 7.6 quadrillion rials (approximately \$152 billion) in loans during the last Iranian year (ended late March), a senior official with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said,



while criticizing the lack of a clear economic prioritization strategy to match the scale of financing with sustainable growth.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 17th Financial Industry Exhibition (Banking, Insurance, and Capital Market), Mohammad Shirijian, Deputy for Monetary Policy at the CBI, said the economy has not reaped the benefits of years of substantial rial- and foreign-currency financing due to an absence of sectoral prioritization.

“Despite a 70 percent increase in foreign-currency financing over three years – reaching \$65.5 billion last year, up from \$39 billion two years earlier – economic growth has not kept pace,” Shirijian noted.

Highlighting inefficiencies in the financial system, Shirijian stressed that the capital market must play a stronger role in funding long-term infrastructure projects, while banks – as providers of short-term liquidity – should focus on working capital for businesses. “Financial

markets must develop targeted tools to support the real economy and curb diversion of funds to non-productive paths,” he said.

Despite the massive credit disbursement by banks, Shirijian criticized the lack of transparency in how and based on which models or priorities loans were allocated. He warned that poor-quality financing could create structural imbalances in the banking system, placing pressure on the Central Bank’s balance sheet.

More than 90 percent of financing in Iran is carried by the banking system. Shirijian said the CBI is taking steps to improve loan quality, including the introduction of special purpose bonds for infrastructure projects. “Financing must lead to job creation and improve household livelihoods,” he said, adding that compulsory lending mandates have strained banks and that public financing must be redirected toward development projects rather than covering unavoidable government expenses.

## GECF chief condemns Israeli attack on Iran, expresses solidarity

TEHRAN – The Secretary General of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) has condemned Israel’s recent attack on Iran and extended his condolences in a message to Iran’s Oil Minister, expressing solidarity with the Iranian government and people.

According to Shana, Mohamed Hamel sent the following message to Minister Mohsen Paknejad:

“The Gas Exporting Countries Forum strongly condemns the reckless attacks on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which constitute a blatant violation of sovereignty, security, international law, and the Charter of the United Nations.

I extend my condolences to the Leader and the people of Iran for this tragedy, and I wish a speedy recovery to the injured and a swift return to stability.

Such acts of aggression threaten

international peace and security and pose a serious risk to global energy security.

As reaffirmed in the statement adopted at the 26th Ministerial Meeting held in Tehran on December 8, 2024, we emphasize our solidarity with the people of the Middle East.

Your Excellency, please accept once again my heartfelt sympathy and solidarity.”

The GECF is an intergovernmental organization that provides a framework for exchanging experience and information among its member countries.

As the gathering of the world’s leading gas exporting countries, the GECF seeks to build a mechanism for a meaningful dialogue between gas producers and consumers in order to improve the stability and security of supply and demand in gas markets around the world.

The full-fledged Members of the GECF are: Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, UAE and Venezuela.

Angola, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Malaysia, Maurita-

nia, Mozambique, Peru and Senegal hold the status of Observers.

With its current number of member countries, the GECF enjoys a dominant position on global energy markets and among international energy organizations. Together, they represent 69% of the world’s gas reserves, 39% of the marketed production, and 40% of global gas exports. Moreover, GECF member countries collectively account for more than half of the world LNG exports (51%).

His Excellency Eng. Mohamed Hamel from the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria has assumed office as the fourth Secretary General of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), the global platform of leading gas exporting countries.

He was appointed to the helm of the 18-country energy organization at the 23rd GECF Ministerial Meeting, presided by the Plurinational State of Bolivia on 16 November 2021 for a period of two years commencing 1 January 2022, in accordance with the GECF Statute.

## Iran’s 2-month non-oil export to Afghanistan stands at \$374m

TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$374 million to Afghanistan during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Foroud Asgari said that Afghanistan was Iran’s fifth top non-oil export destination in the mentioned two-month period.

In early May, Payam Baqeri, deputy head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), said that strengthening economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan will contribute to regional stability and create a framework for sustainable partnerships.

He made the comments at a conference on Iran-Afghanistan trade opportunities, emphasizing the Chamber’s commitment to laying the groundwork for enduring commercial ties between the two neighboring countries.

“Iran and Afghanistan can build a win-win partnership by leveraging their respective resources and capabilities,” Baqeri said. “Iran’s advanced industrial infrastructure and access to global markets, combined with Afghanistan’s mineral wealth, fertile land, and young labor force, make

them natural economic partners.”

Baqeri highlighted the shared linguistic, cultural, and historical bonds between the two countries, describing them as a strong foundation for economic growth, trade expansion, and durable relations. He added that expanding bilateral trade would support stability in the region and benefit future generations.

“The outlook for Iran-Afghanistan trade is positive and promising,” he said, noting that official data indicates a significant increase in trade volume between the two countries in 2024.

The ICCIMA deputy head described the Chamber’s role as a proactive facilitator of trade relations and strategic partnerships. He said the Chamber is committed to resolving trade barriers through dialogue with governments and enhancing commercial interaction by expanding business networks and holding joint trade events.

He also voiced support for the creation of joint ventures across various economic sectors and said the Chamber was working with educational institutions to help train a skilled workforce in both countries.

## Private sectors of Iran, Uzbekistan willing to use potential of Shahid Rajaei Port

TEHRAN- During a meeting hosted by Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), the private sectors of Iran and Uzbekistan expressed their desire to use economic potential of Shahid Rajaei Port, Iran’s largest container port.

In the meeting held at the place of the port in Iran’s southern Hormozgan province, the two sides, while introducing the type of activities of their companies, explained investment opportunities and joint cooperation in Shahid Rajaei Port.

Addressing the meeting, the head of Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture of Hormozgan Province, pointed out that Shahid Rajaei Port is the hub of export and import of goods in Iran and even the West Asia, and said Shahid Rajaei Port has very suitable capacities for investment by entrepreneurs, and the private sector of Uzbekistan can use this potential in a special way.

Earlier this month, Iran’s northern Mazandaran province opened a trade center in Uzbekistan’s capital city Tashkent.

The inauguration ceremony of the center, which is located in Food City area in Tashkent, was participated by the Iranian Ambassador to Uzbekistan Mohammad-Ali Eskandari, as well as Abdollah Mohajeri, a board member of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), and Ali Taqipour, the head of the Chamber of Commerce of Sari city, the center of Mazandaran.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the Iranian ambassador to Tashkent stated: “The Mazandaran province trade center in Tashkent will help further develop economic and trade relations between Iran and Uzbekistan.

The merchants of this province can offer good and quality Iranian goods to the Uzbek market at a cheaper price.”

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# If Hezbollah engages, it would defend its existence rather than just backing Iran

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—Haaretz quoted Israeli War Ministry officials as saying that the Israeli army has begun reducing its military presence in the Gaza Strip. This is part of a plan to redeploy its forces to the northern and eastern borders of the occupied Palestinian territories in anticipation of the possibility of Hezbollah engaging in the current battle on the side of Iran, as Israel started a surprise and illegal war against the Islamic Republic in the early hours of June 13.

Obviously, the ongoing U.S.-led Israeli aggression against Iran is not a passing event. Rather, it is a pivotal moment in reshaping regional and international balances.

Hence, its positive or negative repercussions will inevitably extend to Hezbollah, which finds itself facing fateful questions related to the limits of its involvement and its future.

Whatsoever, political realism today dictates a thorough reading of Hezbollah's position: Will its sensitive status quo push it toward a state of near-strategic paralysis, or might Hezbollah rush to engage in fighting Israel?!

First of all, despite being subjected to a relentless U.S.-led Israeli terrorism, Tehran itself does not need the support of its allies at this stage, as it is capable of protecting its sovereignty on its own and relies on an army that is among the most powerful in the world.

Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah Loyalty faction in the parliament, emphasized that "our region is going through a critical historical phase," where "the Zionist entity—while rushing into what it called 're-engineering the new Middle East'—has collided with the Iranian wall that shattered its ambitions,



reminding it of the established truth: that it is an artificial and alien entity that will not survive in the long term."

Fayyad added that this "will lead to compensating the imbalances that have afflicted the 'Middle East' and will return the enemy to square one."

The Hezbollah MP pointed out, "In an atmosphere of normalization and surrender that govern official Arab policies, the Islamic Republic confirms its credibility and historical role as the state that confronted the usurping entity—supported by the U.S. and all arrogant Western forces."

During the September-November 2024 aggression, the Israeli enemy failed to eliminate the Resistance in Lebanon, so it bet that Washington, along with its European, Arab, and Lebanese allies, would accomplish the mission.

Indisputably, if the ongoing U.S.-led Israeli aggression against Iran succeeds—God forbid—the decisive war against the Resistance in Lebanon will automatically resume!

Therefore, if Hezbollah were destined to join the Iranian defensive battle, it would not delay at all. This is because supporting Iran is not only a moral and religious duty, but also a defence of the authentic

existence of the popular base of the Resistance.

This discussion opens the way for a brief history of the Lebanese-Iranian relationship, before and after the establishment of Hezbollah following the victory of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979 and the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime.

After the defeat of the French occupation of Lebanon due to the resistance, Tehran opened its embassy in Beirut on April 16, 1945 (after its diplomatic representation had been limited to a joint consulate for Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine since 1927). Beirut also opened its embassy in Tehran on February 23, 1946.

In the 1950s, during the presidency of Camille Chamoun, a rapprochement occurred between the two parties, particularly their involvement in the Baghdad Pact, where Chamoun and the Shah of Iran exchanged official visits.

During the so-called "1958 Revolution," Chamoun received weapons from the Shah to confront his political opponents. However, during the reigns of Lebanese Presidents Fouad Chehab and Charles Helou, things changed somewhat as the Shah accused Beirut of protecting his opponents and refusing to ex-

tradite them, leading to the severing of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Upon his election as President of Lebanon in 1970, late Suleiman Franjieh succeeded in reconciling relations between the two countries.

The year 1982 is considered a turning point in Iran's relationship with Lebanon, specifically after the Israeli invasion of the country. Specifically, on June 8, 1981, the Iranian parliament approved a proposal allowing Iranian volunteers to travel to Lebanon to fight the Israeli enemy. At that time, Hezbollah was founded.

In 1983, Tehran sided with the forces opposing the so-called May 17 Normalization Agreement signed with Israel.

In the early 1990s, Lebanon witnessed the end of the civil war that broke out in 1975. This coincided with the cessation of the Iran-Iraq war, with Iranian-Lebanese relations on an increasingly positive trajectory, based on support for Lebanon's liberation from the Israeli occupation.

Following the outbreak of the 2006 war, Iran continued its support and financed reconstruction projects in southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut.

This support continued as Hezbollah repelled takfiri groups attempting to infiltrate Lebanon (2011—2018).

Iran also spared no effort in developing the Resistance's capabilities and supporting the forcibly displaced people during the recent aggression. It was among the first governments rushing to help the Lebanese despite the vulgar and false propaganda spearheaded by the U.S. surveillance den (embassy) in Beirut and its mercenaries.

tion troops near al-Qarara.

Also contributing to the resistance campaign, the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), released footage of a mortar shelling operation that targeted IOF infantry advancing east of the Shejaiya neighborhood.

Israeli media reported a security incident in southern Gaza. The regime's military confirmed that an IOF soldier had been killed during battles in the southern Gaza Strip.

Earlier Israeli outlets also reported the death of another IOF soldier and the serious injury of a second during clashes in Gaza, describing the incident as a "serious security event."

These operations are part of an ongoing effort by Palestinian resistance factions to counter IOF invasions into both the southern and northern regions of Gaza.

The groups have intensified their operations with the aim of inflicting direct losses on advancing IOF infantry.

## Iran claim first win in 2025 VNL

TEHRAN – After falling in three tie-breakers, Iran defeated Ukraine 3-2 (28-30, 25-20, 22-25, 25-21, 15-9) in their last match in 2025 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) in Rio de Janeiro Sunday evening.

Poriya Hossein Khanzadeh scored 23 points for Iran, while Illia Kovalov led Ukraine with 21 points.

Iran had lost to Brazil, the U.S., and Slovenia in their previous matches.

The 2025 FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League is the seventh edition of the FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League, an annual men's international volleyball tournament.

The competition is currently held from 11 June to 3 August 2025, with the final round to take place at the Beilun Gymnasium in Ningbo, China.

Iran will travel to Belgrade for Week 2 to play the Netherlands,

Germany, Serbia, and Argentina.

## I want to make history at 2028 Olympics: Mobini

TEHRAN – Reyhaneh Mobini, the Iranian long jumper who secured gold at the 2025 Asian Athletics Championships in South Korea, expressed her ambition to make history at the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

For the first time, she became the Asian champion in the long jump, making her the first Iranian woman to win a gold medal at the Asian Championships.

"In the competition, there were two stages: the preliminary and the final. In the preliminaries, I managed to jump 6.33 meters and qualified for the final. In the final, I successfully jumped 6.40 meters, which earned me the top position," Mobini said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

When asked about the challenges faced by female athletes in Iran, she said: "One of the issues I can mention is related to my coach, who is a man. Because of that, he cannot attend many competitions. This restriction isn't limited to competitions — he also cannot be present at many training sessions."

"Despite these obstacles, I've always tried not to dwell on problems and instead focus on my abilities and the resources available to me. The more you think about difficulties, the bigger they seem," she added.

"I've had a good training process and have achieved better results during practice. I hope I can perform even better and fully showcase my potential because I believe in myself. My goal is to make history at the 2028 Olympics," she concluded.

## 2025 World Deaf Futsal Championships: Iran edge Italy

TEHRAN – Iran edged past Italy 1-0 in the 2025 World Deaf Futsal Championships on Monday.

Team Mellì, who had defeated Morocco 12-1 in their first match, will face Italy on Wednesday.

The competition started on June 14 in Montese, Italy and will run until June 27.

Iran are drawn in Group A alongside Morocco, Poland, England, Italy, and Uruguay.

## Iran win CAVA U16 Boys' Volleyball Championship 2025

TEHRAN – The claimed the title of the CAVA U16 Boys' Volleyball Championship 2025.

Iran defeated Kazakhstan 3-1 in its last match.

The tournament took place from June 10 to 16 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The U16 competition featured teams from Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, and two Uzbekistan squads (UZB1 and UZB2).

## Iran beat Kazakhstan at 2025 World Aquatics Men's U20 Water Polo Championships

TEHRAN – Iran beat Kazakhstan 16-9 at the 2025 World Aquatics Men's U20 Water Polo Championships on Monday.

Iran, who had defeated New Zealand 15-13 in their first match, topped Group D.

Iran are headed by former national team player Ali Piroozkhah.

The World Aquatics Men's U20 Water Polo Championships takes place from June 14 to 21 in Zagreb, Croatia.

Hungary are the title holders.

## Iran Volleyball aim for resurgence in VNL Week 2

TEHRAN – The Iranian National Team arrive in Belgrade for Week 2 of the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL) with a mix of relief and renewed determination after securing their first victory against Ukraine in Rio de Janeiro.

Following a tough opening week that saw them fall in three tie-breakers before finally clinching a 3-2 (28-30, 25-20, 22-25, 25-21, 15-9) win over Ukraine, Iran are eager to improve their standing in the highly competitive tournament.

The victory over Ukraine, where Poria Khanzadeh impressively scored 23 points, offered a much-needed morale boost after defeats to volleyball powerhouses Brazil, the U.S., and Slovenia. Despite the challenging start, head coach Roberto Piazza expressed satisfaction with his team's effort. «Another tough match against a strong team, but all teams in the VNL are powerful and have more experience than Iran,» Piazza stated after the narrow loss to Slovenia. «We put everything we had on the court. The boys were okay. We needed to change some moments.»

Piazza specifically highlighted missed opportunities in crucial sets, noting, «We should have finished the second set differently, but we lost the key second set, and in the third, we couldn't play like the first. Then, we came back in the fourth.»

Iran currently sit in 14th place in the 18-team VNL standings with one win and four points after the first week. While the victory over Ukraine provided a sweet ending to a challenging week, it also served as a stark reminder of the team's ongoing struggles. The close nature of their losses, often going to tie-breakers, suggests potential but also highlights areas for improvement.

The crucial victory against Ukraine, especially coming from behind, can inject confidence into the team.

Individual performances from players like Poria Hossein Khanzadeh, Bardia Saadat, and Morteza Sharifi have shown flashes of brilliance, indicating strong talent within the squad.

The availability of a full squad, as mentioned by Coach Piazza, will provide more strategic options.

However, the inability to close out tight matches consistently remains a significant worry.

Identified weaknesses in tactical execution, particularly in serving and first reception, need urgent attention.

The upcoming fixtures, though not against the absolute top-tier teams like Poland, Brazil, or Japan, are still formidable. For Iran to make a significant impact in the VNL, they must address their technical and tactical deficiencies, convert close sets into wins, and find the consistency needed to compete at the highest level.

Week 2 Schedule in Belgrade (All times IRDT):

Wednesday, June 25: Iran vs. Serbia (21:30)

Friday, June 27: Iran vs. Argentina (18:00)

Saturday, June 28: Iran vs. Germany (18:00)

Sunday, June 29: Iran vs. Netherlands (14:30)

Hopes and Concerns for Week 2:

## Trump is pushing Tehran to go nuclear by backing Israel: MEE

TEHRAN – In a commentary on June 15, Middle East Eye editor-in-chief David Hearst said Donald Trump is pushing Iran toward building nuclear arms by backing Israel's war on Iran.

"As far as the future of nuclear enrichment in Iran is concerned, Netanyahu and Trump's unilateral attack will provide the biggest incentive Iran can possibly have to get a viable bomb as quickly as possible," Hearst wrote.

**The following is the major part of the article**

US President Donald Trump's decision to allow Israel to attack Iran is the worst miscalculation a US president has made since George W Bush invaded Iraq.

Bush's decision heralded eight years of conflict in Iraq, killed at least 655,000 people, according to The Lancet, spawned an extreme group of Takfiri militants in the

Islamic State group and brought a major state to the verge of collapse from which it has yet to recover 14 years on.

Trump's decision could yet prove to be more calamitous.

Allowing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to attack Iran, when US envoys were engaged in negotiations with Tehran, places the US presidency on the same level of trustworthiness as Al Capone or Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

This is the way you behave if you are in charge of a drug cartel, not a global power.

Who now will trust the word of America? Sooner or later, a power in decline like the US will find it needs the trust of others.

True to form, Trump and his coterie have no inkling of what they have just done. They are gloating in the act of deceit they

sniped the driver of an Israeli military bulldozer on a Street, east of the Shejaiya neighborhood near Gaza City.

The group released footage under its "Stones of David" campaign, showing attacks on an IOF unit force fortified inside a house, and on another infantry unit in an area north of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the al-Quds Brigades, shelled a gathering of IOF soldiers and vehicles in the town of al-Qarara, north of Khan Younis in southern Gaza, with a barrage of mortar shells.

The group also reported a joint bombardment operation with the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. This operation targeted two separate concentrations of IOF units: one in northern Khan Younis, and the other near al-Qarara.

In a similar vein, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, affiliated with the Fatah movement, confirmed that it had partnered with the al-Quds Brigades to shell an IOF unit at an undisclosed location and launched a separate mortar attack of the same caliber on occupa-

have just performed, laughing about duping Iranian diplomats while rushing hundreds of Hellfire missiles to the Israeli army and supplying it with real-time intelligence.

Israel's drones caught their targets at home in bed or lured them to their headquarters, where they were wiped out. This is regarded in Tel Aviv and Washington as a coup. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington provided Israel with "exquisite intel".

After bragging about their act of deception, Trump lectured Iranians to get back to the negotiating table or face even worse. "Iran must make a deal, before there is nothing left, and save what was once known as the Iranian Empire. No more death, no more destruction, JUST DO IT, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. God Bless You All!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))





JUNE 17, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*How wonderful is the situation of a believer. There is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity comes to him, he expresses gratitude to God and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:05 Evening: 19:44 Dawn: 3:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

## Celebrated veteran artists denounce Israeli aggression against Iran



TEHRAN – Over 100 distinguished veteran artists from various disciplines have issued a collective statement condemning the Zionist enemy's aggression against Iran's homeland.

The signatories, renowned figures in cinema, television, theater, music, visual arts, poetry, literature, traditional crafts, and architecture, expressed their unwavering support for the nation's resistance and unity in the face of recent hostile acts.

According to the Public Relations Office of the Veteran Artists Institute, more than a hundred seasoned artists have already endorsed the statement, with the number continuing to grow.

In their statement, the artists emphasized their deep-rooted connection to Iran and its sovereignty. They reflected on their age and experience, noting that their words are guided by wisdom and reason.

As they put it, "As seasoned artists, we, due to our age and experience, prefer to speak with reasoning and wisdom, steering clear of passivity.

Our maturity compels us to recognize that words alone are insufficient in the face of such unprecedented villainy."

The artists referenced the wise words of Persian poet Ferdowsi, who advised that "when all tricks fail, the sword becomes justified," highlighting the need for decisive action in defending Iran.

"Now that our nation's best and most devoted sons and daughters—those who dedicated their lives to elevating Iran—have been taken from us, it is time to respond with decisive action," they declared.

They called on Iran's brave forces to "strike back to protect the sovereignty of our homeland," emphasizing that patience has worn thin and a forceful response is essential.

While the statement conveyed a sense of resolve and readiness to stand for justice, the veterans also acknowledged the delicacy of their position, stating, "Though as elders and artists, we hold delicacy in our words, we feel a profound sense of duty and readiness to stand for justice and honor."

They mourned the loss of prominent figures and celebrated their eternal union with martyrdom, sending their condolences and best wishes to their families.

The statement concluded with a call for unity and resilience, urging the nation to defend its integrity.

Among the signatories are esteemed figures such as Dariush Arjmand, Manouchehr Azari, Saeed Amir-Soleimani, Safa Aqajani, Mahmoud Pakniat, Homa Jedikar, Bahram Hasiri, Akbar Rahmati, Edna Zeinalian, Mahvash Sabrkon, Mehdi Tousi, Nasser Mamdouh, Ahmad Vakili and many others, with the list continuing to grow as more artists express their solidarity.

# Iranian music artists condemn Zionists' attacks on homeland, emphasize unity, dignity



Illustration by Iranian cartoonist Hadi Heidari

TEHRAN – Many Iranian musicians, singers, and composers have reacted to the Zionist regime's attacks on Tehran and several other Iranian cities, on the social media, condemning the brutal attack and emphasizing the same themes: unity, dignity, and the inviolability of Iran's soil, ISNA reported.

In the early morning hours of June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked, large-scale armed attack against Iran.

This was an egregious act of aggression by every definition. Through coordinated air, missile, and drone strikes, it targeted residential neighborhoods, civilian infrastructure, public authorities, and nuclear facilities subject to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Electronic musician Shahin Entezami posted a powerful message on social media. "My non-Iranian friends! Stop your silence now! Speak up, share the truth, and show the world what's happening in Iran.

The genocide machine is at it again, this time in my own hometown, and the media, along with the fascist monarchist diaspora, who have supported/encouraged Israel to attack Iran for years and invested heavily to control the social media narrative, are shamelessly covering for them, spreading lies like 'only IRGC are targeted' while they bomb energy infrastructures, homes, and innocent civilians.

Music artists share maps of Iran, display its flag, and write messages of unity and resistance on social media. Many of them express that resistance, whether on the battlefield or in the world of art, is essential to survival

nocent civilians.

Enough complicity through silence, break it! Amplify this crime or stand guilty of watching it happen".

This urgent appeal cuts to the heart of the issue: Western complicity—whether through distortion or omission—is enabling destruction.

The narrative of "precision attacks" is not only misleading; it whitewashes the reality of explosions near residential zones, damaged

energy infrastructures, and the psychological toll on millions of ordinary Iranians.

Homayoun Shajarian, one of Iran's most prominent traditional vocalists, posted a moving letter alongside social media stories in response to the attacks: "The earth and sky of our homeland are wounded. Hearts are anxious.

A mother's heart trembles a thousand times before sunrise. Sirens steal sleep from children. The sound of explosions replaces the sound of song. We are the children of melody, wounded at heart, with hidden hope in our throats".

"Perhaps a song can soothe a grieving mother or be a silent sigh in a weary father's soul. This voice longs to be a whisper of peace amid the clamor," the letter continued.

"Let us remember: No soil blossoms from blood, and no weapon sows love May a day

come when songs are heard louder than bullets, and peace and calm belong to all people of the world".

Other renowned Iranian musicians have also voiced their anger and grief on social media. Traditional Singer and composer Ali Zand Vakili wrote: "Homeland, the essence of your sorrow flows from my eyes. I offer myself for you. Your pain is mine. Homeland, homeland, homeland".

Pop singer and record producer Mohsen Chavoshi, in a stark, concise post, declared: "You crushed, you will be crushed".

These are not just symbolic gestures. They reflect a broader sentiment from within Iran's cultural sphere: that defending the homeland's territorial integrity transcends politics.

Musician, composer, and Songwriter Kar-en Homayounfar, composer and tar player Ali Ghamasari, pop singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist Reza Sadeghi, pop singer Masoud Sadeghloo, pop singer, songwriter Fereydoun Asraei, pop singer Mohammad Alizadeh, pop singer and lyricist Ali Bahreyni, pop singer Babak Jahanbakhsh, and singer, musician, and composer Reza Yazdani are among other Iranian music artists who have reacted to the Zionists' atrocities.

They share maps of Iran, display its flag, and write messages of unity and resistance.

Many of them express a deep historical awareness, that Iran has long faced foreign aggression, and that resistance, whether on the battlefield or in the world of art, is essential to survival.

## Speaking out on Gaza: Australian creatives, arts organizations struggle to reconcile competing pressures

When Michelle de Kretser accepted the 2025 Stella prize on 23 May, the celebrated author shared a warning.

"All the time I was writing these words, a voice in my head whispered, 'You will be punished. You will be smeared with labels as potent and ugly as they're false,'" De Kretser told the Sydney writers' festival crowd.

Earlier in her prerecorded speech, De Kretser had denounced what she called a "program of suppression" against creatives, scholars and journalists for "expressing anti-genocide views" in relation to Israel and Gaza, The Guardian reported.

The speech received a standing ovation. It had been taped weeks earlier but arrived in the immediate fallout of exactly the kind of episode De Kretser was talking about.

Three days before the Stella announcement, the Martu author KA Ren Wyld revealed she had been stripped of a \$15,000 black&write! fellowship from the State Library of Queensland, just hours before it was due to be announced.

A day earlier, the library's board received a written direction from the Queensland arts minister, John-Paul Langbroek, expressing his "firm view" that Wyld should not receive the prize because of a Twitter post about the death of the Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in October, which referred to him as a martyr who was "resisting colonization un-



til his last breath, fighting the genocidal oppressors like a hero, sacrificing his life for love of his people and ancestral land".

By the time De Kretser's speech aired, several judges of the library's Queensland Literary awards quit in protest.

Sara El Sayed, an Egyptian Australian author and three-time judge was one of them. She says the minister's intervention "undermines the whole process" of independent judging and makes it "impossible to continue to work with the library".

"I don't know how someone supporting the Palestinian people, supporting an oppressed people, people who are facing starvation, genocide every day ... I just don't understand how the reaction is to take an opportunity away," El Sayed says. "That's the ultimate form of censorship, to me."

El Sayed says many artists now grapple with a choice between taking career opportunities and standing up for their beliefs. "I

think a lot of people, especially artists, feel a moral obligation to speak out against what is occurring," she says.

A State Library spokesperson said the library "respects the decision of judges" and "value[s] the conversations we have had with many judges and the writing community and acknowledge the concerns they have raised".

The Wyld case highlights a growing crisis for arts organizations and their management in how they respond to political statements that range from mild to polarizing, but may be entirely unconnected to the subject matter of the artist's work.

From the Khaled Sabsabi-Creative Australia furore to pianist Jayson Gillham's dispute with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO), arts institutions have struggled to reconcile commitments to intellectual freedom and creative expression with official positions of political neutrality and intense scrutiny from

media and politicians, who in some cases may have an influence on their funding.

At the MSO, the fallout has included the resignation of its longtime chief executive, high-profile event postponements and a long legal battle.

The employment lawyer Josh Bornstein, who has represented the journalist Antoinette Latouf in her unlawful termination case against the ABC over online posts about Gaza, says in his view a "cancel culture" fostered by pressure from sections of the media, politicians and lobby groups is leading organizations to make fast, panicked decisions.

"An organization goes into brand management mode and the usual denouement in the post-October 7 atmosphere is to eliminate the source of complaints from the organization," he says, speaking generally.

But Bornstein also points to the University of Queensland's treatment of the UQP publisher Aviva Tuffield, who wore a "Readers and Writers Against the Genocide" T-shirt to the Australian Book Industry Awards in May.

In response to questions from The Australian, the university said its freedom of speech policy allowed Tuffield to express her lawful, personal views, which did not represent the university's.

"That's the sort of approach that should be adopted," Bornstein says.

## Cartoon of Day



Israel Strikes Iran

Cartoonist: Emad Hajjaj from Jordan