

# Iran Stands Firm Against US Pressure for Obedience

Ayatollah Khamenei says 'sacred unity' is an achievement of war that must be protected



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei attended a mourning ceremony for Imam Reza (AS) on August 24, 2025

## Araghchi arrives in Jeddah for emergency OIC meeting

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi travelled in the Saudi port of Jeddah on Sunday to attend an extraordinary Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting. Before embarking on his trip, the diplomat warned in an op-ed that Israel's expansionist ambitions pose an "existential threat" to regional states and international peace.

In the op-ed published in Asharq al-Awsat, Araghchi urged Islamic nations to forge a united front against the genocide in Gaza as well as the regime's broader aggression across West Asia. He argued that the upcoming gathering in Jeddah must go beyond "statements of solidarity" with Palestinians and instead mark a turning point in mobilizing coordinated political, legal, and diplomatic pressure against Israel. ▶ Page 2

## Iran's navy wraps up two-day missile exercise in southern waters

TEHRAN – Two months after Iran fought an all-out war against Israel, the country's navy flexed its muscles in a major missile exercise, dubbed "Sustainable Power 1404", with its homegrown military hardware sailing the northern Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman.

The two-day maneuver saw ships, submarines, aircraft, and coastal units working in concert. The forces successfully test-fired a range of Iranian-made missiles, including the short-range Nasr, medium-range Qader, and long-range Qadir anti-ship cruise missiles, alongside the sophisticated Bavar-5 kamikaze drone. ▶ Page 2

## Iran, Belarus sign industrial cooperation agreements

MINSK – Iran and Belarus signed a series of industrial cooperation agreements during President Masoud Pezeshkian's official visit to Minsk, Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade said.

Industry Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak signed the documents, which include standards for trade exchanges between Tehran and Minsk.

Pezeshkian arrived in Belarus late Tuesday, August 19, at the invitation of President Alexander Lukashenko and was formally welcomed at the presidential palace on Wednesday.

As stated by Belarusian Industry Minister and Co-chair of the Belarusian-Iranian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation Andrei Kuznetsov on the sidelines of the high-level talks between Belarus and Iran at the Palace of Independence in Minsk on August 20, ▶ Page 4

## Uprooting identity, uprooting peace: Israel's war on the olive tree

By Muhammad Akmal Khan

ISLAMABAD – At dawn upon a West Bank hill, a Palestinian farmer stands still, watching in silence as Israeli bulldozers creep into his ancestral grove. The machines growl, their steel jaws sinking deep into the earth, tearing at the roots of olive trees his grandfather once planted with care. Each snap of a branch, each fall of a trunk, feels like a page torn from his family's history.

In Palestine, olive trees play an essential part in family life, poetry and faith. These olive groves unite generations with the land beyond mere crops or oil production. Fruit from Palestinian trees have sustained homes, wood from them has warmed homes, and harvests from them have marked seasons of joy and resilience. Their fruit serves as a symbol of steadfastness, refusing to be uprooted from where one stands firmly rooted.

## Australians unite against Gaza 'genocide'

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Protests against Israel's military campaign in the Gaza Strip continued across Australia over the weekend, with demonstrators demanding a ceasefire, an end to starvation in Gaza, and sanctions against Israel.

Rallies were held in major cities including Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, and Brisbane. According to the Palestine Action Group, more than 40 protests took place nationwide, drawing an estimated 350,000 people. Around 50,000 reportedly joined the march in Brisbane alone.

In Sydney, organizer Josh Lees said Australians were "out in force to demand an end to this genocide in Gaza and to demand that our government sanction Israel," as crowds waved Palestinian flags and chanted "Free, free Palestine."

Diplomatic tensions between Australia and Israel have grown in recent months after Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Labor government said it would consider recognition of Palestinian statehood, following similar moves by France, Britain, and Canada.

## Israel admits 83% of Gaza deaths are civilians

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Date by the Israeli military reveals 83% of Gaza deaths are civilians, contradicting official claims.

A joint investigation by The Guardian, +972 Magazine, and Hebrew-language outlet Local Call has uncovered that the vast majority of people killed in the U.S.-backed Gaza genocide – 83% – have been civilians, according to the Israeli occupation regime's own classified intelligence data.

The investigation challenges nearly two years of public claims by Israeli officials who have strongly stated that most of those killed were resistance fighters. No evidence has ever emerged from the occupation regime to back up its allegation.

An Israeli military database uncovered during the investigation indicates that, as of May 2025, intelligence sources listed 8,900 identified fighters from Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as either dead or "probably dead". The use of the term "probably dead" introduces additional uncertainty. ▶ Page 5

## Exclusive: Gaza killings mirror Israel's decades of crimes against press, human rights activist says



▶ Page 5



## Iran secures IOAA championship for second consecutive year

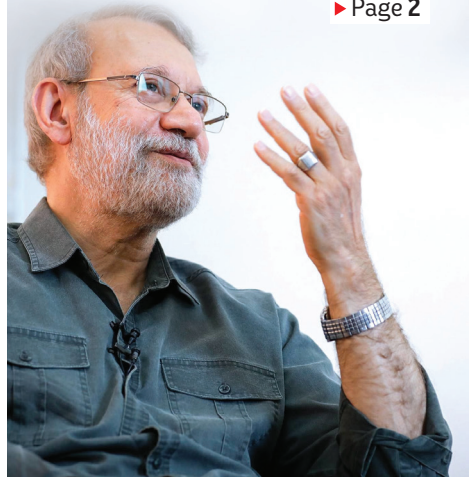
TEHRAN – The Iranian students have grabbed five gold medals at the 18th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA), marking the country's second consecutive world championship.

The event was held from August 11 to 21, in Mumbai, India, attracting over 300 high school students from 64 countries. During the event, students participated in several challenging exams covering theoretical, observational, and data analysis aspects of astronomy.

The five-member Iranian team comprised Ali Naderi Lordjani, Arshia Mirshamsi Kakhaki, Hossein Soltani, Hossein Masoumi, and Hirbod Foodazi. The first three students are placed atop the whole winners. ▶ Page 7

## Larijani says talks possible if West understands Iran 'is not one to surrender'

▶ Page 2





## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Powerful Iran

Siasat-e-Rooz discussed Iran's military approach in a note and said: Situated in a geopolitically sensitive region and facing security and terrorist threats from multiple fronts, Iran—targeted by hegemonic powers seeking its disintegration—undeniably requires strong military and defensive capabilities. The United States and the Zionist regime, along with some European countries, are relying on the tools of terrorism and regional factors, and even direct military attacks, to trigger civil war and ultimately disintegrate Iran. The truth is that today's world no longer values diplomacy, and negotiation without the tools of power means surrender. The experience of the 12-day imposed war showed that the enemy, under the guise of diplomacy, is preparing for war, massacre, and the disintegration of Iran, and diplomacy and negotiation do not work. Certainly, if it were not for the missile and drone capabilities of the armed forces, the United States and the Zionist regime would have never agreed to a ceasefire. Today, what determines Iran's deterrence against any aggression is solely its indigenous military capabilities, which must be taken with authority to realize.

### Shargh: Tehran's mistrust of IAEA

Shargh wrote about the main causes of Iran's dispute with the International Atomic Energy Agency and said: One of the main causes of Iran's dispute with the Agency is that the institution is not neutral. The Agency's silence in the face of direct U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, which were under strict supervision, not only severely damaged Tehran's trust but also paved the way for Iran to reconsider the level of cooperation. Iranian officials have repeatedly emphasized the continuation of this biased trend could limit or even stop technical cooperation with the Agency. Tehran recently began negotiations with the Agency to define a new framework for cooperation, and as long as the country's security and rights are not guaranteed, it cannot be the same as in the past. From Iran's point of view, the main problem lies in the Agency's political and biased behavior. The visit of Agency officials to Washington cannot be considered a mere technical measure. This trip takes place in an environment where mutual trust between Tehran and the IAEA is at its lowest level, and any overt convergence of the IAEA with the United States could exacerbate this distrust and negatively impact the ongoing negotiations.

### Etemad: Difficult conditions after snapback

Etemad discussed the possible activation of snapback mechanism and its

consequences with Dr. Gholamreza Karimi, a professor of international relations. He said: If the snapback mechanism is triggered, the level of distrust between the parties will increase sharply. Iran will probably respond to this action by withdrawing from the NPT or at least reducing the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspections. This will intensify the distrust of Western countries towards Iran and increase the opportunity for building an international consensus against Iran, especially through the issuance of a resolution by the IAEA Board of Governors and referring the issue to the Security Council. Although divisions within the Security Council make the adoption of a new resolution against Iran unlikely, the reinstatement of sanctions from previous resolutions and Iran's potential placement under Chapter VII of the UN Charter would significantly worsen its situation. This situation, given the current multiple internal crises, makes normalizing Iran's case extremely complicated and will likely lead to an escalation of tensions between the two sides.

### Khorasan: Will there be another war?

Khorasan raised a question whether the war between Iran and Israel will be resumed after a lull. It said: There are scattered reports about the end of the temporary ceasefire and the imminent resumption of war between Iran and the Zionist regime, but we must first distinguish between possibility and probability. The possibility of returning to direct war between Iran and Israel is always on the table, but the probability of it occurring in the short term is not very high. Because a new balance of deterrence has been formed after the 12-day war, forcing both sides to reassess the costs and benefits of each action. In this balance, an immediate return to full-scale war has given way to a more likely scenario, which is the continuation of the conflict in the form of a "shadow war", limited strikes, and the field of competition has become more multilayered. Many imagine that the ceasefire was the product of one side's incompetence or complete defeat, while the reality is more complex. The end of the war was the result of a careful calculation by both sides. Both sides realized that they were at a point where the marginal cost of a further attack far outweighed its potential benefits. This is the logic of mutual deterrence that still holds today. As long as this calculation holds, the threshold from shadow war to direct war will remain high.

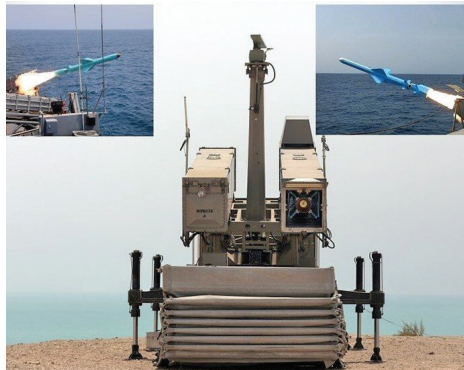
## Iran's navy wraps up two-day missile exercise in southern waters

TEHRAN – Two months after Iran fought an all-out war against Israel, the country's navy flexed its muscles in a major missile exercise, dubbed "Sustainable Power 1404", with its homegrown military hardware sailing the northern Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman.

The two-day maneuver saw ships, submarines, aircraft, and coastal units working in concert. The forces successfully test-fired a range of Iranian-made missiles, including the short-range Nasr, medium-range Qader, and long-range Qadir anti-ship cruise missiles, alongside the sophisticated Bavar-5 kamikaze drone.

The Ganaveh auxiliary ship and Sabalan frigate were also instrumental during the two-day efforts. They unleashed coordinated salvos of Nasr and Qadir cruise missiles that destroyed designated targets on the sea. Simultaneously, the land-based Qader system scored a direct hit, highlighting Iran's capacity for multi-platform coordinated attacks.

Before the drill wrapped up on Wednesday, A navy spokesperson, Rear Admiral Abbas Hassani, told the Tehran Times that the exercise has two main goals: creating



deterrence and assuring the Iranian people that the nation's armed forces are ready and vigilant. Reports show the operations were designed to mimic real combat, even practicing electronic warfare to take down simulated enemy drones.

The drill garnered significant attention from Western and Israeli media outlets, as it was seen as a sign that Iran has quickly recovered losses from the 12-day war it fought against Israel in June, and is already prepared to fend off any similar acts of aggression in the future.

## Araghchi arrives in Jeddah for emergency OIC meeting

From page 1 ► "This meeting must become a historic test for the Islamic Ummah," he wrote, "and perhaps one of the few remaining opportunities to forge a regional and global coalition to halt Israel's aggressions."

Araghchi noted that Israel has been pursuing "one of the most horrifying human catastrophes of the modern era" in Gaza, and warned that such actions will extend far beyond the Palestinian enclave. He cited rapid settlement growth and settler violence in the West Bank, the "Judaization" of al-Quds, repeated strikes on Lebanon, attacks on Yemeni infrastructure, efforts to destabilize Syria, and most recently, a military aggression against Iran that killed more than 1,000 Iranians.

He said such policies were tied to Israeli leaders' public references to a so-called "Greater Israel," a project stretching "from the Nile to the Euphrates."

"These are not passing claims," Araghchi wrote. "They are explicit declarations of strategy that violate the UN Charter and international law, threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and beyond."

Earlier this month, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu provoked regional outrage when he declared his commitment to the vision of a so-called "Greater Israel." In remarks to i24 News, Netanyahu said he feels "very attached" to this vision, describing it as both "a historic and spiritual mission" that he



FM Araghchi landed in Jeddah on evening of August 24, 2025

believes generations of Jews before and after him share. He referred not only to the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories but also to parts of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, underscoring an expansionist outlook that has long been controversial in the region.

The concept of Greater Israel, which has circulated in certain strands of Israeli political thought, typically includes the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Syria's Golan Heights. Some interpretations also extend it to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and parts of Iraq. Netanyahu's invocation of this

idea was swiftly condemned across the Arab states as a threat to sovereignty, peace, and regional stability.

### The 'Greater Israel' includes territories of Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq

Egypt's Foreign Ministry demanded clarification, warning that such rhetoric "fuels instability and shows rejection

of peace in the region." Cairo emphasized that the only viable path forward is through ending the war on Gaza, resuming negotiations, and establishing a Palestinian state. Jordan issued one of the strongest rebukes, calling Netanyahu's comments "a dangerous and provocative escalation, a threat to the sovereignty of states, a violation of international law and the UN Charter." It added that such "delusional claims" would not undermine Palestinian rights or diminish Arab states' positions.

The Palestinian Authority likewise condemned the remarks as "a disregard of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" and "a dangerous provocation" that threatens regional security. It reaffirmed its demand for an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, with Eastern al-Quds as its capital. Hamas also seized on the remarks, saying they reveal "the danger this fascist entity poses to all the countries and peoples of the region."

Beyond Palestine and Jordan, strong criticism came from Yemen, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Doha described Netanyahu's statements as part of Israel's "arrogant occupation policy," while Riyadh rejected "expansionist ideas and projects," reaffirming the Palestinians' right to independence. The Arab League labeled the comments "a serious threat to collective Arab national security," while the OIC warned that such rhetoric seeks to "evade Israel's international obligations" and prolong conflict.

## Larijani says talks possible if West understands Iran 'is not one to surrender'



Iran's security chief, Ali Larijani, speaks to khamenei.ir

TEHRAN – The Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, sat down with a media outlet affiliated with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to conduct his most expansive interview since being appointed to his new role.

Apart from expounding on

how will lead the body, the veteran statesman spoke a lot about the 12-day war Israel launched against Iran, how Iran recovered from losses on the first day of the war, and how it managed to turn the tables and force the Israeli regime to ask for a ceasefire. Larijani particularly praised Leader of the Islamic

Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei for managing the crisis effectively. "The Leader's steps were taken with complete confidence. And this is a defining trait of leaders who follow a divine path and are goal-oriented," he stated.

The security chief also spoke about the future and how Iranians are ready to fend off any similar attacks with more force. He said nuclear talks with Western states are still possible if American and European leaders finally come to the conclusion that they cannot force Iran to concede with threats of war.

"My consistent advice is that Iran should never abandon diplomacy, because diplomacy is itself a tool," Larijani declared. "If the enemy turns the diplomatic arena into a stage for theater and spectacle, nothing meaningful will come out of that diplomacy. Or if its purpose is to use

diplomacy as a cover for another agenda, then clearly diplomacy as such was never their real intent," he stated, adding "But if you truly come to the conclusion that this steadfast and resilient nation cannot be forced into submission through war, then the condition for genuine negotiation is that you grasp this reality."

Iranian and American delegations were set to travel to Oman for a sixth round of indirect nuclear talks only days before Israel launched its unprovoked war against Iran on June 13. The regime targeted Iran's civilian, military, and nuclear infrastructure for the next 12 days before being forced to ask for a ceasefire. Iranian missiles fired at the occupied territories during the course of the war managed to bypass multiple layers of American, Arab, and Israeli air defense and leave large trails of destruction in Israeli cities.

## Six terrorists killed, two captured in counterterrorism operation near Pakistan border

TEHRAN – Iranian intelligence forces have dismantled a terrorist cell in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, killing six of its members and arresting two others during a major counterterrorism operation.

The provincial General Directorate of Intelligence announced on Saturday that its forces intercepted the terror group after the militants crossed into Iran from the eastern border in recent days. Security forces tracked and identified them before they could carry out their mission.

According to the statement, the cell was comprised of seven non-Iranian operatives armed with laser-guided RPG-7 launchers, U.S.-made M4 and M16 assault rifles, hand grenades, grenade launchers, explosive vests, handheld radios, and a significant cache of RPG anti-personnel rounds. Several vehicles and motorcycles were also seized.

A heavy, hours-long firefight ensued, leaving six terrorists dead and two captured alive. Two Iranian intelligence officers and one policeman were injured. Officials said the

group had been planning to target a "critical facility" in eastern Iran, using training methods and mock-up models resembling tactics associated with Israel's Mossad.

### Five policemen killed in terrorist attack in Sistan and Baluchestan

The crackdown comes amid a surge in terrorist violence in the province. On Friday, five members of Iran's law enforcement forces were killed when armed assailants ambushed two police patrol units along the Khash-Irانشahr road. The attackers opened fire before fleeing the scene.

The victims were later identified as Captain Gholamreza Vahdani, Mohammadreza Rahimi, Mohammad Noruzi, Hassan Tavala, and Hadi Royaie, a soldier.

The so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group quickly claimed responsibility for the ambush. Security forces have since launched a manhunt to track down those involved.

Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeed Irvani, condemned the attacks in letters to UN Secretary-General Antonio

Guterres and UN Security Council President Eloy Alfaro de Alba. He urged the UN and the Security Council to denounce the incidents "in the strongest terms possible," warning that double standards or selective condemnation of terrorism would only undermine the Council's credibility.

Jaish al-Adl, which has carried out numerous deadly operations in recent years, primarily in Sistan and Baluchestan, also said it was behind a shooting incident in Irانشahr County last week that killed one police officer.

The province, which shares a long and porous border with Pakistan, has been a frequent target of terrorism. Iranian officials have repeatedly declared that foreign intelligence services including Mossad are supporting the groups behind such attacks.

Last October, ten Iranian law enforcement officers were killed in one of the deadliest attacks in the region in recent years, when terrorists struck in Gohar Kuh district of Taftan County. Jaish al-Adl claimed responsibility for that assault as well.



# Iran stands firm against US pressure for obedience

Ayatollah Khamenei says ‘sacred unity’ an achievement of war that must be protected

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei attended a public mourning ceremony that commemorated the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Reza (AS) on Sunday. He delivered a speech some point during the event, where he spoke about the 12-day U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran, and promised that Iranians will continue to resist U.S. pressure to subjugate them.

The Leader began his speech by offering condolences over the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Reza, and then explained that the nation's steadfastness during the recent Imposed War brought special magnificence and increased honor to the Iranian people in the eyes of the world. He asked: “What is truly the reason for the continuous hostility of all U.S. governments toward Iran over the past 45 years?”

In response, he added: “In the past, they concealed this reason under pretexts such as terrorism, human rights, women's issues, and democracy. The gentleman currently in power in America has revealed their true objective. He said their confrontation with Iran is because they want Iran to obey America's commands, meaning, in reality, they want the Iranian nation and the Islamic Republic system to submit to their commands.”

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized the importance of deeply understanding this sinister American goal, stating: “They want Iran, with its great history, and its people, with all their honor and glory, to obey the U.S.”

The Leader reminded: “Those who argue, ‘Why don't you hold direct negotiations with America and resolve your issues?’ – in my opinion, they too are only seeing what's on the surface. That is not the essence of the matter. This is not a matter that can be resolved.”

He described the statements and actions of American officials to subdue and force the Iranian



nation into obedience as an insult to Iranians and emphasized: “The Iranian nation feels deeply offended by such a grave insult, and it will stand with all its might against anyone who has such a wrongful expectation of it.”

Ayatollah Khamenei further emphasized: “The U.S. incited and aided the Zionist regime to attack Iran and finish the job. They had no idea that Iran, in response, would strike a blow so powerful that it would make them regret it.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, referring to the gathering of a group of American mercenaries in Europe one day after the start of the war, stated: “They were so delusional and confident in achieving their vile goals that just one day after the attack began, they held a meeting to appoint the next government and even designated a monarch.”

Referring to the presence of an Iranian among those individuals, he declared: “That Iranian who works against his own country in favor of Jews, Zionism, and America is such a pathetic person.”

Ayatollah Khamenei described the naive assumption of a rift between the people and the system as one of the delusions of the enemies and their mercenaries, stating: “The Iranian nation, by standing alongside the Armed Forces, the government, and the

system, delivered a powerful blow against all of them.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described the demonstration of strength by the armed forces of the Islamic Republic as a pivotal development that altered strategic equations, adding: “We and all the people of Iran thank the armed forces for their great work, and henceforth, Iran's capabilities and the strength of its armed forces will only grow day by day.”

He further stated: “Despite these hostilities over the past 45 years, the Islamic Republic has grown stronger every day, and the enemy has realized that the way to push back the Islamic Republic is not through harsh tools and methods but by creating discord and division within the country.”

In the continuation of his remarks, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution described the Zionist regime as the most hated regime and government in the world among nations and noted: “Today, even Western governments such as Britain and France, which have always supported the Zionist regime, condemn it—though these condemnations are merely verbal and useless.”

He described the current crimes of the heads of the Zionist regime, such as killing children through starvation, depriving them of water, and shooting

them in food distribution lines, as unprecedented in human history, stating: “We must stand against these disgusting crimes. Of course, standing with words and condemnations is useless; rather, we must act like the brave people of Yemen and ensure that all lifelines of aid to the Zionist regime are cut off.”

Ayatollah Khamenei, expressing the preparedness of the Islamic Republic to take any possible action in this regard, expressed hope that Almighty God, by blessing the movement of the Iranian people and all justice-seeking people of the world, would uproot this deep and deadly cancer from the region and awaken Muslim nations and unite them.

He pointed to elements within the country who align with US and Zionist interests, as well as uninformed commentators, as the main actors creating discord and division within the country, adding: “Praise God, today, our country is united. Today, our people are united. There are differences of opinion – differences in political and social views exist – but in defending the system, in defending the country, and in standing against the enemy, the people today are united. This unity is to the detriment [of our enemies]. This unity blocks their invasions and attacks. This is what they want to destroy.”

The Leader of the Revolution described the preservation of national unity as a collective duty and emphasized the necessity of supporting the country's servants, especially the President.

Ayatollah Khamenei stated that maintaining unity among “all members of the society,” “the people and the government,” “the officials of the system with one another,” and “the people and the armed forces” is an absolute necessity. He added: “Signs and evidence indicate that today, the enemy is making its greatest efforts to undermine this harmony, solidarity, and cooperation.”

## The Iron Dome of silence

How Israel censored Iran's military success, and why that added to its defeat

By Fatemeh Kavand

TEHRAN – At midnight on June 13, 2025, Iran shook regional dynamics by launching Operation True Promise III in response to a direct Israeli aggression.

The operation, which coincided with a televised message the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, struck the heart of Israel's military and security centers with 22 waves of missile attacks and 10 drone strikes over 12 days. Yet, alongside the real damage and heavy blows, another scene emerged—perhaps more significant than the battlefield itself: the battlefield of narratives.

From the very first hours, a stark contrast appeared between the on-the-ground reality and the headlines of mainstream Western media. Newspapers like Financial Times and New York Times reported that “most missiles were intercepted” and “damage was minor.” Meanwhile, images circulating on social media and field reports showed Tel Aviv and Haifa engulfed in flames and smoke, buildings collapsed, and critical infrastructure paralyzed. This gap was not just a discrepancy in details but a sign of a larger phenomenon: narrative management through soft censorship.

Israel, by banning the publication of images and accurate statistics and threatening local media, sought to conceal the true extent of the damage. This prohi-

bition went so far that even Israeli journalists faced legal repercussions for sharing photos and videos. What was communicated to the world was a manipulated version of reality, aimed at maintaining domestic morale, preventing diplomatic pressure, and hiding the failures of multi-layered defense systems like the Iron Dome.

Media experts call this approach “soft censorship.” Soft censorship does not mean completely removing the news but rewriting reality within a controlled framework. Israel and its Western allies attempted to turn an evident defeat against Iran's hyper-sonic Fateh missiles, ballistic Sejil and Qadr missiles, and Arash 2 and Shahed 136 drones into a “defensive victory.” In this rewriting, truth became the victim, and headlines turned into psychological tools.

Meanwhile, independent reports and some regional sources highlighted unprecedented damage to Israel's infrastructure and vital centers, including the Ministry of Defense headquarters, the military-intelligence complex at Kirya, the Nevatim and Tel Nof airbases, Mossad headquarters, Haifa oil refinery, the industrial zone of Kiryat Gat, and Ben Gurion Airport. One of the key targeted sites was the Weizmann Institute in southern Tel Aviv—a scientific-research center active in advanced technology, biosciences, and military research, recognized as one of Israel's pillars of technology and innovation. The destruction



Israel's air defense systems were almost depleted during war with Iran

of this center not only harmed Israel's research and technological capacity but also demonstrated Iran's ability to precisely target sensitive civilian-military centers. It sent a clear message regarding regional deterrence: the capability to respond accurately to threats—even at the heart of enemy scientific and technological centers—is part of a deterrence tool that Israel was unprepared for.

International reactions were also notable. The United States, in an initial statement, labeled Iran as a “destabilizing actor” but limited its response to verbal support. Washington was well aware that acknowledging the full extent of the damage would mean admitting the vulnerability of its main regional ally. The European Union called for restraint but could not clearly address the real scale of casualties and damages. Only some non-mainstream media in Latin America, Africa, and

Asia highlighted the narrative gap by publishing field images. This silence and duality in positions were themselves part of the narrative war—a narrative that preferred the image of an “invincible Israel” to remain intact.

Military analysts, however, were less constrained by such considerations. Russian analysts and some retired Western officials acknowledged that the penetration of Iranian missiles deep into Tel Aviv represented “a strategic defeat” for Israel. They emphasized that the effectiveness of the Iron Dome against hyper-sonic missiles and mass attacks is severely limited. In their view, this operation demonstrated that Israel's military superiority was no longer guaranteed and that the concept of deterrence in the region had entered a new phase.

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



# IRAN IN FOCUS

AUGUST 25, 2025

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

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## SPORTS

### Iran's first gold medal winner in Olympics Habibi passes away

TEHRAN – Emamali Habib, Iran's first gold medal winner in the Olympic Games died on Sunday.

He died in Sari, Mazandaran Province, after a prolonged illness.

Habibi won Iran's first gold medal in the history in the 1956 Olympic Games.

The freestyle wrestler, nicknamed Tiger of Mazandaran, died at the age of 94.

Habibi also won three gold medals in 1959, 1961, and 1962 World Wrestling Championships.

The Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathies to Habibi's family, loved ones, and friends during this time of loss.

### Vafaei beats Jinhao at 2025 Wuhan Open

TEHRAN – Iran's Hossein Vafaei defeated China's Zhou Jinhao 5-2 at the 2025 Wuhan Open.

He will play Belgium snooker player Ben Mertens in last 64 on Monday.

The Open is a professional snooker tournament that is taking place from 24 to 30 August 2025 at the Optics Valley Gymnasium, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, in Wuhan, China.

The qualifiers took place from 22 to 24 June at the Leicester Arena in Leicester, England.

The winner will receive £140,000 from a total prize fund of £700,000.

### Wrestler Ahmadi wins gold at World U20 Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Payam Ahmadi won a gold medal in the 2025 World U20 Championships on Saturday.

Ahmadi defeated Azerbaijan's Turan Dashdamirov 5-3 in the final bout of 55kg.

Iran Hadi Seydi also won a silver medal after losing to Ukraine's Yehor Yakushenko 5-2 in 97kg final.

The 2025 U20 World Championships took place in Samokov, Bulgaria from August 17-24.

### Albanian midfielder Regi Lushkja joins Tractor

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Tractor completed the signing Albanian Midfielder Regi Lushkja on Sunday.

The 29-year-old player was a member of Albanian side Egnatia.

Lushkja has played in Albania U-19 and U-21 football teams.

Ricardo Alves has left Tractor to join Sepahan and Lushkja has joined the Tabriz-based team as Portuguese midfielder's replacement.

Defending champion Tractor suffered a 1-0 loss against Esteghlal in the opening match of the 2025-26 Iran Professional League (IPL).

### Serge Aurier to miss Sepahan match

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team winger Serge Aurier will be absent in the match against Sepahan due to hepatitis B case.

On July 31, Aurier signed with Persepolis but after just a few training sessions and missing his team's draw against Fajr Sepasi, Aurier is already forced to step away from action in the match against Sepahan.

The player has contracted hepatitis B, a viral liver infection that can have serious consequences.

This virus is present in most bodily fluids of

infected individuals and is highly contagious.

### Javad Karimi extends deal with Minas

TEHRAN – Iranian international setter Javad Karimi extended his deal with the Brazilian club Minas.

The 27-year-old player joined the Brazilian club from the Belgium side Warta Zawiercie last season.

Karimi has penned the extension of his deal with Minas for one year more.

Karimi played a key role last season in Brazilian team's success.

### Jasir Asani inks deal with Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Albanian international winger Jasir Asani officially signed for Esteghlal.

The 30-year-old has signed for the Tehran-based club, who will feature in this year's edition of the AFC Champions League Two, after two-and-a-half seasons with K League 1 outfit Gwangju FC.

Asani played a key role in Gwangju reaching the quarter-finals of the AFC Champions League Elite Finals Jeddah 2025, netting a hat-trick against Yokohama F Marinos in the league phase and scoring twice in the Round of 16 to eliminate J1 League champions Vissel Kobe.

In total he struck nine times in 10 appearances to finish in joint second place on the scorers' charts alongside Al Ahli Saudi's Riyad Mahrez and one goal behind Salem Al Dawsari of Al Hilal SFC.

Asani played 22 times in the current K League 1 season and scored eight times. He featured a total of 65 times for Gwangju in the league, scoring 18 goals.

He joins an Esteghlal side that has been drawn in Group A of the AFC Champions League Two alongside Al Wasl from the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain's Al Muharraq and the Jordanian side Al Wehdah.

Esteghlal will begin their campaign against Al Wasl in Dubai on September 17.

### Iran lose to South Korea at 2025 Asian Women's Junior Handball

TEHRAN – Iran suffered 39-19 defeat against South Korea in the 2025 Asian Women's Junior Handball Championship on Sunday.

Iran, who lost to Japan 30-18 in their opening match and defeated Kazakhstan 37-25, will play Kyrgyzstan on Monday.

The Championship takes place from Aug. 20 to 29 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This year's edition features 10 participating teams and marks the first time that Uzbekistan hosts a continental event in this age category.

As a qualification tournament for the 2026 IHF Women's Junior World Championship, the competition will award places to the top four teams, who will secure their participation at the upcoming global event.

The Republic of Korea have been the dominant force in the history of the championship, winning 16 of the 17 previous editions. The only exception came in 2022, when India claimed the title in a tournament where Korea, the People's Republic of China, and Japan — traditionally the most successful nations in the competition — were absent due to Covid-19-related restrictions.

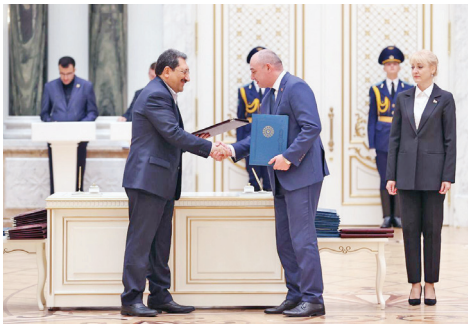
For the second consecutive edition, and only the second time in the history of the championship, 10 teams take part. They have been divided into two groups of five teams each, with the top two in each group advancing to the semi-finals.

In Group A, hosts Uzbekistan face the Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India and the runners-up of the previous edition of the competition, China.

Group B seems to be more balanced, with the title holders, the Republic of Korea, facing Japan, Kazakhstan, Iran and Kyrgyzstan



## Iran, Belarus sign industrial cooperation agreements



TEHRAN – Iran and Belarus signed a series of industrial cooperation agreements during President Masoud Pezeshkian's official visit to Minsk, Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade said.

Industry Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak signed the documents, which include standards for trade exchanges between Tehran and Minsk.

Pezeshkian arrived in Belarus late Tuesday, August 19, at the invitation of President Alexander Lukashenko and was formally welcomed at the presidential palace on Wednesday.

As stated by Belarusian Industry Minister and Co-chair of the Belarusian-Iranian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation Andrei Kuznetsov on the sidelines of the high-level talks between Belarus and Iran at the Palace of Independence in Minsk on August 20, Belarusian Industry Ministry places great importance on the development of mutually beneficial cooperation between Belarus and Iran.

"We highly value the achieved level of interaction and see significant potential for further expansion of bilateral ties. The Industry Ministry is ready to offer Iranian partners a wide spectrum of opportunities for deepening our industrial partnership," Andrei Kuznetsov said.

The minister highlighted specific areas of joint work that demonstrate a commitment to long-term and productive interaction between the two states.

For instance, the establishment of assembly production for Belarusian harvesters would integrate the technologies of the Belarusian mechanical engineering industry into Iran's economy and create a local enterprise for assembling high-quality agricultural machinery. This would reduce logistics costs and provide the local market with access to the advanced technologies of the Belarusian agricultural industrial complex. The minister noted that work in this direction has already begun.

Belarus could gain access to open waters via Iran's free trade zones, officials from the two countries said during talks on expanding investment and transit cooperation.

Alena Perminova, head of Belarus's National Agency of Investment and Privatization, met Reza Masrou, secretary of Iran's Free and Special Economic Zones High Council, to discuss new avenues for collaboration.

Perminova said a cooperation agreement signed between her agency and Iran's free zone secretariat was aimed at boosting joint projects.

She stressed Belarus's interest in building partnerships with Iran's free zones, saying the two countries could meet many of each other's needs through investment and re-exporting goods. "We are committed to implementing the framework of this agreement and creating more opportunities for cooperation," she said.

Perminova noted that Belarus's free trade zones were established to stimulate provincial development and commercial dynamism, and added that Minsk was ready to pursue serious joint projects with Tehran.

Masrou said Belarus could use Iran's ports to bypass its landlocked geography and sanctions-related restrictions.

## Exports from Iran to Australia rise 30% despite overall trade decline

TEHRAN – Iran's exports to Australia grew 30 percent in the first half of 2025 even as overall bilateral trade fell by 10 percent, according to Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Total trade between the two countries stood at 124 million Australian dollars (\$83 million) from January to June 2025, down from 139 million Australian dollars in the same period last year.

Australian exports to Iran dropped 15 per-

cent to 107 million Australian dollars, compared with 126 million a year earlier. Imports from Iran, however, rose to 17 million Australian dollars from 13 million, led mainly by dried fruits, which reached 5.0 million Australian dollars, an 11 percent increase.

He cited the Caspian route from Makhachkala in Russia to Iran's Caspian Port as a corridor that could provide Belarus with maritime access. In return, he said Belarus could enhance Iran's entry into the Eurasian Economic Union's 180-million-strong market.

"Both Iran and Belarus face unjust economic sanctions," Masrou said, adding that the measures had restricted Belarus's traditional access to Baltic ports in Lithuania and Latvia. "Iranian ports can serve as an alternative."

The talks also covered cooperation in tourism, high-tech industries, the digital economy, logistics, and organizing joint investment exhibitions.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his visit to Belarus marked a "turning point" in bilateral relations, stressing that Tehran sees no limits to strengthening cooperation with Minsk across political, economic, and cultural fields.

Speaking at a joint press conference with President Alexander Lukashenko on August 20, Pezeshkian praised Belarus as "a reliable partner in the strategic Eurasian region" and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to fully implementing the 2023–2026 roadmap for cooperation between the two countries.

"Relations with Belarus are now being pursued at the highest level. This trip is a milestone in our ties, and its results will soon be visible in the expanding trend of cooperation," Pezeshkian said. "Today, more than ever, we need cooperation to overcome unilateralism and its destructive consequences."

During the visit, Iran and Belarus signed 12 cooperation documents and one joint statement in the presence of the two presidents.

The agreements cover politics, international law, tourism, arts, media, health, pharmaceuticals, industry, environment, free zones, special economic and industrial zones, and investment.

Pezeshkian said the recent meeting of the Joint Economic Committee in Minsk, alongside the new agreements, will help deepen "mutually beneficial cooperation."

He highlighted areas such as customs coordination, joint investment, trade and transit, resolving private-sector obstacles, and securing vital goods.

He also underlined people-to-people ties: "In the field of media and cultural exchanges, we are ready for more effective cooperation to present an accurate image of both countries and promote mutual understanding of history, culture, and capacities," he said, noting that several documents had been signed in this area.

Later, in a meeting between senior delegations, Pezeshkian again thanked Lukashenko for his remarks at the recent Eurasian Economic Union Summit, in which he compared the Chernobyl disaster to the risks posed by attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, also highlighted tourism opportunities, suggesting direct flights and visa waivers to boost travel in both directions.

Pezeshkian closed by stressing that the current trade volume between Iran and Belarus is "negligible compared to capacities" and pledged to personally oversee the implementation of the new agreements: "Relations between our two nations must be built on a deeper and more sustainable foundation."

# Iran-China non-oil trade stands at \$9b in 4 months

TEHRAN – The value of non-oil trade between Iran and China stood at \$9 billion during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Foroud Asgari said that China was Iran's top non-oil export destination in the mentioned four-month period, importing \$4.5 billion of goods from Iran.

Exporting commodities valued at \$4.5 billion to Iran, China was Iran's second source of non-oil import in the first four months of the present year, the IRICA head added.

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, the value of non-oil trade between Iran and China stood at \$34.1 billion in the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2025.

He said that importing non-oil goods worth \$14.8 billion from Iran, China was the first destination of Iranian products in the past year.

He also announced that by exporting non-oil products valued at \$19.3 billion to Iran, China was the second source of import for Iran in that year.

On May 4, Iran-China Business Development Forum convened at the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), with the participation of China's ambassador to Iran, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the chair of the Iran-China Parliamentary Friendship Group, and senior officials from the Tehran Chamber.

A large number of business leaders from both countries attended the event, where state, legislative, and private-sector strategies for deepening bilateral trade ties were outlined, the TCCIMA portal reported.

Opening the event, TCCIMA Head Mahmoud Najafi Arab welcomed Chinese delegates who traveled to Iran for the Iran Expo. He expressed gratitude for the Chinese ambassador's continued efforts to expand economic ties between the two nations.

Najafi Arab said Iran and China share thousands of years of cultural and commercial relations, which have entered a new phase in recent decades, marked by growing partnerships across multiple sectors. He said the two countries could serve as a model for sustainable cooperation based on mutual respect in today's increasingly interdependent world.

He also highlighted recent visits of Iranian private sector delegations to various Chinese provinces and exhibitions, emphasizing the need to identify investment opportunities and facilitate financial exchanges. The Chamber, with over 140 years of history, is prepared to host expert meetings, present economic opportunities, support joint ventures, and activate pro-



fessional networks between Iranian and Chinese businesses, he said.

China's Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu, thanked Iranian participants and the Tehran Chamber for organizing the event. He expressed hope that the forum would help strengthen bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Referencing the recent meeting between the two presidents at the BRICS summit in Russia, Cong said China is fully committed to enhancing cooperation across all sectors in ways that benefit both peoples.

Also speaking at the forum, Ruhollah Nejabat, chair of the Iran-China Parliamentary Friendship Group, said Iran's non-oil exports to China surpassed \$14.8 billion last year, making China the largest destination for Iranian goods and accounting for about one-quarter of Iran's total non-oil exports. Imports from China reached approximately \$19.3 billion, or 27 percent of Iran's total imports, making China Iran's second-largest import partner after the United Arab Emirates.

These figures, he said, demonstrate the resilience and strategic importance of Iran-China trade, even amid global economic slowdown, with both countries supplying a significant portion of each other's needs.

Nejabat noted that Iran's Seventh National Development Plan emphasizes industrial modernization and attracting foreign capital and technology. He said Iran aims to upgrade its industries—from automotive and textiles to pharmaceuticals and medical equipment—and that this will be achieved more quickly with partners like China, now a global industrial superpower.

He added that technology transfer and joint investment are two strategic priorities for Iran. Chinese firms, he said, could take advantage of Iran's market size and skilled labor to establish production lines and access broader regional markets.

Conversely, Iran could supply intermediary goods and industrial components needed by Chinese industries. Nejabat said Iran will offer special incentives for foreign industrial investment and provide a secure legal environment for Chinese companies. Infrastructure development—including rail networks, highways, and ports—is

also a priority, and many of these projects will require Chinese expertise and participation.

He also pointed to Iran's largely untapped mining sector, including vast reserves of iron, copper, aluminum, and rare earth elements, as an area ripe for development and export growth.

Speaking at the forum, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), outlined four key strategies for expanding trade with China. The first is technology transfer. He said Chinese companies have made major investments in research and development, much of which has not yet been fully commercialized. Iran, as a long-time partner, seeks deeper collaboration in these cutting-edge sectors.

The second strategy, he said, is increasing trade in high value-added goods. Currently, much of the bilateral trade consists of raw or semi-processed materials. The average value of Iran's exports stands at less than \$400 per ton. "We want to change that," he said, calling on Chinese importers to prioritize Iranian products with higher added value. He welcomed the Chinese ambassador's praise for the competitiveness of Iranian nanotechnology and biotechnology products.

The third strategy is joint production through co-investment. Dehnavi said Iran offers a secure investment climate, with legal guarantees allowing foreign investors to repatriate both capital and profits. "There are many documented cases of investors successfully exiting after profitable ventures," he said.

Iran offers highly competitive costs, a wide range of investment opportunities, and strong security for foreign capital, he added, expressing hope for increased joint ventures with Chinese firms.

The fourth strategy is mutual market access. Dehnavi said Iran produces many goods that are well-suited for the Chinese market and that joint production could also help both countries expand into third-country markets. "This kind of cooperation can make our trade ties deeper and more sustainable," he said.

Fereydoon Vardinejad, secretary general of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, said China had stood by Iran during both stable and turbulent times, and that the two peoples share a strong emotional

bond.

However, he warned that a lack of information exchange and mutual understanding of economic capacities had led to a wide gap between political relations and economic realities. "Our ties are excellent in potential but need significant work in practice," he said.

Vardinejad called for a "win-win partnership" and proposed several actions: holding specialized business meetings, promoting bilateral trade missions, introducing market opportunities, ensuring trade balance, and supporting private-sector cooperation in areas like creative industries, digital economy, nanotechnology, and biotechnology.

"These steps," he said, "can build deeper and mutually beneficial ties between Iran and China."

Meanwhile, Hossein Eyvazlou, a member of the executive board of Iran's National Development Fund (NDF), has announced plans for collaboration with China in the field of foreign investment in Iran.

Speaking at a press conference on January 4, Eyvazlou highlighted the importance of attracting foreign capital to boost Iran's economic projects, emphasizing the role of strategic partnerships with countries like China.

Details on the scope and nature of the cooperation were not disclosed, but it is expected to focus on key sectors that align with Iran's long-term development goals.

On December 20, 2024, a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) representative announced that the Chinese investors are prepared to fund the construction of combined-cycle power plants in Iran's energy-rich Khuzestan province to help address the country's energy imbalance and boost regional economic development.

Zhao Bin He, the Executive Director of SCO's Iran Office, made the remarks during a meeting with Khuzestan's governor and local religious leaders. "We are here to pay our respects to provincial authorities and outline China's plans for strengthening economic and trade ties, with a particular focus on Khuzestan," Zhao said.

He highlighted the historical and enduring relationship between Iran and China, describing it as built on mutual respect, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange.

"Khuzestan's strategic position in southwest Iran and its vast economic potential make it a key player in enhancing Iran-China relations," Zhao added. "With access to the Persian Gulf and proximity to strong regional economies, Khuzestan offers exceptional opportunities for port infrastructure development and maritime transport."

Zhao reiterated China's readiness to actively participate in developing Khuzestan's infrastructure, expanding port capacity, and exploring joint projects in energy, industry, and agriculture.

## Iran stands at 10th place in global almond exports

TEHRAN – Iran ranked tenth among the world's almond exporters in 2024 with sales of \$34 million, down 19 percent from the previous year, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Iran held ninth place in 2023 with \$53 million worth of almond exports, FAO figures showed.

The report noted that global almond trade is concentrated in a handful of countries. The United States, Australia, Spain, Turkey and the

Netherlands accounted for about 91 percent of total export value.

Analysts say the dominance of large exporters and the limited number of import destinations make competition difficult for producers such as Iran.

As previously reported by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran's agricultural exports rose by 29 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on

March 20), reaching \$5.2 billion.

IRICA reported that Iran exported 7.6 million tons of agricultural products during the year, marking an 11 percent increase in weight compared to the previous year.

Key export commodities included various types of pistachios, tomatoes, and dates. Pistachio exports led the sector, generating \$1.5 billion in revenue, followed by \$233 million in tomatoes and \$205 million in dates.

## South Azadegan oil output increases by 8,000 bpd

TEHRAN – Iran's South Azadegan oilfield has boosted production by 8,000 barrels per day (bpd) following the launch of two new wells, raising Petropars Group's output at the field to nearly 59,000 bpd, state media

reported.

Hamidreza Saqafi, chief executive of Petropars, said wells 207 and 200 of the Fahlyan reservoir were successfully brought online this week.

Oil from the new wells is trans-

ported via a flowline built by Petropars to the southern manifolds of the Azadegan field and then to West Karoun processing facilities.

Project manager Engineer Nari said the company plans to add another three wells next week

with a combined capacity of 4,200 bpd, which would further increase production at South Azadegan.

The South Azadegan field is one of Iran's largest shared oilfields, located in the southwest near the border with Iraq.



# Gaza killings mirror Israel’s decades of crimes against press, human rights activist says

*Sherif Mansour says the bullet that silenced Shireen Abu Akleh now echoes across Gaza*

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – The systematic targeting of Palestinian journalists in Gaza by Israeli forces represents a calculated assault not just on individuals, but on the very essence of truth-telling in conflict zones. Despite international protections under the Geneva Conventions, which mandate the safety of media personnel, Israel’s military has killed over 200 journalists since October 2023, with dozens classified as deliberate murders, according to reports from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

This unprecedented lethality, coupled with impunity through sham investigations and false narratives labeling reporters as “terrorists,” underscores a policy of silencing witnesses to atrocities like starvation, civilian bombings, and collective punishment. The recent killing of Al Jazeera correspondent Anas al-Sharif and his colleagues exemplifies this escalation, where even those with international affiliations face mortal peril for documenting Gaza’s humanitarian catastrophe.

Amid this grim reality, Sherif Mansour, an Egyptian-American human rights advocate with 20 years of experience, emerges as a pivotal voice. Having spent 11 years at CPJ as Middle East and North Africa Program Coordinator—where he documented Israel’s “deadly pattern” of journalist killings, including the 2022 murder of Shireen Abu Akleh—Mansour transitioned to independent advocacy post-2023. Now distributing the documentary “Gaza: Journalists Under Fire” through Brave New Films, he humanizes three slain reporters: Bilal Jadallah, Heba al-Abadla, and Ismail al-Ghoul.

Drawing on personal interactions, such as threats faced by Anas al-Sharif, Mansour critiques Western double standards, where Palestinian journalists are dehumanized amid racism and indifference, contrasting sharply with responses to threats in Ukraine or elsewhere.

In this exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Mansour reflects on his exile from Egypt, personal risks, and the Arab Spring’s lessons, arguing that Gaza’s threats—deadliest in history—redefine journalism’s sacrifices. He advocates innovative strategies like rejecting censored military embeds and building global coalitions, from Gaza screenings to Hebrew translations in Israel. What unfolds is a profound call for solidarity, exposing how press freedom’s erosion fuels impunity and demanding action to protect guardians of democracy.

Below is the full text of our interview with Sherif Mansour:



**Drawing from your extensive background in human rights and journalism advocacy, how has your transition from the CPJ to independent projects like distributing the documentary, “Gaza: Journalists Under Fire” reshaped your approach to amplifying the voices of threatened reporters in conflict zones?**

I think in some ways my work with Brave New Film is a continuation for the mission that I have spent 11 years working at the Committee to Protect Journalists, but also more broadly for the mission to which I have devoted 20 years of my life which is the cause of freedom, human rights, and peace building.

When I had kind of started doing the journalist protection safety work, my focus was helping journalists not because journalists are some kind of special people, it’s because journalists play an important function in promoting democracy and holding people in power accountable, including holding warring parties accountable.

**“More and more organisations in Israel are speaking out against the Gaza war”**

So, the work that I have done at CPJ over the years, including before October 7th happened a couple of years ago, was in so many ways holding the Israeli government and all governments across the Middle East accountable for attacks on journalists because I believe in democracy and because journalists, if they do the work well, they can protect democracy.

The only way we can tackle any global issues, let alone any global threat, has to be with the protection of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and people

being able to pressure people in power in order to be responsive to the need.

**“The Israeli army has killed more journalists than any other army, any other entity in history”**

This is the whole introduction to come to the point when I departed CPJ. At the time I had decided to leave before October 7th, that same year, 2023, I had visited Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and Ramallah to produce a report on the anniversary of the killing and the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-American journalist who worked with Al Jazeera, to show that she was not a one-off case, that she is one of at least 20 who were killed by the Israeli army over 20 years. She was one of a dozen that I personally documented while being at CPJ since 2012. In my trip, we called the report Deadly Pattern, and in some ways we wanted to highlight all the measures that the Israeli government and the Israeli army used in order to evade responsibility for the killing of a journalist.

That includes spreading false narratives, propaganda, accusations of terrorism, and also conducting meaningless investigations only if they are pressured by an international news organization or an international government. We said that these investigations never led to anything, no indictment, no one was ever held accountable for the killing of any journalist, including Shireen Abu Akleh at the time. That was in May, less than six months before October 7th happened.

At the time when we were in Tel Aviv communicating directly and confronting the Israeli army

and the Israeli government, I was happy to see for the first time that the Israeli army spokesperson went on CNN primetime live and for the first time apologized for the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh and he commended her work as a journalist, breaking from all the lies that they said about her and about Al Jazeera being a terrorism-supporting organization.

He even went farther to say that Israel is a democracy and that the role of journalists should be respected in a democracy, including, but even said specifically, during the time of war.

At the time it felt different than all the other responses that we’ve heard from the Israeli government over the years. But once October 7th happened, we’ve seen exactly the opposite of these promises, that the deadly pattern has grown, the impunity has increased. While I went six months earlier with 20 cases of journalists killed by the Israeli army, including three that at the time we documented and classified as murder, direct attack, in the first six months of the war, where I spent at CPJ, I helped document at least a hundred cases of journalists being killed and at least a dozen or two that we classified as murder.

The number now, closer to two years, is close to 200, including a few dozens classified as murder. During that six months, I literally did thousands of interviews with media organizations all over the world, in all languages, and responded to the allegations of the Israeli army and their false narratives about journalists, civilians in Gaza. It became clear to me that everything that I could have done, or the journalists in Gaza could have done, to tell the story, to show people all over the world what’s happening there, was done.

But nothing had changed. People around the world, including people in government and people in international-listed media, didn’t care. That made me realize the shortcoming of this advocacy work, when we have a situation like this, where it’s primarily racism that is the reason why people do not care about journalists in the situation, that Western government, Western media do not see Palestinian journalists in Gaza as civilians and as equal to them in their right to do journalism in their own society.

One of the criticisms that I took seriously was maybe we are not doing our advocacy work right, that we’re not able to attract sympathy because we are not able to use tools that can reach and influence Western audience, reach public opinion in Western society in a way that allows them to associate with, sympathize with the suffering of people in Gaza, including journalists.

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

## Israel admits 83% of Gaza deaths are civilians

From page 1 ► At the same time, Gaza’s health ministry reported a total death toll of around 53,000 people. If the Israeli regime’s own count of 8,900 resistance fighters is accurate, that means more than 44,000 of the dead were civilians, approximately five out of every six people killed.

This level of civilian death is extremely high for any modern war. According to Therese Petterson from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), which tracks civilian casualties globally, the civilian death rate in Gaza is higher than nearly every other major war in modern history.

The occupation’s military did not deny the existence of the classified database when asked by +972 Magazine and Local Call.

The Guardian says it received a vague response that the Israeli military had decided to “rephrase” their previous statement.

However, the Israeli military has previously acknowledged that the Gaza health ministry’s casualty figures, though frequently dismissed publicly by Israeli politicians, are treated as reliable for op-

erational planning.

According to the investigation, the Israeli military uses this classified database, compiled from documents seized in Gaza, as its most accurate measure of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighter deaths.

The secret database includes 47,653 people identified as active in the armed wings of both resistance movements. Still, only 8,900 were confirmed or presumed dead by May.

Despite this, Israeli officials have repeatedly claimed that 20,000 resistance fighters have been killed and have often presented a 1:1 ratio of civilian to combatant deaths.

However, analysts and sources familiar with the data say those numbers are misleading and often inflated. In some cases, Israeli commanders allowed soldiers to report any unidentified person killed in Gaza as an armed member of Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad without evidence.

According to one intelligence source, “People

are promoted to the rank of terrorist after their death.”

Former Israeli general Itzhak Brik, who once advised Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, strongly criticized the government’s handling of the genocidal war and the misinformation being spread.

Brik said soldiers on the ground know the truth that most of those killed are civilians, and he called the casualty numbers released to the public “one big bluff.”

Further doubts about the Israeli regime’s claims come from Palestinian sources. By the end of 2024, estimates shared with Palestinian analyst Muhammad Shehada suggested only about 6,500 members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad had died. “Israel expands the boundaries so they can define every single person in Gaza as Hamas,” Shehada said, describing the strategy as a justification for “killing in the moment” with little regard for long-term outcomes.

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

## Australians unite against Gaza ‘genocide’

From page 1 ► Protests have also taken place inside Israel, where demonstrators — including families of captives held in Gaza — have called for an immediate ceasefire. Many fear ongoing military operations in Gaza City threaten the lives of those still in captivity. Demonstrations were staged outside the homes of government ministers to pressure the Israeli leadership into reaching a deal.

Globally, protests against the war have expanded amid growing warnings of mass starvation in Gaza. A United Nations-backed food security body, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), reported Friday that famine has been confirmed in the Gaza Governorate, which includes Gaza City, calling the crisis “man-made.”



Since launching its war on Gaza in October 2023, Israel has killed more than 62,600 Palestinians and wounded over 157,000 others, according to Gaza’s health authorities. Nearly 300 people have died from hunger and lack of access to food and medicine.

## Uprooting identity, uprooting peace: Israel’s war on the olive tree

From page 1 ► Human rights groups estimate that since 1967 over 800,000 olive trees have been uprooted from their soil across occupied territories as though they were enemies in war. The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has noted an upsurge in this practice during periods of settlement expansion, turning once-green hillsides to dust. When families return home, they find stumps where once stood an entire orchard.

Olive farming supports nearly 80,000 Palestinian families and represents up to 15% of agricultural income, as reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization. The loss is both symbolic and tangible. Destroying olive groves is not simply an attack on culture; it is an attack on survival as well.

According to UN agencies and the Gaza Ministry of Agriculture, nearly three quarters of Gaza’s olive trees have been lost since the war started in October 2023. Independent satellite analysis confirms vast orchards being reduced to barren ground, prompting FAO warnings about food production collapsing in Gaza and leaving its population on the verge of starvation; dependence is almost exclusively on aid for survival.

When generations-old trees that supported and employed millions are deliberately destroyed without military justification or as collective punishment, it cannot simply be dismissed as mere necessity.

International law is very clear. The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits wanton destruction of civilian property, while Rome Statute of International Criminal Court recog-

nizes starvation warfare as a war crime. UN Human Rights Council has raised their concern that targeting agriculture in Palestine violates humanitarian law; olive trees do not threaten soldiers or settlements but provide life-giving oxygen; their uprooting is seen as part of dominating, cutting the link between people and soil.

There’s an ironic sense here. For centuries across cultures and religions, olive branches have come to symbolize peace. From biblical passages and Quranic verses to ancient traditions and even the UN emblem, to extend an olive branch has always meant reconciliation – yet in Palestine as bulldozers tear these branches from their soil, witnessing not an extension but an uprooting. Every destroyed tree represents broken olive branches; every destroyed stump offers yet more opportunities for dialogue that no longer can take root and foster reconciliation.

Tragic events are compounded by silence while orchard destruction rarely makes headlines internationally, and Palestinian journalists who attempt to document its destruction often pay with their lives. The Committee to Protect Journalists has called Gaza one of the deadliest conflicts ever for journalists since October 2023 with over 190 reporters killed since then. International media are barred from entering and local voices are muzzled therefore the destruction of trees becomes an invisible war on identity that risks being forgotten about altogether by many parts of the world.

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

## Dutch government in crisis as ministers resign over Gaza policy

The Netherlands’ caretaker government plunged into a political crisis as all ministers and state secretaries from the New Social Contract (NSC) party resigned on Friday following Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp’s departure over the government’s refusal to impose stronger sanctions on Israel regarding its military operations in Gaza.

The mass walkout included Acting Deputy Prime Minister and Social Affairs Minister Eddy van Hijum, Interior Minister Judith Uitermark, Education Minister Eppo Bruins, Health Minister Daniëlle Jansen, and four state secretaries, who stepped down in solidarity with Veldkamp.

Their resignations came after prolonged cabinet disputes over implementing tougher measures against Israel.

Veldkamp, who resigned earlier that day, stated he felt “resistance inside the cabinet” and was “insufficiently able to take meaningful additional measures to increase pressure on Israel” despite the ongoing situation in Gaza.

His proposed measures included an import ban on settlement goods, entry bans for far-right Israeli ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, suspension of certain military export licenses, and pushing for a freeze of the EU-Israel trade agreement.

The liberal People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), part of the ruling coalition, criticized the resignations. The government had already collapsed on June 3 over immigration disputes, with elections scheduled for October 29.

Hamas praised the resignations as a “courageous and ethical” stance that “embodies humanitarian values and reaffirms commitment to international law,” and called for other governments to follow suit in imposing sanctions on Israel.

The Netherlands, like many EU members, has faced criticism for its complicity in Israel’s actions. Despite some limited measures – such as banning extremist Israeli ministers and revoking three export permits for naval components – the EU has not implemented comprehensive sanctions.

Human rights organizations and UN agencies have documented extensive civilian casualties in Gaza, with at least 62,000 Palestinians killed and over 157,000 injured since October 2023, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. Women and children make up a large proportion of the dead.

Multiple UN experts and international bodies have described the situation as meeting the legal definition of genocide, and a UN-backed food security body has declared famine in Gaza City and surrounding areas.

This perceived complicity has proven highly unpopular among European citizens. In the Netherlands, between 100,000 and 150,000 people demonstrated against Israeli policies in The Hague on June 15 — one of the largest protests in the country in two decades.

Polls across EU countries show a majority support for arms embargoes and sanctions against Israel, with growing public pressure on governments to take stronger action.



## ‘Oldest handicrafts’ traced to Lorestan, official says



TEHRAN – Iran’s oldest known handicrafts have been traced to its Lorestan province, according to a local official.

Abbas Hamzeh’i, deputy head of handicrafts in Lorestan, said archaeological findings show that some of the earliest handicrafts identified in the country originated in the region.

“Lorestan is very distinguished in the field of handicrafts, and the oldest crafts known to archaeologists and experts belong to this land,” Hamzeh’i said.

The official said one of the earliest examples is a deer fang pendant discovered in Yafteh Cave near Khorramabad, which dates back about 40,000 years and was used as a personal ornamentation. He added that Lorestan is also renowned for its ancient bronze and metal works, many of which date to the early first millennium BC and are preserved in museums.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official noted that nomadic handwoven textiles are another craft deeply rooted in Lorestan’s history, though their precise origin cannot be determined, as they were part of daily life among tribal communities.

According to Ata Hassanpour, tourism chief of the province, the so-called Lorestan (Loristan) Bronzes, a collection of small cast objects from the Early Iron Age, remain a cultural hallmark of

the region. “The artifacts discovered in Lorestan testify to millennia of human habitation in this region, as well as the mastery of art and refined taste of their creators,” he said.

The bronzes, often depicting horsemen, warriors and farmers, conveyed ancestral traditions and religious concepts, according to Hassanpour.

The origins of the artifacts attracted global attention in the late 1920s, when finely crafted bronze figures began to appear on the antiquities market, National Geographic reported last year. Many of them were traced back to Lorestan, part of the Zagros Mountains.

Earlier this year, the Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley were collectively inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. It includes five caves and one rock shelter within a narrow ecological corridor rich in water, flora, and fauna. The property enjoys a human occupation dating back 63,000 years, with evidence from the Middle to Upper Palaeolithic periods. These sites reveal Mousterian and Baradostian cultures, offering insights into early human evolution and migration from Africa to Eurasia. Artifacts such as decorative objects and advanced stone tools highlight the cognitive and technological development of early humans in the Zagros Mountains. The area remains underexplored, holding significant potential for future archaeological discoveries.

## Only 10 historical houses in Lar registered nationally, official says



TEHRAN – Around 50 historical houses have been identified in the old quarters of Lar, in the southern province of Fars, but only 10 have been inscribed on the national heritage list, the provincial cultural heritage director said on Saturday.

Sadeq Zare’ told ILNA that another 40 historical houses need to complete the registration file, conduct studies, and prepare a map based on the national registration indicators in order to go through the national registration process and be registered on the country’s National Heritage List.

He said that 4,000 historical monuments have been identified across the province which require a national registration file, but due to limitations such as lack of credits and expert staff, their na-

tional registration file has not been formed.

He added that over 3,230 historical monuments, or 10 percent of the country’s nationally registered monuments, are located in Fars province.

Zare’ recalled that last year, 90 historical monuments of the province were registered on the National Heritage List.

This year, efforts are being made to have about 100 historical monuments of this province registered nationally, he added.

The credit allocated for the national registration of historical monuments of Fars province is 660 billion rials (\$733,333), and a good budget was also allocated from the Social Responsibilities of Oil Ministry for historical monuments of Fars province, he said. But there is still a need to allocate credit for the national registration of historical monuments of Fars, apart from the related budgets for archaeological excavations and the protection and restoration of historical monuments of the province, he added.

Lar historical texture is the second valuable texture of the province following Shiraz. The majority of Lar historical houses pertain to Qajar era and a number of them relate to Zand dynasty.

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Minaret of Jam

At 1,900 m above sea level and far from any town, the Minaret of Jam rises within a rugged valley along the Hari-rud River at its junction with the river Jam, around 215 km east of Herat.

Rising to 65m from a 9m diameter octagonal base, its four superimposed, tapering cylindrical shafts are constructed from fired bricks. The Minaret is completely covered with geometric decoration in relief enhanced with a Kufic inscription in turquoise tiles. Built in 1194 by the great Ghurid Sultan Ghiyas-od-din (1153-1203), its emplacement probably marks the site of the ancient city of Firuzkuh, believed to have been the summer capital of the Ghurid dynasty. Surrounding remains include a group of stones with Hebrew inscriptions from the 11th to 12th centuries on the Kushkak hill, and vestiges of castles and towers of the Ghurid settlements on the banks of the Hari River as well

as to the east of the Minaret.

The Minaret of Jam is one of the few well-preserved monuments representing the exceptional artistic creativity and mastery of structural engineering of the time. Its architecture and ornamentation are outstanding from the point of view of art history, fusing together elements from earlier developments in the region in an exceptional way and exerting a strong influence on later architecture in the region. This graceful soaring structure is an outstanding example of the architecture and ornamentation of the Islamic period in Central Asia and played a significant role in their further dissemination as far as India, as demonstrated by the Qutb Minar, Delhi, begun in 1202 and completed in the early 14th century.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Traditional games seen as a path to boost tourism and preserve local culture

TEHRAN – Traditional games rooted in Iran’s cultural heritage could serve as both a tool for preserving local identity and a driver of sustainable tourism, according to new research focused on Yazd province.

These indigenous games, once central to community life across generations, provided not only entertainment but also physical, mental, and social development, scholars say. With simple rules and minimal equipment, they encouraged teamwork, strategy, and coordination. Yet with the rise of digital entertainment and changing lifestyles, many of them risk fading into obscurity.

The decline, experts warn, threatens not only sorts of related intangible cultural heritage but also untapped tourism potential.

By integrating local games into tourism programs, communities could both safeguard traditions and create unique experiences for domestic and international visitors.

“In many countries, combining traditional sports and games with tourism initiatives has become a successful approach to sustainable development,” said Fa’ezeh Asadian Ardakani, a faculty member at Yazd University’s School of Economics,



Management and Accounting. She recently conducted a study on the role of local games in developing tourism and protecting cultural identity in Yazd.

The research analyzed educational, psychological, social and historical aspects of traditional games in the region and compared them with similar practices in other cultures.

Findings indicate that reviving these activities through cultural festivals and tourism packages could generate jobs, strengthen community bonds, and create lasting memories for visitors.

One recommendation is the organization of seasonal festivals where tourists can not only watch but also participate in traditional games.

Other proposals include designing tourism packages that combine game experiences with visits to Yazd’s historical sites, establishing a museum of local games, and using digital platforms to promote them internationally.

“Traditional games are not just old pastimes,” the study suggested. “They are cultural and economic assets that can bridge the past and present, while shaping a more dy-

namic future for local communities.”

The research article has been published in the academic journal Folklore and Literature, affiliated with Tarbiat Modares University.

The research article has been published in the academic journal Folklore and Literature, affiliated with Tarbiat Modares University.

According to Asadian Ardakani, the study could spark greater attention among policymakers and tourism stakeholders toward the overlooked potential of traditional games in Iran’s heritage and tourism industries.

## Iran boasts high potential for Halal tourism

TEHRAN—Halal tourism is one of Iran’s good potentials for attracting Muslim tourists, said Peyman Falsafi, the head of the Agriculture Faction of the Parliament.

According to ILNA, he also said that Halal tourism is one of the branches of the tourism industry, adding that agritourism can also be one of the branches of Halal tourism.

He emphasized serious attention to Halal tourism and agritourism in Iran.

Stressing that all food products available in the country are Halal, he said that Iran’s tourism industry is run on the basis of Halal tourism. The way hotels are run, food is cooked, and accommodation is managed is based on religious principles and the Halal industry, he pointed out.

Falsafi mentioned that the agritourism in lights of diversity of products, nature and climate, is a good capacity for attracting those who are interested in the country’s villages and agricultural hubs.

Out of 17 global climates, 14 are

located in Iran which has led to diverse climatic conditions in various parts of the country. The four-season regions of the country which have a comparative advantage in the agricultural sector, especially horticulture, boast special attraction for people and tourists.

Currently, even the urban agriculture issue is important in global tourism industry, he said, adding that people can do agricultural work and enjoy it in cities.

He reiterated on necessity of serious planning for Halal tourism and agritourism, adding that the way to promote these two branches is to train and empower those who work in these branches. It means that the unions, associations and trades related to the tourism industry in various sectors of the hotel industry, entertainment centers and institutions, handicrafts and ecotourism activists should become familiar with the capacities of Halal tourism and agricultural tourism in the country and receive training in these two sectors and transfer the necessary skills to the people to develop Halal tourism, he added.

Stating that successful countries in Halal tourism and agritourism strongly emphasize the issue of education, he added that Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia and the UAE are among the Islamic countries that were very progressive in the issue of Halal tourism.

Falsafi continued: “After capacity building, empowerment, and training, we can move on to advertising and promoting Iran’s Halal tourism across the world and attracting Halal tourists to Iran.”

The world’s Halal tourist population is high, he said, adding that they are interested in traveling to Iran as a Halal tourism destination in which all services are rendered to the tourists in a Halal manner.

Halal tourism can develop Iran’s tourism industry provided that the main focus for the prosperity of Iran’s Halal tourism is on Muslim countries, which includes a population of about two billion people.

Emphasizing the Parliament’s readiness to pursue Halal and agricultural tourism, he added: “The issue of agricultural heritage is one of the very important issues that has

## Isfahan, birthplace of Alam making, one of Iran’s ritual crafts

TEHRAN—Isfahan is the origin of one of Iran’s ritual crafts: Alam making. Processional Standards (Alams) are used in many parts of the Muslim world by the Shia community in processions marking the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.), grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who died at the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

The art of Alam making, which is rooted in the Safavid era, combines the techniques of metalworking, latticework, calligraphy, and plating, and creates a work that is not only a symbol of Muharram mourning but also an embodiment of the faith, art, and collective identity of the people of Isfahan, ISNA reported.

Isfahan is not only known for its minarets and turquoise tiles, but also is the birthplace and base of the art of Alam making.

Alams are carried on the shoulders of mourners during the months of Muharram and Safar, are, in fact, the products of dozens of artistic fields and handicraft techniques that are used in a religious and ritualistic form.

Alam making is a complicated process. In the old workshops of Isfahan, craftsmen use arts such as metalworking, latticework, engraving, calligraphy, casting, plating, and even sewing fabric flags to create a processional standard (Alam) that is a small exhibition of traditional Iranian arts.

Majid Nesarali, one of the veteran craftsmen of this art, says: “To make an Alam, one must learn several crafts, including metalworking, cutting, latticework, plating, calligraphy... none of which are sufficient on their own. Alam making means combining several arts to create a ritual symbol.”

The history of “Alam Gardani” (Standard Carrying) in Iran, especially among the people of Tehran, is not clear. What is certain is that the ritual dates back to the pre-Safavid era. It was a sign of the presence of a tribe or family in war, but the Safavid era, like other rituals of this era, also made Alam making a tradition, and Isfahan artists brought it to its peak.

The custom of “Alam Gardani” took a new form in the Qajar era, and the flags became heavier and more flags were added to it every day thanks to the efforts of Iranian artists. During the Naser al-Din Shah Qajar era, there were several famous Alams that were related to Tehran capital.

The oldest Iranian Alams are kept at Topkapı Museum in Istanbul, Turkey.

Perhaps these Alams, which are examples of the symbols and emblems of various Iranian tribes, existed during the reign of the Aq Qoyunlu and Qara Qoyunlu Turkmens, and were used by political and religious groups. These Alams are war booty, and after the capture of Tabriz by the Ottoman armies, Shah Selim transferred them to Istanbul.

There is also an Alam in the Central Museum of Astan Quds Razavi in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province, which dates back to the 13th century AH and was made in the city of Isfahan.

In the 17th century CE, travelers such as Pietro Della Valle mentioned in their travelogues the “metal processional standards” in the mourning groups of Isfahan. From that period, Alam became known as a symbol of soldiering and loyalty to Imam Hussein (AS) and found a special place in the districts and tekkiyehs (specific locations for mourners who meet and participate in reli-



gious gatherings after which they head out on the streets in groups known as dasteh (literally meaning cluster) to parade dramatic mourning) of Isfahan.

Isfahan’s Alam making workshops, especially the old workshops like “Kamran” that have been active since 1995, still thrive in the months leading up to Muharram. Orders are made from different cities in Iran and even Iraq for the making or restoration of Alams in Isfahan. After being prepared, each Alam is placed on the shoulders of mourners during mourning days and becomes the focus of the processions and groups of people beating their chests.

Although the art of Alam Making has not been independently registered on the National Heritage List, the ritual of Alam Making and Alam Gardani has been registered in the country’s Intangible Heritage List, which could help preserve the art of Alam Making. However, the decline in the number of traditional craftsmen, the reluctance of the younger generation to learn this profession, and the high cost of metal raw materials threaten the future of this art.



# Tehran, Peking beef up sci-tech ties

TEHRAN – The head of the Organization for the Development of International Cooperation in Science and Technology, Hossein Roozbeh, and Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu have explored the avenues for the expansion of scientific and technological collaborations between the two countries.

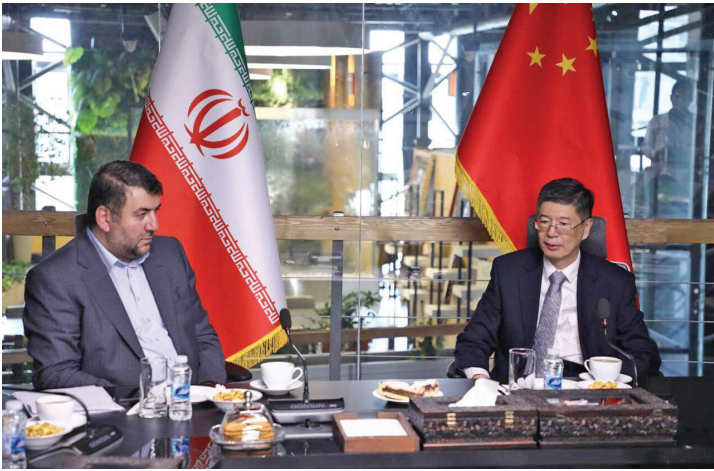
The officials met on Wednesday following Peiwu's visit to Tehran branch of Iran House of Innovation and Technology (iHiT), Mehr news agency reported.

Having visited the iHiT in Tehran, the Chinese official said, "Iran possesses a magnificent civilization and is home to intelligent people who have made great achievements. The country's history of technology development is glorious. Today, we are proud to witness Iran's rapid technological advances in the modern era. China and Iran are two great civilizations with long histories, and the two countries have great potentials for fostering scientific cooperation."

Referring to Iran's Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, Hossein Afshin's, recent visit to China and the country's open approach to international cooperation, the official said we believe there are many potential avenues for enhancing partnerships between the two countries.

For his part Roozbeh stressed the need for promoting and accelerating scientific cooperation between Iran and China, highlighting that the two nations have a long-standing history of scientific, technological, economic and trade collaborations.

Iran's science and technology ecosystem has made significant progress in recent years, with more than ten thousand knowledge-based companies operating in the country. The contributions of the highly-skilled and talented workforce have created major opportunities for the development of joint cooperation,



he said.

Referring to the memorandum of understandings (MOUs) signed by Afshin and Ding Zhisheng, the Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, on the sidelines of the 2nd Belt and Road Conference on Science and Technology Exchange in June, the official announced Iran's full readiness to implement the made agreements.

Underscoring china's notable capabilities in artificial intelligence (AI), and Iran's progress in the field, Roozbeh said the two countries partnerships in AI will bring about invaluable achievements to the region and the world.

The official went on to say that the establishment of BRI (Belt and Road initiative) LabsNet will play a crucial role in the expansion of scientific interactions at international scale.

The two countries have also agreed on exchanging researchers, young scientists, and elites as well as participating in each county's exhibition. The collaborations include joint efforts in technology, health and medicine, environment, agriculture sectors.

The official also noted that Iran will inaugurate the first iHiT in China within next few months.

**China interested in developing scientific co-op with Iran**

The 2nd Belt and Road Confer-

ence on Science and Technology Exchange took place in Chengdu, the capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province, from June 10 to 12.

Zhisheng met Afshin on the sidelines of the three-day conference. He voiced China's willingness to boost scientific and technological cooperation with Iran within the framework of the BRI.

Referring to the achieved agreements between the two countries, the Chinese official said China is willing to effectively implement the Iran-China strategic partnership and promote high-quality cooperation within the framework of the BRI. "We seek to further develop the capacity for cooperation in science and technology between the two sides to bring more tangible benefits to the people of both countries," IRNA quoted Zhisheng as saying.

For his part, Afshin said Iran is interested in enhancing ties with China to achieve breakthroughs in major scientific and technological cooperation.

China and Iran formally defined their bilateral relations as a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in early 2016, when President Xi Jinping paid a visit to Iran. The strategic relationship has seen robust development since then.

Iran has demonstrated its full support for China in various is-

ssues, from those related to China's core national interests and major international agendas proposed by China, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China has also strongly supported Iran's legitimate quest on many issues. China supported Iran's legitimate position on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran's position on women's rights, and membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS.

Addressing the second conference, Afshin proposed six strategic plans to boost technological ties along the Silk Road. The six proposals are based on national capacities, operational experiences, and a region-oriented perspective, IRNA reported.

The first plan focused on the establishment of BRI (Belt and Road Initiative)-TechMatch platform to adapt affordable and indigenize technologies to the needs of developing countries.

The establishment of a regional center in Tehran for future studies and monitoring technology for member states in the BRI was the second recommendation.

The third suggestion involved launching a BRI LabsNet. To ensure high-quality technology exchange and provide affordable technology, Iran proposes launching a multinational network of specialized laboratories to test and evaluate equipment and technologies produced in countries of the BRI, which is a step towards enhancing mutual trust and facilitating technological trade.

Implementing a regional technological skills training program focusing on youth in countries of the BRI was the fourth presented plan.

Developing a technological cooperation charter for the countries of the BRI with a focus on ethics, data governance, and fair technology transfer was the last proposal.

## National quantum network to be launched by March 2026

TEHRAN – The first national quantum network is planned to be inaugurated by the beginning of the next Iranian Calendar year (March 21, 2026), an official with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has said.

Quantum technology is a rapidly growing field that serves as a fundamental pillar for the development of science, industry, safety, and information technology worldwide, Mehr news agency quoted Davood Ranjbar as saying.

Many countries like the U.S., China, Russia, and Germany have made significant investment in quantum technology. Now, Iran is making progress in the field by placing strategic projects on the agenda, he added.

Supported by ICT Ministry and the atomic Energy Organization, and knowledge-based companies, the national project to design and implement Iran's first quantum network has kicked off through a comparative study of the advanced countries' programs, the official noted.

In July, President Masoud Pezeshkian declared the implementation of the 'national document on quantum science and technology'.

The document is a comprehensive set of main objectives, assessment indicators, national strategies, implementing and monitoring mechanisms, IRNA quoted Abdolhassan Bahrami, an official with the Vice

Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-based Economy, as saying.

It has been developed as a roadmap for the progress of research, expansion of technology, and commercialization of quantum technologies, the official added.

In this line, quantum science and technology headquarters will be established to enhance coordination among relevant organizations, develop an implementation roadmap, pursue the development of regulations, observe national and global advancements, as well as propose amendments to revise the document.

To implement the document, the vice-presidency, in cooperation with other relevant institutions, will initially provide a national plan for division of labor in the quantum science and technology sector. It will be followed by providing support for the development of applications, commercialization, and participation of knowledge-based companies to make the best use of domestic innovative capacities.

**Iran's ranking in Quantum Science, Technology**

According to data released by Web of Science (WoS) in 2024, Iran's ranking in Quantum Science and Technology publications improved from 23 in 2014 to 16 in 2023, placing the country top among Islamic nations in all quantum technology fields.

Over the past decade, the country's best

ranking in quantum technology is 15, from 2019 to 2021, IRNA reported.

Quantum technologies include three main categories, namely quantum computing, quantum communication, and quantum sensing and measurement.

Quantum computing includes photonic networks, superconducting circuits, spin qubits, neutral (cold) atoms, and trapped ions. Quantum communication involves quantum key distribution, quantum telemetry, quantum repeater, and sensors. Quantum sensing encompasses quantum clocks, quantum imaging, and quantum radars.

Iran's best global ranking is in quantum remote sensing technology. The country is ranked eighth worldwide.

The country's other global ranking include photonic network technologies, 17; superconducting circuits, 18; spin qubit, 16; neutral (cold) atoms, 21; Trapped ions, 19; quantum key distribution, 24; quantum repeater, 26; quantum clock, 12; quantum imaging, 14; and quantum radar, 15.

In quantum remote sensing, Yazd University, University of Tehran, and University of Mohaqeq Ardabili ranked first to third, respectively. Yazd University also ranked first in Quantum repeater.

Shahed University; University of Tehran, and Imam Khomeini International University ranked first respectively in superconducting circuits, spin qubits, and nuclear atoms.

from the Ministry for Youth Affairs of the

Republic of Tatarstan, TV BRICS, and other international organizations. It offers a unique platform for young leaders to gain global recognition, connect with influential networks, and be celebrated for their meaningful contributions to society.

Utilizing artificial intelligence (AI), the Garnet platform offers personalized learning paths for entrepreneurship and income generation by assessing users' strengths, Mehr news agency reported.

Hitherto, 60,000 individuals have completed the course on Garnet platform, with over 10,000 users attending lectures and workshops, free of charge.

In February, Hosna Salimi, a student of the Faculty of World Studies at University of Tehran, was named the 'Young Researcher of the Year' in BRICS and SCO Young Leaders Award 2025, held on January 24-26 in Kazan, Russia.

Over 400 participants from 13 countries including Iran, India, China, the UAE,

## Iran secures IOAA championship for second consecutive year



TEHRAN – The Iranian students have grabbed five gold medals at the 18th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA), marking the country's second consecutive world championship.

The event was held from August 11 to 21, in Mumbai, India, attracting over 300 high school students from 64 countries. During the event, students participated in several challenging exams covering theoretical, observational, and data analysis aspects of astronomy.

The five-member Iranian team comprised Ali Naderi Lordjani, Arshia Mirshamsi Kakhaki, Hossein Soltani, Hossein Masoumi, and Hirbod Foadazi. The first three students are placed atop the whole winners.

This remarkable achievement is the result of the students' dedication, the support of their families, the tireless efforts of their coaches, and the solidarity of the country's scientific community, which has once again raised Iran's flag in the international arena, Pres TV quoted an statement by Iran's ministry of education on Thursday.

In a congratulatory message to the team and the Iranian nation, the Young Scholars Club hailed the great accomplishment as a source of pride and hope for Iran's scientific future, expressing optimism that such achievements would continue in international academic arenas.

The 17th IOAA was held last year from August 17 to 27 in Vassouras, state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Over 250 students from 57 countries participated in the event; Iranian students won five gold medals, ranked first globally.

The International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) is one of the twelve International Science Olympiads. Founded by five countries (Thailand, Indonesia, Iran, China, and Poland), its first edition took place in Thailand in 2007.

The main goal of the IOAA is to promote the growing interest in Astronomy and related STEM subjects, especially through the general education of young people, and enhancing the development of international contacts among different countries in promoting Astronomy and Astrophysics in schools. It is expected that, through events like the IOAA, more bright high-school students will be eager to study astronomy at the university level to become the next generation of astronomy and astrophysics professionals.

**Recent achievements**

The Iranian participants at the International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) in Ji'ning, China, grabbed four bronze medals.

Co-hosted by Ji'ning Confucius School, Shandong University of Science and Technology, the IESO took place from August 7th to 17th.

The team comprised Bardia Khalili, Parisa Sedqi, Fatemeh Hedayat Kakhaki, and Zahra Goudarzipour, Mehr news agency reported.

Iranian students won a gold medal, two silver medals, and a bronze medal at the 37th edition of

the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) being held in Sucre, Bolivia.

The event kicked off on July 27 and will wrap up on August 3. A total of 330 contestants from 84 countries participated in this year's event.

Amir-Ali Asgari secured the gold medal, Mani Zare and Hamed Ghafari grabbed silver medals, while Kiarash Rezaei won a bronze medal, ISNA reported.

Iran won two silver medals and two bronze medals at the Eighth International Economics Olympiad (IEO) 2025, which was held from July 20 to 29, in Baku, Azerbaijan.

This year, 68 countries participated in the IEO. Mohsen Payandeh-Peyman and Abolfazl Modir-Roosta won silver medals, while Parsa Sedaqat and Alireza Ahmadi secured bronze medals, IRNA reported.

Four Iranian students clinched three gold medals and a silver medal at the 36th International Biology Olympiad (IBO 2025), ranking second among 81 countries, up from third in 2024.

Siavash Pezeshpour, Ali Soleimanzadeh Kahlroudi, and Ali-Akbar Nourollahi won the gold medals, while Radin Bayani secured the silver medal at the competition, which was held from July 19 to 27 in Quezon City, Philippines, PANA reported.

Five Iranian students secured silver medals at the 55th International Physics Olympiad, ranking 11th globally.

Held from July 18 to 24 in Paris, the IPHO 2025 brought together 440 candidates from over 90 countries.

Mohammad-Hassan Sadeqinejad Simaki, Arya Zarabi, Ilya Qashae, Mohammah-Hassan Golabdar, and Milad Mohammadi won silver medals, IIRB reported.

Iran grabbed two gold medals, three silver medals, and a bronze medal at the 66th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO 2025), held from July 10-20 in Australia.

Bardia Khosh-Eqbal and Mehdi Aqajanloo grabbed gold medals, Mohammad-Reza Attaranzadeh, Mohammad-Sajad Memari, and Amir-Hossein Zarei secured silver medals, while Parsa Tajallaei won a bronze.

The team had ranked second in the 3rd International Mathematics Summer Camp (IMSC) held in Beijing, China, from June 20 to July 12, 2025.

Bardia Khosh-Eqbal grabbed a gold medal, Mehdi Aqajanloo, Parsa Tajallaei, Mohammad-Reza Attaranzadeh, and Mohammad-Sajad Memari won silver medals, and Amir-Hossein Zarei won a bronze medal, IIRB reported.

IMSC 2025 brought together over 300 people, including students and lecturers, from 32 countries such as Belarus, Belgium, Cameroon, Germany, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, the United States, Romania, Poland, and Uzbekistan.

scientific research in the fields of history, education, art, information technology (IT), law, philosophy, and finance.

The Award aims to identify talented young people and recognize the contribution of young leaders of the BRICS and SCO countries to socially significant areas, attract young people to cooperation, and provide them with opportunities for self-realization in the BRICS and SCO countries.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*To render relief to the distressed and to help the oppressed make amends for great sins.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:07    Evening: 19:01    Dawn: 4:02 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 5:31 (tomorrow)

## What’s in Tehran art galleries



### Painting

\* Sharif Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mostafa Emami.

The exhibit entitled “Before the Image Comes into Being” will be running until September 5 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.

\* Paintings by Hossein Shirahmadi are on display in an exhibition at Doost Gallery.

Entitled “Mujo”, the exhibit will be running until September 30 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 4, 4th St. off Eshqyar St., Khorramshahr Ave.



\* An exhibition of paintings by Nazgol Nayeri is currently underway at Didar Gallery.

The exhibition will run until September 12 at the gallery located at 10 Mobini Alley, Mofatteh St.

\* An exhibition of paintings by Saman Khadem is underway at Ebteda Gallery.

Entitled “Shadow and Surface”, the exhibition will run until August 28 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.



\* A collection of paintings by Neda Jalili is on view in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibit named “The Folding of Flight” will run until August 31 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

\* Paintings by Kolsoum Salehi are currently on view in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until August 29 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



### Photo

\* A collection of photos by Omid Tarifard is on view in an exhibition at Sepand Gallery.

The exhibit will run until September 5 at the gallery located at No. 22, Sepand Alley, Ostad Jafar Shahri St., Karim Khan Ave.

### Multimedia

\* An exhibition of paintings and sculptures by a large number of artists is underway at E1 Gallery.

The exhibit named “Not Yet Human, No Longer A Puppet” will run until August 29 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebbeh St., off Mahdiah St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.



### Installation

\* An exhibition of sets of installation by Mani Koumar is currently underway at Saless Gallery.

The exhibit named “Lady Iran” will be running until September 1 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

### Sculpture

\* A collection of sculptures by Mahmoud Mahroumi is currently on view in an exhibition at 009821 Projects Gallery.

The exhibition named “Upheaval” will run until September 2 at the gallery located at No. 25, 18th Alley, Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.

# 10 photos from Iran win at International Photography Awards 2025



“Nowruz, the Ancient Heritage of Iran”  
by Majid Hojati



“Peak of Light” by Mehdi Parsaeian



“Legend 1” by Abolghasem Khoshro

TEHRAN - The International Photography Awards (IPA) 2025 has announced the winners, with 10 photos by Iranian photographers in the list.

For selecting the winners of the 2025 Photography Competition in the professional and non-professional/student categories, a stellar international jury of renowned photography experts judged more than 14,000 entries from 100 countries, ILNA reported.

Two Iranian photographers won 1st Place prizes in two categories: Mehrdad Oskouei for “Amidst the Rubble of Disaster” in the Analog, Film, Photojournalism category, and Arlen Keshishian for “Perspective” in the Fine Art, Collage category.

Oskouei’s photo is about the earthquake in a village near the city of Qazvin in Iran. A boy searches in confusion for other family members and his belongings, and school supplies, hours after his house was destroyed.

Keshishian’s “Perspective” is a fine art photo montage collection that reflects the photographer’s personal view of various subjects. The image was shot in his home studio and artistically edited to express a unique meaning.

Seven photographers from Iran won the 2nd Place prize in various categories. Ehsan Moradi won the prize in the Editorial, Press, Environmental section for “Water Is Not the Source of Life”.

The photo is about deep and drinking water in Iran’s Sistan and Baluchestan Province, which, in addition to being contaminated with soil, is contaminated with eight heavy elements.

It is one of the top 5 selections by the jury member Alex Ng. “This is a simple and concise photo-

graph: a girl in the wilderness and a bucket of murky water. The composition is straightforward, the lighting soft, yet behind it lies an extraordinary and troubling story. The most captivating element is the girl’s helpless gaze into the camera, which touches the heart of every viewer.

In the lower diagonal of the frame sits that bucket of cloudy water—hard to imagine it is the drinking water she must carry away, heavily polluted and prompting deep concern for the people who live here,” he wrote about the photo.

Hadi Dehghanpour won the 2nd Place prize in the Event, Social Cause category for “Petition Writing,” which shows protesters against the spread of war in the Middle East signing a street petition.

In the Fine Art, Landscape category, Mehdi Parsaeian won the 2nd Place prize for “Peak of Light,” depicting the Caracal Desert in the city of Yazd, where the sands stretch like peaks of light towards God.

In the photo, the artist tries to capture a dramatic atmosphere that captures the feeling of loneliness and solitude with God.

Masoumeh Rahimi is another winner of the 2nd Place prize, who won it for “The Commotion” in the People, Self-Portrait category.

The self-portrait consists of several photos, all captured and edited with a mobile phone camera. The density of migratory birds can refer, in addition to beauty, to the influx of thoughts of the subject, who is the photographer herself.

Two photographers from Iran, Abolghasem Khoshro and Majid Hojati (nicknamed Maho), were

the recipients of both 2nd Place and 3rd Place prizes for their works.

Khoshro won the 2nd Place prize in the Fine Art, Architecture category for “Niavaran Palace,” showing a unique inside look at the historical palace complex situated in the north of Tehran.

His 3rd Place prize was in the Fine Art, Minimal, Minimalism category for “Legend 1,” which shows Legend, a purebred German horse kept at a farm in the suburbs of Alborz Province.

Hojati’s “Eid Morning Day” won the 2nd Place prize in the People, Traditions, Culture category. Taken in Hamedan City during Eid al-Fitr prayer at a mosque, the photo shows a polite boy, dressed in stylish clothes, playing behind his mother while Muslim women are saying prayers.

“Nowruz, the Ancient Heritage of Iran” is the title of the other photo by Hojati that won the 3rd Place prize in the People, Traditions, Culture category.

The photo shows five little girls in colorful traditional dresses, all holding a red rose, and laughing, on the occasion of the new year.

Nowruz, the first day of the solar new year, coincides with the first day of spring and is one of the oldest celebrations left over from ancient Iran.

Every ethnic group in every corner of Iran celebrates Nowruz in its own way. From Haftsin tables to local dances and new clothes, all are signs of a common culture that recognizes differences and emphasizes coexistence and peace.

In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution designating March 21 as

equivalent to the first day of Farvardin as International Nowruz Day under the title of Culture of Peace.

The International Photography Awards conducts an annual competition for professional, amateur, and student photographers globally, creating one of the most ambitious and comprehensive competitions in the photography world today.

The mission is to salute the achievements of the world’s finest photographers, discover new and emerging talent, and promote the appreciation of photography.

The category winners in both professional and amateur levels, listed here, will compete for IPA’s top two awards, which will be announced at the annual IPA Awards Gala.

The main professional prize is International Photographer of the Year, selected from the 11 professional category winners and earning the coveted IPA Trophy and a cash prize of \$10,000. The 11 category winners in the non-professional/student categories will compete for the title of Discovery of the Year. The winner will also be awarded the IPA Trophy and a \$5,000 cash prize.

IPA is a sister-effort of the Lucie Foundation, 501(c) 3 non-profit, charitable foundation whose mission is to honor master photographers, discover and cultivate emerging talent, and promote the appreciation of photography worldwide.

The annual programming of the Lucie Foundation is funded largely through the International Photography Awards, including the signature event, the Lucie Awards.

## Filmmakers urge Venice Festival to take stand on Gaza in open letter

Hundreds of Italian and international filmmakers, artists, and cultural figures have signed an open letter calling on the Venice Film Festival to take a “clear and unambiguous stand” against what they describe as genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza.

The appeal, organized under the banner of Venice4Palestine (V4P), was sent on Friday to the Venice film festival umbrella organization the Biennale di Venezia, as well as the festival’s independent sections Venice Days and International Critics’ Week, Hollywood Reporter reported.

“Stop the clocks, turn off the stars,” reads the letter’s opening paragraph.

“The burden is too much to carry on living as before.

For almost two years now, images of unmistakable clarity have been reaching us from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Incredulous and helpless, we keep witnessing the torment of a genocide carried out live by the State of Israel in Palestine.

No one will ever be able to say: ‘I couldn’t know, I couldn’t imagine, I couldn’t believe,’” the letter adds.

In the letter, the group accuses the Israeli government and military of carrying out genocide in Gaza and ethnic cleansing across Palestine, and urges the festival to avoid becoming “a sad and empty showcase” by instead providing “a place of dialogue, active participation, and resistance, as it has been in the past.”

Signatories include British filmmaker Ken Loach, Italian actor Toni Servillo, Italian actress and director siblings Alba and Alice Rohrwacher, actress Jasmine Trinca, French directors Céline Sciamma and Audrey Diwan, British actor Charles Dance and Palestinian directorial duo Arab Nasser and Tarzan Nasser, among others.

The group references the deaths of nearly 250 Palestinian media workers since the start of the conflict and frames artistic institutions as responsible for fostering awareness and resistance.

“As the spotlight turns on the Venice Film Festival, we’re in danger of going through yet another major event that remains indifferent to this human, civil, and political tragedy,” the letter reads.

“The show must go on,’ we are told, as we’re urged to look away — as if the ‘film world’ had nothing to do with the ‘real world.’”

For once, the letter continues, “the show must stop.

We must interrupt the flow of indifference and open a path to awareness,” adding, “there is no cinema without humanity.”

The letter calls on the festival to host events highlighting Palestinian narratives and to create “a constant backdrop of conversations and initiatives” addressing “ethnic cleansing, apartheid, illegal occupation of Palestinian territories, colonialism and all the other crimes against humanity committed by Israel for decades, not just since October 7.”

In a statement in response to the letter, the Biennale said they and the Venice festival “have always been, throughout their history, places of open discussion and sensitivity to all the most pressing issues facing society and the world.

The evidence of this is, first and foremost, the works that are being presented [at the festival].”

The statement noted that “The Voice of Hind Rajab,” a real-life drama from Tunisian director Kaouthar Ben Hania, about the killing of a 5-year-old Palestinian girl by Israeli forces in Gaza in 2024, will be screening in competition at Venice this year.

The Biennale noted that last year’s Venice lineup featured Israeli director Dani Rosenberg’s film “Of Dogs and Men,” shot in the wake of the Oct. 7 attacks.

“The Biennale is, as always, open to dialogue,” the statement said.

The 82nd Venice international film festival will run from August 27 to September 6.

At least 61,000 people living in the Gaza Strip have died in Israel’s subsequent military campaign.

United Nations-backed global hunger monitor the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) announced this week that 500,000 people in the Gaza Strip are officially facing “a man-made” famine in the territory, with at least 132,000 children under five-years-old expected to suffer from acute malnutrition.