

# Iran Vies With West for UNSC Votes

**A Russian resolution would put snapback of Iran UN sanctions on hold if passed**



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IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi briefs the Security Council.

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## ‘Misunderstanding fully resolved’, Iran reaffirms ties with Qatar

TEHRAN – Iran and Qatar have resolved a recent diplomatic misunderstanding following high-level discussions in Doha, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced on Friday.

The issue had arisen after Iran conducted strikes on Qatar’s Al-Udeid base in response to a U.S. attack on Iranian nuclear facilities, prompting tensions between the two Persian Gulf neighbors.

Speaking in an interview with Al-Sharq newspaper, Araghchi described the outcome of his meetings with Qatari officials as “very important and influential.” ▶ Page 2

## Iran boosts monthly oil exports by 630,000 barrels: oil minister

TEHRAN – Iran’s oil exports rose by an average of 630,000 barrels a month in the first four months of the current Iranian year (March 21-July 22) compared with the same period last year, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Wednesday.

Speaking after a cabinet meeting, Paknejad stressed that “there are currently no problems selling oil,” noting that the increase equates to about 21,000 barrels per day.

He also dismissed a recent [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) statement claiming the Arash gas field belonged to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. ▶ Page 4

## Slovak PM in China: Building partnerships for a fairer global future

By Lucia Hubinská

PRETORIA – Robert Fico has once again put Slovakia under the international spotlight. While other EU leaders stayed home, the Slovak prime minister travelled to Beijing for China’s commemoration of the 80th anniversary of victory over fascism in Asia. There, he was the only EU head of government standing alongside Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin.

For Brussels, this was a provocation. European diplomats bristled at the images of an EU member aligning so visibly with Moscow and Beijing. The Slovak opposition went further, calling the visit “an international shame.” And yet, the Slovak public should resist the instinct to cheer the trip simply out of frustration with the EU,

## The lie of “arms exclusivity” to uproot the resistance!

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—The resistance in Lebanon constitutes a crucial, fundamental link in withstanding the Zionist-imperialist conspiracy. This vicious move has been expressed in an unprecedented manner to undermine the resistance under the pretext of “arms exclusivity.”

All the proposals being discussed today in Lebanon, particularly Thomas Barrack’s infamous one, are a manifestation of the new guardianship whose primary concern is to disarming the resistance, which has fought and defeated the Zionist enemy numerous times.

The most dangerous of all, Barrack’s infamous proposal is pushing Lebanon to sign a treaty with the Zionist enemy worse than the May 17 Agreement of the 1980s.

## ‘Mouthpiece of IDF butchers’: Israeli president faces arrest calls ahead of UK visit

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – Israeli President Isaac Herzog is poised to visit the UK this week, but his arrival has stirred a political storm. Some MPs are demanding his arrest, accusing him of backing Israel’s military operations in Gaza and calling him the “mouthpiece of IDF butchers.” The visit now tests whether the UK government will take a firm stance on the Gaza conflict or risk being seen as indifferent.

Herzog is expected in the UK on Wednesday and Thursday, The Guardian reported. Some Labour MPs have urged Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his ministers to avoid meeting Herzog, warning that any engagement could send a confusing message about the UK’s stance on the Gaza conflict.

## Gaza genocide passes 700 days

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – As the Gaza genocide surpasses 700 days, Hamas has accused the Israeli Prime Minister of deliberately sabotaging mediation efforts.

In a statement, Hamas described Benjamin Netanyahu as a “war criminal” and held him responsible for obstructing all attempts by international mediators to reach a ceasefire or political resolution. The movement stated that it has demonstrated maximum flexibility in negotiations with mediators.

An increasing number of critics around the world argue that the Israeli Prime Minister is prolonging the genocide in Gaza not only to maintain power but also to avoid facing a possible prison sentence. They say that by continuing the genocidal war, he is trying to shift public attention away from his ongoing corruption trial and to use the wartime atmosphere to shield himself from legal accountability.

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## IRCS dispatches humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has sent over 100 tons of essential goods to quake-hit people in Afghanistan.

Some 50 tons of relief goods were sent via a flight, and 60 tons were transported overland through the Dogharon border, IRNA reported.

The shipment includes clothing, rice, beans, blankets, and canned food.

On August 31, at 23:47 local time, a 6+ magnitude earthquake struck Afghanistan’s Nangarhar Province near the Pakistan border. The epicenter was located in Kama district, some 30 km northeast of the city of Jalalabad. Several aftershocks have occurred since, with the initial quake felt in neighbouring provinces including Kunar, Laghman, and Nuristan, as well as Kabul. The quake’s hypocenter was estimated at only 8 to 10 km beneath the surface, exacerbating the quake’s impact. ▶ Page 7

## Tehran eyes more medical tourists from Islamic countries, officials say

TEHRAN — Tehran is on track to become a hub of medical tourism for Islamic countries, the secretary general of the Islamic Countries Health Tourism Development Center said on Thursday.

Majid Zangooei told the fourth International Conference on Health Tourism of Islamic Countries, held at the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting conference hall, that a proposal has been made to designate Tehran as the capital of medical tourism for Islamic nations. He described the initiative as an opportunity to expand Iran’s tourism industry.

Zangooei said restrictive views within the health economy remain an obstacle to growth despite Iran’s capabilities in the sector. He called for reducing state control and transferring administration of health tourism to professional bodies such as the Iranian Medical Council. ▶ Page 6



## ‘Sumud’ flotilla heads for Gaza with over 50 vessels despite Israeli threats

The Global Sumud Flotilla — named for the Arabic word meaning steadfastness, a principle of unyielding resistance — is pressing across the Mediterranean toward Tunisia, part of a bid to break Israel’s 18-year naval blockade of Gaza.

More than 50 vessels carrying humanitarian aid and hundreds of activists are expected to join the mission before it turns east toward the besieged enclave.

Organizers say the mission is “entirely peaceful, lawful, and unstoppable,” embodying the very spirit of Sumud despite threats from Israeli officials to intercept the ships. ▶ Page 5

## Shifting US political landscape threatens Israel’s traditional congressional influence

By staff writer

TEHRAN – In late August 2025, Donald Trump gave an interview to the Daily Caller, which stirred great debate regarding shifts in the political U.S. support for Israel and the diminution in power of the American pro-Israel lobby in the U.S. Congress. With such candid remarks, Trump set an extraordinary milestone in the discourse of American Middle East policy, domestic political shifts, and the event unfolding in Gaza. ▶ Page 5



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Upcoming and future scenarios of negotiations

Shargh examined the new round of diplomatic moves regarding the Iran nuclear issue as the European trio of Britain, France and Germany have invoked the snapback to return the UN Security Council resolutions against Iran. It wrote: While the three European countries, along with the United States, are emphasizing maintaining maximum pressure against Tehran, Russia and China are trying to change the power equation by presenting a new resolution. Despite the movements of Russia and China and proposals by Iran, the fate of the new resolution remains unclear. Analysts believe that Russia may simply be seeking to present itself as a mediator and, in the event of a failure of negotiations, blame the United States and Europe. On the other hand, Europe and the United States, by maintaining the pressure policy on Tehran, want to keep Iran in a permanent state of suspension. Tehran considers this approach a political blackmail. Iran believes that it must create an environment in cooperation with its Eastern partners, both legally and economically, in which sanctions will have little practical effect. Ultimately, it seems that the future of the nuclear negotiations and the fate of the snapback mechanism depend on the extent to which the actors are able to create a global consensus and take advantage of diplomatic opportunities; an opportunity that, although limited, still exists.

### Etemad: National cohesion is Iran's most important winning card in negotiations

In an interview with Etemad, Hossein Nourani-Nejad, the deputy chairman of the Union of Islamic Iran People Party, said Iran's strength in negotiations with the United States lies in its national unity. He said: Given previous experiences, greater caution should be exercised in negotiations with the Americans. However, the issue that constitutes the negotiators' red line is national interests, preserving the country, and creating security for the Iranians. The lingering shadow of war, accompanied by the heavy burdens of tension and anxiety, must be lifted—not only from the hearts of the people but from the soul of the nation itself. In the current situation in which Iran has gone through a 12-day war, internal cohesion is Iran's most important winning card. We must support the Iranian negotiators to achieve the best outcome. This card of Iran's game must be preserved and strengthened. In the past, it was stated that in order to solve economic problems, Iran must resolve problems in the areas of foreign policy. Given the events following the October 7 incidents, Iran must resolve problems in the field of foreign policy

in order to resolve economic problems. Today, Iran's most important winning card for solving foreign policy problems is national unity and social cohesion.

### Farhikhtegan: Iran keeping the door of diplomacy open

Farhikhtegan wrote that Tehran is seeking to keep the path of dialogue open despite United States' attack on Iran's nuclear infrastructure during the negotiations: Iran's emphasis on adherence to diplomacy, even in the midst of a cessation of war, is important from several aspects. Despite its aggression on Iran, the United States is always trying to depict Iran as a threat to the region. Iran's emphasis on seeking to resolve challenges through diplomacy sends a clear message to the world that Iran not only does not want war but also seeks to manage crises through negotiations. Despite responding to aggression, Iran does not welcome war and seeks to use peaceful means to manage tensions to the extent possible. This time, Iran will sit at the negotiating table with a precondition that the Americans provide guarantees (that they will not start war during the talks). This approach shows that Iran is trying to keep the door open to diplomacy and not completely close it. However, it is not going to concede to the wishes of the Americans and give them whatever concessions they want.

### Iran: Eastern front against snapback

The Iran newspaper wrote that Iran, Russia and China are forming a front against the return of the UN sanctions the Islamic Republic by the European trio. It said: Only three weeks are left until the end of the critical 30-day deadline for the UN Security Council to vote on activating the snapback sanctions against Iran, but Tehran is seeking to counter Western pressure, relying on the decisive diplomatic support of Russia and China. By forming an Eastern diplomatic front, Iran is trying to neutralize or at least delay this mechanism, along with Russia and China. Iran has focused on bringing together other permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, including Algeria and Pakistan, countries that, although they have limited legal power, can politically create a broader front and put significant psychological pressure on Europe and the United States. This targeted diplomacy is rooted in shared geopolitical interests and deep global divisions after the Ukraine war. A division in which Russia and China, as two major powers against Western hegemony, are trying to maintain balance in the international arena by supporting Iran, while keeping the space for negotiations open

## US-Israeli strikes on Iran's nuclear sites violate Charter, Tehran tells UN

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has condemned recent US and Israeli strikes on the country's nuclear facilities as a “blatant violation” of the UN Charter, urging the international community to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Thursday during a session marking the International Day against Nuclear Tests, Ambassador Amir Saeed Iravani said the commemoration serves as a reminder of the catastrophic consequences nuclear weapons and testing have on human life, the environment, and international security. He stressed that new nuclear risks are emerging, including deliberate attacks on peaceful nuclear installations.

“Dangers posed by nuclear tests are not confined to deliberate explosions alone; the threat or use of force against nuclear facilities entails equally grave risks,” Iravani said.

The envoy pointed to the “reckless” Israeli and US attacks in June on Iran's safeguarded nuclear sites, which operate under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) oversight and are dedicated solely to peaceful purposes. Such strikes, he said, are a “direct assault on the foundations of multilateralism” and constitute a “grave threat” to global peace and security.



Iravani also denounced Israeli attacks on Iranian cities hosting International Monitoring System (IMS) stations, which are part of the global verification network against nuclear testing. He warned that such actions not only endanger the safety of technical staff and compromise the integrity of the facilities, but also strike at the core infrastructure of the international non-proliferation regime.

“The international community must unequivocally condemn these actions, demand accountability for those who violate international law, and strengthen protections for nuclear installations,” he said. “Perpetrators must know they cannot enjoy impunity for such grave violations.”

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

# ‘Misunderstanding fully resolved’, Iran reaffirms ties with Qatar



*Araghchi (third from the left) meets with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, in Doha*

From page 1 ► noting that he conveyed a message from Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar. “There are no differences between the two countries, and the misunderstanding that had arisen has been fully resolved through this visit,” Araghchi said.

### Discussions with Qatari PM ‘highly productive’

The Iranian diplomat also met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, describing the discussions as “serious, constructive, and highly productive.” Araghchi emphasized that the talks provided a platform to strengthen bilateral ties and explore opportunities for regional cooperation, particularly in the areas of security and stability.

The Iranian foreign minister highlighted that discussions with Qatar extended beyond the immediate misunderstanding, covering a broad spectrum of issues, including bilateral relations and the latest regional developments. He underlined the importance of enhancing cooperation among neighboring countries to ensure regional stability and security.

“In our talks, we explored ways to revive dialogue among regional nations and to coordinate efforts in countering the hegemonic ambitions and aggressive policies of the Israeli regime,” Araghchi said. He also noted that the Iranian nuclear program was discussed in detail, with the Emir of Qatar receiving updates on the

latest developments. “Our Qatari friends have always held constructive views, and these consultations provided valuable insights for both sides,” he added.

A central focus of Araghchi's meetings was the ongoing crisis in Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The discussions highlighted the continuation of Israel's attacks on Gaza, which have resulted in civilian casualties and widespread humanitarian suffering.

Both sides called for urgent action by regional states and the international community to halt what Araghchi described as “genocide and crimes committed by the Zionist regime in occupied Palestine.” He emphasized the necessity of prosecuting those responsible, providing immediate humanitarian aid to affected populations, and confronting Israel's broader policies of aggression and domination in the region.

Araghchi praised the “legendary resilience” of the Palestinian people, affirming Iran's principled support for their legitimate resistance against occupation. He reiterated Tehran's commitment to stand by the Palestinian nation until its rights are fully restored, describing the ongoing atrocities, including imposed famine and attacks on civilians, as evidence of a genocidal campaign.

### ‘Iran remains steadfast on diplomacy in nuclear talks with EU’

In addition to his meetings with Qatari leaders, Araghchi



*Iran's FM (third from the right) meets with senior Hamas officials including Khalil al-Hayya on September 4, 2025*

met with Kaja Kallas, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The discussions focused on recent developments surrounding Iran's nuclear program, particularly the controversial move by Britain, France, and Germany to reinstate previously annulled UN Security Council resolutions.

Araghchi condemned the European trio's action as “illegal and unjustified,” stressing the responsibility of the EU in its capacity as coordinator of the JCPOA Joint Commission under UN Security Council Resolution 2231. He called on the EU to support diplomatic channels and prevent actions that could undermine ongoing negotiations.

Reaffirming Iran's steadfast commitment to diplomacy, Araghchi stated that Tehran remains serious and unwavering in pursuing dialogue to address international concerns.

Kallas, in turn, emphasized that diplomacy and negotiations remain the only viable path forward and urged that all parties provide additional time and space for constructive talks. Both sides agreed to continue consultations in the coming weeks to maintain momentum in resolving nuclear-related disputes.

### Palestinian determination to resist remains unshaken, Araghchi tells Hamas leaders

During his visit, Araghchi also held a meeting with senior Hamas officials, including Khalil al-Hayya, a member of the movement's Political Bureau, along

with other members of the leadership council. Discussions centered on the evolving situation in Gaza, the continuation of Israeli attacks, and efforts to facilitate prisoner exchanges.

Araghchi praised the “heroic resilience” of the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank, reiterating Iran's support for their legitimate resistance. He highlighted the growing wave of international protests against Israeli atrocities as evidence of global awareness and solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

He called for urgent, coordinated action by Muslim nations to stop ongoing violence, deliver humanitarian aid to the besieged population, and ensure accountability for those responsible. Araghchi further stressed that continued cooperation among Islamic countries is essential to end the siege of Gaza and counter Israel's destabilizing actions in the region.

Khalil al-Hayya provided a detailed briefing on the situation on the ground in Gaza, praising Iran's support for the Palestinian people and acknowledging solidarity from regional and international allies, particularly the people of Yemen. He stressed that despite Israel's repeated atrocities, the determination of the Palestinian people to resist and defend their legitimate rights remains unshaken.

## Australian ambassador leaves Iran as Tehran downgrades Canberra's diplomatic presence

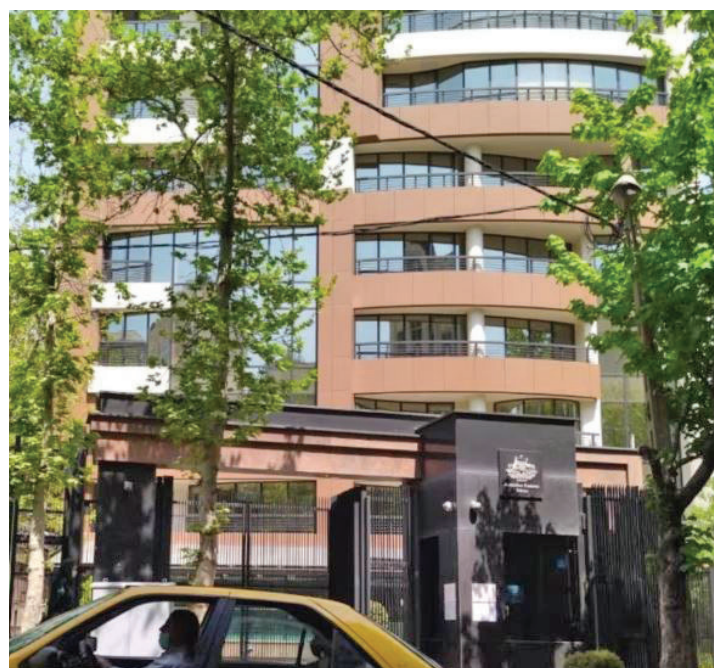
TEHRAN – The Australian ambassador has left Tehran after Canberra ordered Iran's envoy and several diplomats to leave Australia, prompting the Islamic Republic to downgrade Australia's diplomatic status in Iran in a reciprocal move, the Foreign Ministry announced on Thursday.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said the decision followed standard diplomatic norms and international law, though Tehran viewed the move as unjustified.

“We do not welcome the reduction of relations because we believe there was no reason or justification for this action, and it affects ties between the two nations,” Baghaei told reporters.

He confirmed that the Australian ambassador had departed Iran but noted that Iran's consular section in Canberra remains active to provide services for Iranian nationals in Australia.

Baghaei also dismissed as “ridiculous and baseless” Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's August 25 allegations that Iran was behind two



*The Australian embassy in Tehran*

so-called anti-Semitic attacks in Australia. Albanese subsequently announced the expulsion of Iran's envoy Ahmad Sadeghi, the suspension of Australia's embassy operations in Tehran, and urged Australians living in Iran to leave immediately.

The Iranian spokesman re-

jected the accusations outright, stressing that anti-Semitism has no place in Iran's cultural, historical, or religious traditions. “This phenomenon is a Western and European one,” he said. “If you look at history, persecution of Jews because of their religion is rooted in Europe, and it is they

who must be held accountable for their past.”

Baghaei further argued that Canberra's decision was aimed at justifying its anti-Iranian stance and compensating for recent, limited criticism of Israel voiced by some Australian politicians, including Albanese.

The row comes amid a broader diplomatic dispute between Australia and Israel. Last month, Albanese announced that Australia would formally recognize Palestinian statehood and revoked a visa for a visiting Israeli minister. In response, Israel canceled visas for Australian diplomats accredited to the Palestinian Authority, while Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu branded Albanese a “weak leader.”

Australian Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke hit back, saying true strength is not measured “by how many people you can blow up or how many children you can leave hungry,” describing Netanyahu's attacks as part of Israel's “lashing out” against other governments.



# Iran vies with West for UNSC votes

*A Russian resolution would put snapback of Iran UN sanctions on hold if passed*

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Two distinct blocs have emerged within the UN Security Council as nations maneuver for votes ahead of a Russian proposal, which will offer to extend the implementation period of Resolution 2231 by six months.

This potential extension would pause the reimposition of UN sanctions against Iran, sanctions which the E3 countries (Germany, Britain, and France) triggered a process to reinstate in August. The process known as the “snapback mechanism” is part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). It allows signatories to the agreement to reinstate UN sanctions that were in place before the JCPOA lifted them in 2015 if they find Iran non-compliant of the deal.

The United States withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018 and re-imposed stringent economic sanctions on Iran. While Germany, France, and the UK – the European signatories – did not officially leave the agreement, they ceased fulfilling their commitments to protect Iran from the impact of these sanctions. Consequently, in 2020, Iran began to roll back some of its own JCPOA commitments.

China and Russia, the other two signatories to the JCPOA, have consistently criticized the West's actions, arguing they have effectively nullified the agreement. During a meeting on the sidelines of an SCO summit in Tianjin this week, the foreign ministers of Iran, China, and Russia signed a letter, prepared by Iran's Abbas Araghchi, which condemned Europe for



FM Araghchi (R) held phone conversations with the foreign ministers of Greece, Sierra Leone, and Slovenia on Friday

activating the snapback. It also asserted that the E3 lacked the legal and moral justification use the snapback, as it failed to exhaust the JCPOA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) and did not uphold its own commitments.

Furthermore, Iran's nuclear facilities, the very matter the JCPOA was designed to address, were bombed multiple times by Israel and the United States in June. European nations did not condemn these attacks, and instead placed the blame on Iran.

European have said they would temporarily extend Resolution 2231 if Iran returns to negotiations with the U.S. (negotiations Washington derailed by bombing Iran) and allows inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) back into the country. Iran has suspended cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog for now after an IAEA report – recycling old and disproven claims about Iran's nuclear activities – provided the pretext for military action by Israel and the U.S.

### Iran needs 9 votes at the UNSC

The UNSC is composed of five permanent members (the U.S., UK, France, Russia, and China) and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Currently, the non-permanent members are Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Somalia.

Araghchi held phone conversations with the foreign ministers of Greece, Sierra Leone, and Slovenia on Thursday, a move widely suspected to be connected to the upcoming Russian resolution.

Among the non-permanent members, South Korea and Denmark are considered the most likely to align with the West when Russia presents its extension proposal. Guyana also maintains close ties with the United States and is in disagreement with Venezuela, a key ally of Iran in Latin America.

Iran's relations with Greece, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Slovenia,

and Panama are described as neither antagonistic nor particularly friendly. This neutral stance may explain why the Iranian Foreign Minister chose to engage with representatives of these nations first.

Russia, China, Algeria, and Pakistan are expected to vote in favor of the draft resolution. To pass, Iran needs to secure the support of five additional members. If the resolution fails to achieve nine affirmative votes, even with abstentions, it will not be adopted.

Once a resolution is voted for at the Security Council, the permanent members retain the power to veto it. It is highly likely that the U.S. and the E3 would choose to veto the bill, but all four are hoping they would not have to do so, as it comes with political complications.

The activation of snapback has negatively impacted Iran's economy in recent days and further devalued the Iranian Rial. That's why some within Iran oppose extending the snapback. They argue that the return of UN sanctions has primarily psychological effects, rather than practical ones, and that the Iranian market would suffer again if this situation were to repeat in six months.

Russia has already distributed its draft resolution, according to remarks by Western missions. Iranians have said that if pre-JCPOA UN sanctions are eventually re-instated, they would seriously consider leaving the NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons).

## The Global South has changed, so will the future of the world

By Fatemeh Kavand

TEHRAN – The voice of resistance resonates from the streets of Gaza to the halls of BRICS summits and Shanghai Cooperation Organization meetings. Palestinian students waving their flag at universities around the world, African leaders expelling colonial forces, Latin American politicians asserting the independence of their decisions, and Islamic resistance movements in West Asia that have shaped the ethical and military pillars of the region—all demonstrate that the world no longer accepts the unipolar order dominated by the U.S. and Europe.

The awakening of the Global South marks a turning point in contemporary history, signaling the decline of Western legitimacy and the end of its monopoly on narrative.

Three decades ago, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western elites celebrated the “end of history,” imagining the twenty-first century as the era of unipolar dominance. The U.S. was not only the preeminent military and economic power but also the source of global values and norms. This perception relied on diverse instruments of dominance: NATO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and largely Western media. Any country that did not conform to this order faced sanctions, threats, or even war.

Yet the real world never adhered to this Western unipolar narrative. The endless wars of the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan, the destruction of countries under the pretext of combating terrorism, economic sanctions that brought nations to their knees, and unconditional support for Israel exposed the imperialist nature of this order. The Global South, historically a victim of domination, now demonstrates that it is no longer merely a spectator but an active and decisive actor.

### The awakening of the Global South and the role of emerging alliances

Over the past two decades, the Global South has challenged the unipolar order using new political, economic, and security tools. Central to this awakening are emerging economic and security alliances, such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which not only transform global power structures but also demonstrate the genuine independence of the Global South.

BRICS, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, the UAE, Ethiopia, and Indonesia has evolved from a simple economic coalition into a powerful geopolitical force. By developing financial and economic cooperation



Picture taken at a recent SCO summit in Tianjin

independent of the West, reducing the dominance of the dollar, establishing a new development bank, and creating joint investment funds, this alliance has opened a new path for Global South countries. Recent BRICS summits have emphasized not only economic issues but also independent regional and global policies—policies prioritizing the interests of member states over Western interests—showing that the world is redefining its financial and political order.

The SCO also plays a vital role. Led by China and Russia, the organization coordinates security and military cooperation among Asian countries while creating an independent shield against NATO and Washington's influence. Iran and other member states signal that Asia is forging a truly multipolar order, independent of the West and free from U.S. and European dominance. SCO meetings, addressing cyber security, counterterrorism, economic cooperation, and regional infrastructure projects, demonstrate that the Global South can ensure its security and development without dependence on the West.

### The Islamic Axis of Resistance in West Asia

Alongside BRICS and SCO, the Islamic Resistance Axis in West Asia serves as the core of regional and global resilience in the South. This axis includes Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, Ansarullah in Yemen, and Resistance groups in Iraq. Relying on popular support and strategic ingenuity, these movements have reshaped the military, political, and ethical equations of the region.

Islamic Resistance is not only a tool to counter direct occupation and domination by Israel and its Western allies but also provides a practical model for Global South countries,

demonstrating that people and governments can withstand economic pressures, sanctions, and military aggression. Hezbollah in Lebanon, successfully confronting Israeli forces and ISIS military offensives, exemplifies long-term, popular-based resistance. Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, through resilience in Gaza and symbolic defensive operations, have amplified the Palestinian voice of suffering and resistance worldwide. Ansarullah in Yemen, despite a siege and extensive attacks by the Saudi-U.S. coalition, has managed its country and demonstrated the ability of Islamic Resistance to preserve political independence and national security.

This Resistance Axis, with its regional influence, has strengthened the moral and political consensus of the Global South. Countries from Iran and Venezuela to Africa and Latin America have drawn inspiration from the Islamic Resistance model, pursuing paths of independence and opposition to Western dominance.

### Other resilient Global South countries

Beyond the Resistance Axis and emerging alliances, other Global South countries have also embraced paths of resilience:

– Iran, through independent regional policies and nuclear and defense programs, demonstrates that autonomy in the face of Western pressure is achievable.

– Venezuela and Cuba, through resilient economies and regional cooperation, have bypassed U.S. sanctions and implemented independent development.

– Bolivia and Nicaragua, by maintaining political and economic independence, exemplify practical resistance to Western intervention.

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

## Iran fall short against New Zealand at 2025 FIBA U16 Asia Cup

TEHRAN – New Zealand hit cruise mode early in the game and then coasted along finishing off with a 92-69 win over Iran in the FIBA U16 Asia Cup Quarter-Finals at the M Bank Arena on Friday.

The result took New Zealand to their fourth successive entry into the medal rounds and also a trip to the FIBA U17 World Cup 2026 in Turkey.

New Zealand will now take on winners of the last eight encounter between three-time former champions China and Persian Gulf qualifiers top-pers Bahrain.

Lawson Pryor and Tawhiri Cate did the trick early on for New Zealand leaving nothing to doubt or chance, nipping any hopes of an upset Iran may have carried.

Coach Ben Sheat's team only grew in composure on court and complete control of the scoreboard as the game wore on before keeping their hopes for a fourth successive medal, and a potential second successive entry into the Final, alive, [fiba.com](http://fiba.com) reported.

Noah Duncan's 15 points with 10 rebounds led the scoring effort for New Zealand who saw five of their 10 players who took to court, scoring in double-digits.

Alireza Rashid had a consolation game-high 23 points for Iran, who now have to be content aiming for a better finish than the sixth place they achieved in Qatar two years ago.

## Piazza names Iran squad for 2025 World Championship

TEHRAN – Roberto Piazza has named his 16-man team for the 2025 FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship.

Amin Esmaeilnezhad missed the Championship after sustaining an ankle injury during Iran's training camp in Doha.

Team Melli are been drawn in Pool A along with Egypt, Tunisia, and the Philippines.

The competition will be held in Pasay, the Philippines from Sept. 12 to 28.

Squad:

\* setters: Ali Ramezani, Arshia Behnezhad

\* Opposites: Bardia Saadat, Ali Hajipour

\* Outside hitters: Morteza Sharifi, Amirhossein Esfandiari, Ehsan Daneshdoust, Poriya Hossein Khanzadeh, Ali Haghparsat

\* Middle blockers: Mohammad Valizadeh, Yousef Kazemi, Eisa Naseri

\* Liberos: Mohammadreza Hazratpour, Arman Salehi

## Iran, Qatar handball federations sign MoU

TEHRAN – Alireza Pakdel, President of the Iran Handball Federation, and his Qatari counterpart Ahmed Al Shaabi signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Doha, Qatar.

The MoU aims to promote and develop mutual collaboration in the sport of handball.

Al Shaabi expressed a strong desire to expand the good relations with Iran. He also highlighted Iran as a major federation in Asia with notable progress in women's handball and beach handball.

Under the MoU, the two federations will engage in further exchanges, including joint camps and preparatory matches in handball.

## Mahrouz Saei named Iran's women's taekwondo coach

TEHRAN – Mahrouz Saei has been appointed as the head coach of Iran's national women's tae-

kwondo team.

Saei has replaced Minoo Maddah, who stepped down in January.

Saei had won a bronze medal in the women's 72kg weight class in the 2006 Asian Games.

Niloofar Samadian and Shima Khalil Arjmandi will be her assistants.

## Iran held by Tajikistan at 2025 CAFA Nations Cup

TEHRAN- Iran football team were held to a 2-2 draw by Tajikistan at 2025 CAFA Nations Cup on Thursday.

In the match held at the Hisor Central Stadium in Hisor, Tajikistan, Mohammadmehdi Mohebbi gave Team Melli a lead in the 37th minute and Mohammad Mohebbi doubled the advantage two minutes into the second half.

Shahrom Samiev pulled a goal back in the 57th minute and Zoir Dzurboyev leveled the score in the 77th minute.

Iran have previously defeated Afghanistan 3-1 and India 3-0 in the tournament.

Defending champions Iran advanced to the final.

## Messi surpasses Daei's World Cup qualifying record

TEHRAN – Lionel Messi became the second player in history to score goals for a national team in 20 consecutive years (since 2006), after Cristiano Ronaldo (22 years in a row, 2004 to 2025).

Messi, with a brace in presumably last home qualifying match in his career, equaled Cristiano Ronaldo as the 2nd highest scorer in World Cup qualifying history (36 goals both). He surpassed Ali Daei (35). The record belongs to Guatemala's Carlos Ruiz (39).

These goals are the first Messi's for Argentina in 2025.

The next in this ranking are Robbie Keane, scoring for Republic of Ireland during 19 successive years (1998 to 2016),

Edin Džeko, scoring for Bosnia and Herzegovina during the same period (2007 to 2025).

Messi equaled Ecuador's Iván Hurtado as the player with most appearances (72) in the history of South American Qualifiers.

## Iran wins eight medals at AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian karate athletes won two gold, two silver and four bronze medals at the AKF Cadet, Junior & U-21 Championships.

Setayesh Ghane'ei in the women's -54kg and Setayesh Afshar in the women's +61kg won two gold medals.

Arshia Moalemi and Fariar Bahadori in the men's -63kg and -70kg seized two silver medals.

Iran's Kata Team Cadet and Junior Female and Kata Team Cadet and Junior Male, Ava Farmani in the women's -47kg, and Dina Karimi in the women's -61kg claimed four bronze medals.

Shaoguan, China has become the center of Asian karate from September 5 to 7, as the city hosts the AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships.

More than 500 young athletes from 30 countries gather to compete in the three-day event, aiming to take home continental titles and prove themselves as the future stars of the sport.

This year's event follows on from a successful edition in Manila, Philippines, in 2023. That tournament brought together over 500 athletes from 28 nations, with Japan finishing at the top of the medal table. The Japanese squad claimed 16 gold medals, ahead of Iran with 10 and Kazakhstan with 4.

As Asia's future champions prepare to compete, the Shaoguan championships will provide fans and officials with a glimpse of what lies ahead for the sport. For many young athletes, this is the biggest stage of their careers so far — and the first step toward becoming the next great names in karate.



## Iran, China expand cooperation on energy projects



TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Company (Tavanir) said the country has stepped up collaboration with Chinese firms in areas such as smart grids, gas switchgear equipment, energy storage systems and other related technologies, with some production lines already operating inside Iran.

Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, speaking at a joint meeting with representatives of Chinese state and private companies, stressed the need to harness new technologies in renewable energy, electric storage and pumped-storage plants. He called for broader technical cooperation and the transfer of know-how to Iran.

Highlighting Iran's push to expand so-

## Petchem output hits 32m tons in 5 months, \$5.5b exported

TEHRAN – Iran produced 32 million tons of petrochemical products in the first five months of the current Iranian year to late August, with 13 million tons worth \$5.5 billion exported, the head of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said.

Hassan Abbaszadeh, who also serves as deputy oil minister, told reporters on Wednesday that another seven million tons valued at \$4.0 billion were sold in the domestic market.

He said the sector continued operating with minimal disruption despite recent unrest, adding that the industry gained important lessons from a recent 12-day conflict.

Abbaszadeh said NPC was prioritizing completion of development and infrastructure projects. He noted that 15 petrochemical production plants, four feedstock projects, three utility units and four infrastructure projects were planned to come on stream in 2025. Six projects, including the first phase of a flare gas recovery plant in East Karoun, are already completed and awaiting inauguration. Together they will add 2.7 million cubic meters of gas to petrochemical feedstock.

He put the total planned investment for 2025 projects at \$6.0 billion, saying they would expand industry capacity by 9.8 million tons.

Despite a nominal capacity of nearly 100 million tons, about 22 percent remains idle due to feedstock shortages, Abbaszadeh said. A task force has been formed to tackle supply issues, while large petrochemical firms are being encouraged under the seventh development plan to invest in upstream gas fields.

The flare gas recovery drive is a key measure to secure feedstock, with many flares in oil-rich regions already being extinguished, he added.

Abbaszadeh said NPC had broadened its customer base, especially in Africa, with feasibility studies carried out for markets including India. Eleven inactive projects lost their permits, freeing up 14 million cubic meters of feedstock gas that has been redirected into the value chain.

## Iran to digitize oil tanker fleet within 2 years, refining company says

TEHRAN – National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) has launched a major digital transformation program to modernize its supply chain, with all domestic oil tankers set to be equipped with real-time monitoring systems within two years, a senior official said.

Farzad Barzegar, adviser to the NIORDC head, told Iran Petroleum Monthly that the "smart supply chain" project prioritizes tighter oversight of pipelines, refineries and tankers to boost efficiency, cut risks and curb fuel

smuggling. lar power, Rajabi Mashhadi said the use of energy storage systems was vital for renewable growth. He added that developing pumped-storage plants would help strengthen the stability of the country's vast and diverse power grid. The Energy Ministry is actively pursuing this to ensure renewables can grow without creating strains on the grid.

He said Tavanir's approach in past projects was not only to import technology but also to ensure technical knowledge was transferred into the country. "Cooperation should not be limited to equipment supply," he noted, urging agreements that accelerate localization of technologies.

Rajabi Mashhadi added that mutual visits by expert teams and operational site inspections would deepen collaboration.

The Chinese side referred to two ongoing contracts with Iran — a 1,500-megawatt project and a \$600 million package — and voiced readiness to expand joint work in energy and financing new projects.

The meeting was also attended by Iranian battery and power equipment manufacturers, who discussed technical cooperation and pathways to accelerate technology transfer.

He noted that petrochemical plants currently use only about 4.5 percent of Iran's daily 700 million cubic meters of gas, compared to nearly half consumed by households and a quarter by power plants. Energy efficiency programs, including replacing household heaters and reducing gas and electricity consumption by 10 percent for 140,000 customers in five cold provinces, have helped sustain petrochemical output.

The official said NPC had taken preventive steps to protect coastal mangrove forests and would host a conference on plastic pollution on Saturday with Environment Organization chief Shina Ansari.

He announced that the 19th IranPlast exhibition would host about 750 domestic and 67 foreign companies, including direct participants from China and India. Some firms withdrew due to the 12-day conflict, missing final registration.

Petrochemical firms are also investing in power generation, including renewable projects. The Kaveh Methanol project has launched power units in Dayyer and Saveh, and a 600-megawatt wind farm is being installed in Sistan-Baluchestan, he said.

Abbaszadeh also confirmed that Bakhtar Petrochemical and Petrofarhang Holding will develop upstream gas fields with a 35 million cubic meter capacity, while other firms are studying participation.

On regulation, he said the NPC statute was under parliamentary review and called for the Competition Council to define regulators for the industry by the end of the current development plan.

He added that the Oil Ministry was pushing leadership renewal by discouraging contract extensions for senior managers, with succession plans requiring new appointments a year before retirement.

Abbaszadeh said new ethylene projects would come online by year-end, with tighter planning to ensure downstream units are completed quickly so that no excess ethylene is wasted.

smuggling.

Formed in 1991 to unify fragmented operations in refining, fuel transport and distribution, NIORDC is now shifting its vast nationwide network onto a fully data-driven platform. Barzegar said the company was building a system in which sensors and automated collection tools feed a central data structure, forming the basis for later deployment of artificial intelligence in operations such as fuel distribution planning.

# South Korean National Day, Armed Forces Day celebrated in Tehran

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- On the evening of Thursday, September 4, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in Tehran successfully hosted a reception to commemorate South Korea's National Day and Armed Forces Day.

The event, held at the Ambassador's residence, was well-attended by members of the diplomatic corps and Iranian officials.

The program effectively blended Korean and Iranian cultural elements, featuring formal remarks, musical performances, a dinner featuring both cuisines, and a Taekwondo demonstration. The event served as a positive platform for cultural diplomacy and strengthening bilateral ties.

The event demonstrated strong diplomatic engagement. Attendees included:

- \* Foreign Diplomats: A numerous contingent of ambassadors, charges d'affaires, and other diplomatic staff.

- \* Military Attachés: Representatives from various foreign defense attaché offices.

- \* Iranian Officials: The guest list included senior Iranian government representatives, notably Mr. Hamid Ghanbari, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Economic Diplomacy.

The ceremony was structured to provide an engaging and culturally rich experience for the guests.

### Opening Address

The event commenced with a formal speech by His Excellency Ambassador Kim Junpyo. The address set the tone for the evening, reflecting on the significance of the dual celebration and undoubtedly addressing the state of bilateral relations between the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The following is the text of Mr. Ambassador's speech.

His Excellency Dr. Hamid Ghanbari, Deputy Minister of Economic Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

Salam. Khosh amadid! Khosh-halam ke mibinametoon.

Kheili mamnoon ke tashrif avordid.

Good evening, and a very warm welcome to all of you. It is a great honor to be with you tonight to celebrate the Korean National Day. I am pleased to have so many friends of Korea and Iran here.

On this occasion, I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to the victims of the war in June and their loved ones. I also deeply admire the courage and resilience you have shown during those challenging days.

Truly, it is delightful to see you here today in good health and high spirits.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

Have you heard the story of the Kushnameh? Kushnameh is a 7th-century Persian epic about a Persian prince who traveled to Korea and fell in love with a Korean princess.



Yes. More than a thousand years ago, Korea and Iran were already writing love stories together! This story is a reminder of the deep roots of our friendship.

Building on this historical connection, Korea and Iran have maintained a close relationship over the 63 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1962.

Korea and Iran share a lot of similarities. We both cherish family values. We both respect our elders, We both take pride in our traditions of literature, music, and art.

These shared traditions bring our people closer. And this closeness is most vividly reflected in our cultural exchanges.

Ever since the drama Jumong captured the hearts of Iranians, K-dramas have been loved here.

At the same time, Koreans are inspired by the cultural richness of Iran.

Maestro Kayhan Kalhor, renowned 'Kamanche' player, delivered a remarkable performance in Korea last year and won the hearts of many Koreans. And many Iranian films continue to be featured at the Busan International Film Festival.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Perhaps the strongest bridge between us is Taekwondo. It is Korea's traditional martial art. However, Taekwondo has found a second capital here in Iran.

These days, nearly three million Iranians practice Taekwondo. And Iranians are not just practicing. They are excelling.

At the Paris Olympics last year, Iran's Taekwondo team made history, by winning 4 medals: one gold, two silver, and one bronze.

I also thank Mr. Hadi Saei and Iran Taekwondo Federation.

Thanks to their dedication, we revived the Korea-Iran Friendship Championship last year after a long pause since 2019, and another will be held next month.

Sports keep bringing us closer in other ways too. Last year, legendary Korean volleyball player Ms. Lee Do-hee became the coach of Iran's Women's National Volleyball Team. With her guidance, I am confident the team will shine at the next Olympics.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

Our friendship is reflected not only in sports and culture, but

also in the people themselves. Many Korean expatriates and an-Iranian families have made Iran their home. They are living bridges of friendship, bringing our peoples closer and fostering mutual understanding.

Since my arrival in Tehran last year, I have also worked to advance our relationship by promoting high-level exchanges.

This commitment has led us to resume high-level visits, including the Deputy Foreign Minister's visit to Iran.

Not just once, but twice last year alone. Our Foreign Ministers also met in New York last year. And in Seoul this year, DG level policy consultations were held for the first time in seven years.

The fields of vocational training and education provide another important platform that builds stronger connections between two countries.

In cooperation with UNESCO and Iran's TVTO, we successfully launched the project for modernization of Instructor Training Center, to which Korea contributed 7.5 million dollars.

Moreover, through our scholarship programs, many young Iranians are now studying in Korea. They are not only gaining knowledge, but also forging friendship that will last a lifetime.

I believe they will become the future leaders of Korea-Iran friendship.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As shown in the highlight video earlier, the Embassy of Republic of Korea has been making continuous efforts to reach out more closely to the Iranian people.

Through a wide range of cultural events and visits to different provinces, we have sought to build bridges of understanding and friendship.

This year alone, we organized events such as 'Quiz on Korea', 'Korean Speech Contest', and 'K-culture unboxing events'.

We also traveled from Shiraz to Sanandaj - and everywhere, we felt your warmth and hospitality. Mehrabani-ye shoma hichvaght faramoosh nemishe. Besiyar sepasgozaram.

Among these experiences, my most memorable one was singing the Iranian song Porsoon Porsoon with the Istgah Orchestra.

I was deeply moved by the tremendous response and encour-

agement from so many Iranian people.

Mamnoonam ke az man be garmi esteghbal kardid.

And also, I would like to thank Mr. Mahdi Noruzi and the Istgah Orchestra once again for sharing their music with us tonight.

Yes. Of course, my team and I will continue to do our best to bring Koreans and Iranians even closer. I look forward to all of you playing an important role in this endeavor.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen

Before closing, I want to thank my wonderful Embassy members. They worked day and night to prepare this evening.

Even during the war time, they stood here together as one team, overcoming challenges side by side.

And finally, as you know, no celebration of Korean culture would be complete without K-food. Tonight, we have prepared a wide variety of authentic dishes.

I warmly invite you to enjoy them and experience the true flavors and spirit of Korea.

Once again, khosh amadid va az hamegi besiyar tashakor mikonam.

### Cultural Performances

Following the speech, the program featured a blend of Korean and Iranian cultural elements:

- \* Musical Performance: An Iranian band performed a selection of both Korean and Iranian songs, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere.

### Dining

Guests were treated to a dinner that featured a diverse variety of delicious Korean foods alongside a selection of Iranian dishes. This culinary diplomacy was a highlight, allowing attendees to experience Korean culture firsthand.

### Taekwondo Demonstration

The event concluded with a highly exciting Taekwondo demonstration performed by the Iranian Takavaran Demonstration Team.

The performance, marking the World Taekwondo Day, was noted as a major success, greatly exciting the attendees and showcasing a key aspect of Korean martial culture as adopted and excelled in by Iranians.

The reception was a significant and well-executed diplomatic event. The careful curation of the program, which seamlessly integrated Korean and Iranian cultural performances and cuisines, successfully promoted cross-cultural understanding.

The high-level attendance from both the diplomatic corps and the Iranian government indicates the importance of the Republic of Korea's diplomatic mission in Tehran.

The event ultimately served its purpose as an effective exercise in soft power and public diplomacy, strengthening the Republic of Korea's presence and fostering positive relations within the host country.

## Iran boosts monthly oil exports by 630,000 barrels: oil minister

proven in the area, with drilling extending to 750 meters near an old demarcation line.

The Foreign Ministry is handling the matter diplomatically, he said, adding that once resolved, the Oil Ministry was prepared to move forward with development if part of the field is confirmed to be Iranian.

Paknejad said imported premium gasoline would soon be available at fuel stations. He emphasized that its supply would not affect existing quotas or prices of regular gasoline but would be offered as an additional service.

Pricing would be handled by private suppliers, he added, giving consumers the option to buy premium fuel if they wished.

On the possibility of gas cuts for industries this winter, Paknejad said allocations would depend on consumption in the household and commercial sectors, which typically rise as temperatures fall.

"When demand increases in that segment, industries and power plants will naturally have to rely more on alternative fuels such as gasoil," he said.



From Page 1 ► "This is just a claim," he said, pointing out that the field was first discovered in the 1960s and its first exploration well, "Arash-1," was drilled in the late 1990s.

He added that hydrocarbon reserves were



# ‘Sumud’ flotilla heads for Gaza with over 50 vessels despite Israeli threats

The Global Sumud Flotilla — named for the Arabic word meaning steadfastness, a principle of unyielding resistance — is pressing across the Mediterranean toward Tunisia, part of a bid to break Israel’s 18-year naval blockade of Gaza.

More than 50 vessels carrying humanitarian aid and hundreds of activists are expected to join the mission before it turns east toward the besieged enclave.

Organizers say the mission is “entirely peaceful, lawful, and unstoppable,” embodying the very spirit of Sumud despite threats from Israeli officials to intercept the ships.

Departing Menorca and Barcelona earlier this week, the flotilla — now joined by vessels from Tunisia, Italy, and beyond — is expected to expand to over 50 ships before sailing toward the besieged enclave.

Activists stress the mission is urgent: Gaza has entered its 700th day of devastation, with more than 64,000 Palestinians killed in Israel’s war and the UN warning of famine across the strip.



Among those on board are French parliamentarian Marie Mesmeur of La France Insoumise, who described the mission as “the largest peaceful popular initiative to support Palestinians in Gaza” and urged President Emmanuel Macron to recognize Israel’s actions as genocide.

Mandla Mandela, grandson of Nelson Mandela, joined the Tunisian leg of the journey, declaring: “The Palestinians are experiencing a far worse form of apartheid than we ever experienced.”

International voices have amplified support. Colombian President Gustavo Petro praised participants for choosing “the most difficult and dangerous path: that of action in the face of brutal violence.”

Francisca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, confirmed the flotilla “fully complies with international law,” while dockworkers in Genoa pledged to block shipments to Israel if the convoy is attacked.

The flotilla also includes Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who denounced what she called “genocidal political propaganda” by Israeli officials seeking to intimidate participants. Irish actor

Liam Cunningham, Spanish actor Eduardo Fernández, and former Barcelona mayor Ada Colau are among cultural figures lending visibility to the mission.

Israel’s far-right National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, called the activists “terrorists,” prompting outrage from organizers, who denounced Israel for criminalizing humanitarian solidarity.

Previous flotillas, including the 2010 Mavi Marmara raid that killed 10 activists, were violently blocked. More recent attempts in 2024 and 2025 were met with drone strikes and mass detentions in international waters.

This time, organizers insist, the world is watching. “Our mission is humanitarian, lawful, and unstoppable,” the coalition said in a statement. “We cannot accept living in comfort while the people of Gaza remain under blockade and genocide.”

As the flotilla edges closer to Gaza, its success may not only be measured by whether it reaches the enclave, but by how it forces governments and publics to confront the reality of Israel’s siege.

## ‘Mouthpiece of IDF butchers’: Israeli president faces arrest calls ahead of UK visit

From page 1 ► John McDonnell, the former shadow chancellor, argued that Herzog should be barred from entering the UK. “I am appalled at the decision to allow this representative of a government that is systematically killing Palestinian children on a daily basis to visit our country,” he said, according to the UK news outlet. McDonnell added, “The prime minister is proving to be absolutely tone deaf to the desperate plight of the Palestinian people and the overwhelming feelings of revulsion among the British public at the brutality of the government Herzog represents. Herzog is the mouthpiece of the IDF butchers and should never be allowed near our country.”

Labour MP Sarah Champion, chair of the international development committee, expressed her concerns on X, questioning the purpose of the proposed meeting: “The UK has recognized the ‘real risk’ of genocide perpetuated by Israel, so unless this meeting is about peace, what message are we sending?”



MP for Coventry South, Zarah Sultana, called for Herzog’s arrest. “Beyond disgusted that Israeli President Herzog is set to visit London next week to meet Labour ministers. The Labour Party is living up to its reputation as The Genocide Party. Herzog should be arrested for war crimes the moment he sets foot on UK soil,” she wrote on X.

Unlike Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, there is currently no international arrest warrant for Herzog, who has largely support-

ed Israel’s military operations in Gaza.

The controversy over Herzog’s visit comes after Starmer condemned the “terrible situation” in Gaza this week. He has indicated that the UK may recognize a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly this month, unless Israel meets certain conditions it appears unlikely to fulfill. Critics argue, however, that Starmer’s stance amounts more to a charm offensive toward Palestinians, intended to deflect criticism over the UK’s continued military support for Israel.

Political pressure on Israel is undoubtedly crucial to halting the war in Gaza, which has claimed more than 64,000 Palestinian lives since October 2023. Yet unless that pressure is backed by concrete actions, statements of concern risk remaining symbolic gestures rather than meaningful steps toward peace. The Herzog visit now serves as a litmus test: whether the UK will take a firm stand for Palestinian lives, or allow diplomacy to be reduced to empty optics.

## Slovak PM in China: Building partnerships for a fairer global future

From page 1 ► or to reject it outright because it breaks ranks with Brussels. Both reactions miss the real question: what do such visits mean for the people of Slovakia?

### The global stage

Beijing knows how to stage history. A military parade, group photographs of leaders, and speeches wrapped in slogans such as “the world is changing” and “peace versus war.” The event sent a clear message: the West no longer monopolises the global narrative.

Xi Jinping used the occasion to praise Slovakia’s “positive role in promoting China-EU relations.” Fico responded by speaking of “accelerating economic cooperation” with China, hoping to secure investments that have so far eluded Slovakia. At the same time, he declared a desire to “normalise relations with Russia” and expand gas imports from Gazprom, a stance sharply at odds with EU policy.

This was more than symbolism. It was a performance of shifting alliances in a world where the “Global South” is asserting itself against Western dominance.

### A shared history — and a missed opportunity

Slovakia is right to develop relations with countries of the Global South and the wider “global majority.” These nations, from China to Latin America, have lived through colonial domination and economic exploitation. Their his-

tories are not distant from ours. Slovakia too has known what it means to be treated as a periphery, a territory whose resources and labour are subordinated to foreign capital.

After the Second World War, both the USSR and China deliberately chose non-capitalist development paths. Their socialist projects—however contradictory—were grounded in the belief that societies must be freed from imperialist dependency. That experience resonates with us. Slovakia can and should seek cooperation with countries that aspire to a more equitable, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist world order.

But this is exactly where Fico falls short. Instead of giving his visits this deeper and more profound meaning, he reduces them to anti-EU rhetoric. Rather than framing Slovakia’s outreach as part of a liberating, anti-capitalist project, he plays the tired card of “standing up to Brussels.” In practice, this makes his trips little more than photo-ops, designed to exploit anti-EU sentiment at home and prepare himself for the next election—gestures that bring no real value to Slovak society.

### The central question

This is why the real issue is not whether Fico looked presidential in Beijing or whether Brussels felt embarrassed. The real issue is whether foreign policy choices are used to build a socialising and liberating path at home.

Will new ties with China or Russia lower the cost of living for Slovaks, strengthen our health care, or fund our schools? Will they protect us from the exploitation of foreign capital, or merely replace one exploiter with another?

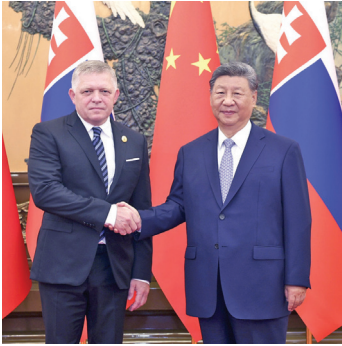
At present, food prices remain high, hospitals are under pressure, education is neglected, and young people continue to emigrate. No handshake with Xi Jinping or Vladimir Putin changes that.

Foreign relations only matter if they allow Slovakia to overcome its peripheral status and pursue development that is not dictated by external profit motives—Western or Eastern. That means investing in education, raising wages, and building institutions that strengthen social solidarity. In short, the task is to liberate Slovaks from the grip of capital itself, not to shift from one dependency to another.

### Accountability at home

In a democracy, governments change. If Fico loses the next election what remains of this “eastern opening” if it is not tied to tangible domestic progress? Grand strategies will collapse unless they deliver real improvements in the lives of ordinary Slovaks.

That is why accountability matters. We must hold Fico not for the photo-ops in Beijing, but for whether his government uses diplomacy to secure genuine so-



cial development. And we must prepare the next generation of Slovaks to navigate global politics in a way that serves liberation rather than dependency.

Slovakia’s place in the world will not be defined by whether Fico sits closer to Brussels, Beijing, or Moscow. It will be defined by whether foreign ties are used to build a society that is freer, fairer, and less dominated by capital.

And this is the real criticism of Fico: he talks loudly about resisting Brussels, but he fails to articulate the only vision that could give these foreign ties real meaning—an anti-capitalist, liberating path that lifts Slovaks out of exploitation. Without that, his visits abroad are nothing more than electoral theatre: photo-ops for domestic consumption, empty of substance, and devoid of real value for our future.

(Lucia Hubinská is a university lecturer, activist, commentator, and publicist from Slovakia who has participated in the BRICS Summer School in South Africa.)

## Shifting US political landscape threatens Israel’s traditional congressional influence

### Decline of the Israel lobby’s congressional influence

Trump began by acknowledging a dramatic reduction in the lobbying power Israel once held in Congress. He characterized the pre-eminent status of the Israeli lobby over the past two decades as unparalleled: “Israel had the strongest lobby in Congress of anything or body, or of any company or corporation or state that I’ve ever seen,” he told the Daily Caller. Yet today, “it doesn’t have that strong a lobby,” he added, expressing surprise at this erosion of influence.

Historically, organizations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) were instrumental in securing bipartisan and near-universal congressional support for Israel. This support translated into steady flow of military aid, diplomatic backing, and political protection. However, Trump cited shifts beginning approximately 15 years ago, evolving toward an environment where politicians could openly criticize Israel without instant political repercussions—a scenario he suggested would have been unthinkable in prior decades.

### America’s changing views on Israel and military aid

This shift aligns with recent polling data that reveal a marked drop in favorable public opinion about Israel among Americans. A March Pew Research Center survey showed

that 53% of U.S. adults held an unfavorable view of Israel in 2025, up from 42% in 2022. More striking was the change among younger Republicans aligned with the “America First” or MAGA movement, where unfavorable views rose from 35% to 50% within a similar timeframe. Other polls, including Quinnipiac University’s, indicated 60% of U.S. voters opposed sending additional military aid to Israel post-Hamas’s October 7, 2023, attacks.

Prominent figures within Trump’s own orbit also embody this realignment. Georgia Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene has controversially accused Israel of “genocide” in Gaza, while former Trump strategist Steve Bannon has questioned Israel’s status as a reliable U.S. ally, branding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s bloc as untrustworthy.

### Impact of the Gaza war on Israel’s image and US support

Trump’s commentary expressly linked the ongoing conflict in Gaza to the erosion of Israel’s political and public relations standing. He acknowledged Israel’s military successes but warned that the humanitarian toll and international backlash are damaging its global reputation and political capital in the U.S.: “They may be winning the war, but they’re not winning the world of public relations,” he observed.

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

## Gaza genocide passes 700 days

From page 1 ► “Seven hundred days, and the world continues to witness, in sound and image, one of the most horrific genocides in modern history,” the Hamas statement read.

The resistance movement accused the Israeli occupation government of violating all international laws and humanitarian norms meant to protect civilians during armed conflicts.

It said the Israeli regime has openly pursued a policy of genocide and forced displacement against the Palestinian people through massacres, starvation, siege, and the denial of basic necessities for human survival.

The movement emphasized that Israeli actions constitute full-scale genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced displacement.

It also placed direct blame on the United States administration for enabling these war crimes by providing political and military sup-

port to the occupation, and by obstructing United Nations institutions from fulfilling their role in halting the violence and holding those responsible accountable.

Hamas renewed its call to the international community, including Arab and Islamic nations, the United Nations, and especially the UN Security Council, to take immediate and effective action. The movement stressed that statements of condemnation are no longer sufficient.

Additionally, Hamas praised the growing global grassroots solidarity with the Palestinian people and welcomed the launch of the international “Fleet of Steadfastness,” aimed at breaking the blockade on Gaza.

The movement urged people across the Arab and Islamic world, as well as supporters of justice worldwide, to escalate their protests and mobilizations in cities and public squares until the genocide ends and the siege is lifted.

## The lie of “arms exclusivity” to uproot the resistance!

From page 1 ► It must be noted that the history of this conspiracy is deep-rooted, predating the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the emergence of Hezbollah. It reached its peak during the 1950s and the expansion of the Nasserist nationalist project.

The imperialist-Zionist alliance has always tried, through its local tools, to bring the battle to the streets of Lebanon and give it a sectarian dimension.

Hence, the current desperate call to disarm Hezbollah in Lebanon goes beyond the commonly used pretext of the state’s right to monopolize arms.

Lebanon has long failed utterly to build an army capable of deterring the Zionist enemy. The imperialist West does not permit, nor does it want, the presence of any strong Arab army on its borders.

It should also be noted that one of Lebanon’s most prominent dilemmas is its sectarian constitution.

The arms, according to the Zionist-imperialist conspiracy, is for fighting the takfiri extremist groups, which have not fired a single bullet at the Zionist enemy.

Likewise, the arming of any submissive regime controlled by Western intelligence agencies is permitted, in parallel with the dissemination of sectarian projects.

The best evidence of this is the recent events in Syria, where the government led by Hayaat Tahrir al-Sham did not hesitate to declare its

objective alliance with the Israeli enemy, even reaching the point of setting up joint checkpoints just 12 kilometers from the capital, Damascus.

This Zionist-imperialist conspiracy aims to eliminate every threat to the Zionist regime’s expansion. It further aims to establish demilitarized cantons, not prosperous, independent cantons.

This ensures the realization of the well-known Talmudic homeland extending from the Persian Gulf to Haifa. The path to achieving this required, and continues to require, an end to all resistance movements, especially after the failure of the fabricated color revolutions.

This Zionist-imperialist conspiracy is altering the demographic maps of West Asia to control South Lebanon’s gas and oil reserves, as well as the entire water basin extending from south of the Litani River to the Yarmouk Basin, passing through the Golan Heights.

This conspiracy has repeatedly failed to break the will of the nationalist resistance movement, as occurred in June 1982 and subsequent attacks in 1993, 1996, 2006, and 2024.

The anti-resistance team knows that there is no force in the world that can help them eliminate or disarm Hezbollah, despite their efforts to embroil the Lebanese army and some Lebanese forces in a civil war, as well as to involve takfiri terrorist groups, transforming the entire region into an arena for sectarian tensions. Nevertheless, the Hezbollah possesses a great deal of patience and wisdom!



## Qom to become a tourism hub within five years, minister says

TEHRAN—Qom province will gain special status in domestic and foreign tourism within five years through expanding the infrastructures, supporting the private sector and continued management stability, said Cultural Heritage Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri.

According to ISNA, speaking on the sidelines of inauguration of Avaye Qom Hotel on Wednesday, he said: “Our first visit to the province’s industrial and production capacities was at the Chamber of Commerce; the exhibitions demonstrate the significant development of the industrial, commercial, and tourism infrastructure, and promises a bright future for investment and economic growth in Qom province.”

Referring to the opening of a recreational complex, Salehi-Amiri said: “This project, with an area of 11,000 square meters and an investment of 4,500 billion rials (\$4.5 million) from the private sector, will provide a recreational and invigorating space for young people and will meet some of the needs of the younger generation.”

Avaye Qom Hotel, with private investment and modern design, provides a 100-bed accommodation capacity and reflects the growth of the province’s tourism infrastructure, he said. This three-star hotel, with its architecture and regular layout, creates a suitable experience for domestic and foreign tourists, he added.

Expressing his appreciation to Qom Governor-General, he emphasized that the governor-general, with his detailed understanding of the tourism sector and successful experience, has played an important role in developing the province’s infrastructure and activating unfinished projects.

He continued that Qom with its cultural heritage and handicrafts capacity and drawing domestic and foreign tourists, can turn into one of Iran’s tourism hubs. It can be a major pilgrimage destination following Mashhad and Shiraz, he added.

“To attract tourists, infrastructure development is essential; tourists must have appropriate accommodation, welfare services,



and recreational facilities, and this is not possible without the participation and investment of the private sector.”

Regarding the government’s planning in the tourism field, he said that according to the Seventh Plan, the target of an annual growth of 25 to 30 percent in Qom tourism has been set, and with the cooperation of the provincial administration and investors, this goal can be achieved.

He added that the pilgrimage area, especially Jamkaran and the holy shrine of Hazrat Masoumeh (SA), has the capacity to attract millions of domestic and foreign tourists, and infrastructure projects are on the path to activation in cooperation with the private sector.

Referring to last year’s statistics, he said that nearly 7.4 million foreign tourists entered the country, and with the plans made, the goal of increasing Iraqi tourists to five million has been set in cooperation with Iraqi Minister.

Salehi-Amiri clarified that the activation of Qom Airport will enable direct entry of tourists from the Persian Gulf countries and other regions, and it can be the second destination for tourists for domestic and pilgrimage trips.

He emphasized: “Today’s visit to the province’s industrial and tourism projects and discussions with investors indicate rapid growth and tangible changes in the city, lifestyle and architecture of Qom, and this conveys a clear message of the province’s progress to the government.”

## Managers of Iraq travel agencies visit UNESCO World Heritage site of Bisotun

TEHRAN—A number of managers of Iraqi travel agencies visited the UNESCO World Heritage site of Bisotun and all the attractions and historical monuments of Bisotun complex during September 2-5.

The visit aimed for increasing the tourism cooperation between Iran and Iraq and introducing Iran’s historical attractions to Iraqi tourists, IRIB reported.

Bisotun site is one of the most important and unique cultural heritages of Iran. It includes artifacts pertaining to Achaemenid era comprising ancient inscriptions, magnificent bas-reliefs and numerous historical monuments.

Along with its pristine nature and captivating landscapes, it offers a unique combination of history and nature.

After visiting Bisotun complex, Iraqi tourism managers appreciated the historical and natural richness of this region. They said that Bisotun complex is not only a historical site, but also a living and valuable treasure of ancient Iran’s culture and art.

Iraqi guests also paid special attention to the large Achaemenid reliefs carved into the huge stones, deeming it worthy of global attention.

The complex’s tourist guide provided comprehensive explanations about the history of Bisotun, the importance of the existing historical monuments, and the surrounding natural landscapes, providing a better understanding of the complex and answering the questions of Iraqi guests.

The familiarization tour of managers of travel agencies of the Arab part of Iraq, with the participation of 14 people, was hosted by Kermanshah Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department.

As a world-registered site, Bisotun is a symbol of identity not only for the Kermanshah people, but also for Iran as a whole, and

it must be protected.

Located 30 kilometers east of the provincial capital Kermanshah, at the foot of the Zagros Mountains, Bisotun was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage list on July 13, 2006.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures.

The area was on the ancient trade route linking the Iranian high plateau with Mesopotamia and contains remains from prehistoric times to the Median and Achaemenid eras.

The principal monument of this archaeological site is the bas-relief and cuneiform inscription ordered by Darius the Great shortly after he ascended to the throne of the Persian Empire in 521 BC.

UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values in the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Kermanshah is a region celebrated for its profound historical and cultural significance. Set against the backdrop of the Zagros Mountains, Kermanshah has been an important center of civilization since ancient times.

The province boasts remarkable archaeological treasures, including the monumental rock reliefs of Taq-e Bostan and the ancient inscriptions at Bisotun, which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Beyond its historical allure, Kermanshah features breathtaking natural landscapes, such as the serene Sarab-e Niloofar Spring, the dramatic Quri Qal’eh water cave, and the picturesque Parishan waterfall.

With its blend of historical marvels and natural wonders, Kermanshah offers a rich tapestry of experiences that continue to captivate visitors and highlight Iran’s diverse heritage.

# Tehran eyes more medical tourists from Islamic countries, officials say

TEHRAN — Tehran is on track to become a hub of medical tourism for Islamic countries, the secretary general of the Islamic Countries Health Tourism Development Center said on Thursday.

Majid Zangooei told the fourth International Conference on Health Tourism of Islamic Countries, held at the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting conference hall, that a proposal has been made to designate Tehran as the capital of medical tourism for Islamic nations.

He described the initiative as an opportunity to expand Iran’s tourism industry.

Zangooei said restrictive views within the health economy remain an obstacle to growth despite Iran’s capabilities in the sector.

He called for reducing state control and transferring administration of health tourism to professional bodies such as the Iranian Medical Council.

He added that engaging stu-



dents in international health tourism programs would discourage migration and expand cooperation across Islamic countries, as well as Europe and Africa.

According to Zangooei, Tehran Municipality has taken a leading role in supporting entrepreneurs in

the sector.

Mohammad Raeiszadeh, head of the Iranian Medical Council, said the country’s medical sector has the capacity to make Iran a recognized destination for medical tourism.

He cited strengths in cardiac

surgery, ophthalmology, and advanced treatment techniques as evidence of international-level expertise.

Raeiszadeh said the council, with 220 boards and 400 active members, continues to work closely with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to develop the industry.

He pointed to Iran’s modern hospitals, medical facilities, accommodation standards, and cultural attractions as assets for drawing foreign patients.

Iran’s long history in medical science should also be highlighted internationally, Raeiszadeh added, saying the country’s achievements can enhance its reputation and attract patients from abroad.

He also called for clear legislation and a defined framework from the government, saying Iran has the potential to host patients from around the world and become a leading destination for medical tourism.

## 63 coins bearing Prophet Muhammad’s name to be unveiled in Unity Week



File photo depicts a centuries-old coin bearing the name of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

TEHRAN – Iran will unveil 63 historical coins inscribed with the name of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the first time during Islamic Unity Week, officials said on Thursday.

Hamidreza Soleimani, head of the Dafineh Museums Group, said the coins will be presented on Sunday, Sept. 7, at a ceremony marking the 1,500th anniversary of the Prophet’s birth. The event will take place at the Shahid Zehedi Hall of the Mostazafan Foundation in Tehran, he added.

Soleimani said the 63 coins, symbolizing the years of the Prophet’s life, were selected from the foundation’s treasury of historic currency. Following the unveiling, they will be on public display for two weeks at the Astan Quds Razavi Museum in Mashhad.

The collection includes some of the most prominent gold dinars and silver dirhams from across the Islamic world, Soleimani said. The oldest coin dates back to the 7th century CE, while the most recent belongs to Iran’s Qajar period.

He said the coins span multiple dynasties, including the Abbasids, Samanids, Aghlabids, Tulunids, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Seljuks, Ilkhanids, Timurids, Safavids, Afsharids and Qajars. Their geographic origins include the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, Iran, Mesopotamia, the Levant and North Africa.

Islamic Unity Week is observed annually between the dates regarded by Sunni and Shia Muslims as the Prophet Muhammad’s birthday.

## BRICS TV to air over 50 hours of Iranian documentaries in Russian

TEHRAN — BRICS TV is set to broadcast more than 50 hours of Iranian documentaries dubbed in Russian starting in fall 2025, the network announced.

The programs will highlight Iran’s history, culture and tourist attractions and will also be shared with partner media outlets across Russian-speaking countries.

The agreement follows a cooperation deal signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and BRICS TV.

Network officials said additional documentaries and animated films focused on Iranian traditions, cuisine and tourism are also in production.

Masoud Ahmadvand, cultural counselor at Iran’s embassy in

Russia, said: “The screening of Iranian films and travel programs in Russia plays a significant role in strengthening cultural dialogue and mutual understanding between our peoples.

This initiative is an important step toward deeper and more trustworthy relations between Iran and Russia.”

Ksenia Komissarova, editor-in-chief of BRICS TV, said the Iranian documentaries will be added to the channel’s content library alongside productions from other BRICS member states and partners. She said screenings are also planned at the BRICS+ Cultural Media and Information Center in Moscow.

TV BRICS is set to broadcast three Iranian documentaries, including the first 12 episodes of



the series Above Fars (directed by Amin Malekzadeh), which explores the historical, natural, and cultural attractions of the republic.

The network will also broadcast the two-part documentary Saffron (directed by Abdollah Hadji Mohammadi) on the

production of Iran’s key export commodity, and the film Iranian Traveller (directed by Javad Garaei and Hamed Jam) on Iran’s heritage and remains.

BRICS TV previously aired Dot, a documentary by Amir Valinejad that focused on the art of Iranian calligraphy.

## ‘Majestic Iran’ tourism brand to be introduced in CITIE 2025



TEHRAN-- Iran is to participate in the 17th China (Guangdong) International Tourism Industry Expo (CITIE 2025), with the aim of introducing the country’s tourism vision (brand) under the title “Majestic Iran” and developing the Chinese tourist market.

According to ILNA, the Public Relations Department of Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI) said that this exhibition, which will be held in Guangzhou from September 11 to 13, will host Iran’s official presence for the first time, with the efforts of TACI as the representative of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in the field of holding the Iranian pavilion at international tourism exhibitions abroad.

Eight Iranian traveling and air services companies and a handicraft production company will be present in CITIE event and represent the country’s tourism industry.

Considering this international event as an opportunity for business-to-business (B2B) meet-

ings, they will introduce special travel packages of Iran and attract potential tourists from China.

Among the programs planned to be implemented in the Iran pavilion are the introduction of various Iran tourism services and packages, establishing contacts with Chinese tourism activists, introducing a new, safe and different image of Iran to the Chinese tourism market, and also implementing advertising campaigns after the end of the exhibition.

Iran’s presence at the CITIE 2025 will be an effective step towards developing target markets and increasing the country’s share of international tourism, especially in East Asia.

As one of the largest and most

prestigious tourism events in China, this exhibition is held annually with the participation of more than 50 countries and regions in an area of 30,000 square meters and hosts more than 20,000 tourism professionals, travel agencies and tour operators.

Guangdong province, as one of the richest provinces in China and with an annual population of more than 16 million inbound and outbound tourists, is an important market for the development of Iranian tourism.

Given the media position of this province and its promotional capacities, Iran’s presence in this exhibition can help redefine the image of our country as a safe, diverse, and cultural destination in the minds of Chinese tourists.



# Over 1m Iranians donate blood in 5 months

TEHRAN – A total of 1034 million Iranians donated blood in the first five months of the current Iranian year, which started on March 21, according to an official with the Blood Transfusion Organization

The highest blood donation growth was recorded in the provinces of Zanjan, North Khorasan (both with 13 percent), and Sistan-Baluchestan province (with 11 percent), Mehr news agency quoted Shahram Mirzaei as saying

The official went on to say that about 54 percent of blood donations, almost 557,000 blood units, come from regular blood donors

The provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan (with 115 percent), North Khorasan (more than eight percent), and Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad (over seven percent) hold the highest rates for continuous blood donation growth

During the same period, 52,600 women donated blood, with Lorestan and North Khorasan (about nine percent), Qazvin and Kermanshah (roughly eight percent) holding the highest shares, he added

Women's contribution in blood donation has significantly increased in Hormozgan, Fars, and Zanjan provinces, Mirzaei further noted



## WHO lauds IBTO's achievements

In January, the World Health Organization representative, Jaffar Hussain, admired the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization's (IBTO) leadership in blood safety and transfusion services, and highlighted their remarkable achievement of a 100 percent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation system, a testament to the principles of universal health coverage in action

He also thanked the blood donors, whose selflessness serves as an inspiration to all

Admiring the IBTO's efforts and expertise in providing services to patients with rare blood types, the official underscored Iran's capacity

to serve as a model for other nations in the realm of blood transfusion and rare blood management

Addressing National Rare Blood Day on January 22, the official praised the country's steadfast commitment to equitable healthcare access, ensuring that no one is left behind, regardless of their blood type

The official commended the country's unwavering dedication to tackling the unique challenges surrounding rare blood, emphasizing the critical importance of collaboration, innovation, and unwavering determination in this global endeavor, the WHO website announced in a press release on January 27

He lauded the Iranian Blood Trans-

fusion Organization's (IBTO) leadership in blood safety and transfusion services, highlighting their remarkable achievement of a 100 percent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation system, a testament to the principles of universal health coverage in action He also thanked the blood donors, whose selflessness serves as an inspiration to all

## Blood donation rises by 15% yr/yr

Some 236 million Iranians donated blood over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2024-March 2025), representing a 15 percent increase compared to the previous year

Tehran and Fars, Khorasan Razavi, Isfahan, Mazandaran, and Khuzestan provinces made the largest contributions, IRIB reported

Over the past (Iranian) year, some four million blood units, including blood products, were transferred to medical centers, IRIB quoted Hajji-Beigi, as saying

Men made up 95 percent of blood donors, while women's contribution amounted to five percent Women in Lorestan province, North Khorasan, and Sistan-Baluchestan had the highest share, he added

Highlighting the need for negative blood types, the official said 90 percent of donors had positive blood

## International Charity Day develops human solidarity culture

TEHRAN – Celebrated every year on September 5, the International Charity Day highlights the opportunity to commend philanthropists, the collective efforts to fight poverty, promote education, public health, as well as human solidarity culture

The day is an expression of global solidarity, bringing people together to build more just and resilient societies, whether through direct giving, volunteering, or collective action

The General Assembly of the United Nations designated the day in recognition of the role of charity in alleviating humanitarian crises and human suffering within and among nations, as well as of the efforts of charitable organizations and individuals, including the work of Mother Teresa

Today, the world is grappling with grand crises such as war, climate change, pandemics, and economic inequality

In such circumstances, the World Charity Day

underscores that being indifferent to the suffering of others is not only immoral but also a threat to global stability and security

World Charity Day is a reminder that charity is the common bond of humanity that transcends ethnic, religious, and political boundaries

Beyond immediate aid, charity strengthens healthcare, education, cultural preservation, and the protection of vulnerable groups (OECD) Today, charity and philanthropy alike are evolving to address the deeper causes of poverty and inequality

For instance, in Iran, some 51 percent of the schools in the country are constructed with the help of benefactors Their participation in constructing schools shows their will and commitment to improve educational opportunities and develop educational infrastructure; their efforts have positive, profound impacts on the education, students, and the future of the country

Charitable efforts now influence public policy, fund innovation, and support communities where public services fall short In fragile regions, they often fill critical gaps where governments cannot

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development puts ending poverty across all its dimensions at the center of the global mission Poverty isn't just a lack of income; it also means hunger, exclusion, unsafe living conditions, and limited access to education or healthcare Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires strong partnerships between governments, civil society, businesses, and charitable organizations working together

The International Day of Charity was established with the objective of sensitizing and mobilizing people, NGOs, and stakeholders all around the world to help others through volunteer and philanthropic activities

## ‘Cooperatives contribute to higher productivity, greater competitiveness in global markets’

TEHRAN – According to Farukh Toirov, the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to Iran, cooperatives help bring farmers together, enabling larger-scale farming, higher productivity, and greater competitiveness in global markets

“Introducing modern technologies and mechanization requires a minimum production scale, which individual smallholders cannot achieve alone,” the FAO website quoted Toirov as saying

The official made the remarks

while addressing the event, which was co-organized by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations

It was attended by Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri; Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare Minister Ahmad Meydani; as well as numerous ambassadors, senior government officials, and international representatives

Speaking as a panel member in a specialized session, Toirov emphasized that cooperatives are unique structures where

individuals come together to pursue common interests, generating both individual and collective benefits He noted that the strength of cooperatives lies in their ability to achieve “economies of scale,” where joint action produces results far greater than what members could achieve alone

Highlighting the essence of successful cooperatives, Mr Toirov stressed that members should not only safeguard their personal interests but also recognize and prioritize the collective good “If every member only

seeks personal advantage, the cooperative will eventually fail True success comes when common interests are placed at the center,” he said

Drawing on FAO's global experiences, Mr Toirov illustrated how leadership is a decisive factor in determining the success of cooperatives Recalling his past assignments in other countries, he explained that while groups with strong leaders thrived, those with weaker leadership structures often collapsed despite having the same resources, training, and opportunities

## IRCS dispatches humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

From page 1 ▶ “It is with profound sorrow that we learned about the devastating earthquake that hit Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan, and Laghman in eastern Afghanistan, causing many losses of life and injuries

The Iranian Red Crescent Society offers sincere condolences to you and the family of the victims

We stand by the people of Afghanistan, and we are ready to dispatch humanitarian aid as well as relief teams in case needed,” Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the IRCS, wrote in a message to the president of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), Shahabuddin Delawa, on Monday

On September 1st, President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed deep sorrow over the tragedy in the “friendly and brotherly” nation of Afghanistan He also wished a swift recovery for the injured

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi separately conveyed sympathy to the Afghan people and the families of the victims, emphasizing that Iran was fully prepared to dispatch relief and medical teams to the quake-hit areas

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei echoed the pledge, stressing that Iran stands



ready to support the treatment of the injured and to work with Afghanistan through regional and joint cooperation to ease the suffering caused by the disaster

Overall, the de facto authorities are now reporting 2,205 people killed and 3,640 people injured Some 84,000 people have been affected, with 6,700 homes destroyed, UNOCHA reported

A second earthquake of 5.5 magnitude struck the region on Tuesday, further destabilizing the villages

## Intl congress aims to elevate Iran's position in global cooperative diplomacy



TEHRAN – Taking place in the context of the United Nations (UN) International Year of Cooperatives 2025, the second International Congress on Cooperative Economy aims to strengthen international cooperation in the cooperative sector, promote innovation and productivity, and elevate Iran's position in global cooperative diplomacy

Supported by the UN in Iran, the event was held in Tehran on September 2 under the theme ‘Cooperatives Build a Better World’

This year's theme underscores the enduring global impact of cooperatives, positioning them as essential solutions to today's global challenges

It highlights their contributions to sustainable development across social, economic, and environmental dimensions, showing how cooperatives are key drivers in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030

The theme also emphasizes the unique ability of cooperatives to foster inclusive growth and strengthen community resilience

The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to explore the role of cooperatives in achieving sustainable development, economic resilience, and social equity, the UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Tehran reported

In his opening remarks, the UN Resident Coordinator in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Stefan Priesner, also emphasized that cooperatives drive global progress by creating jobs, promoting sustainability, and empowering communities

In Iran, they are the recognized “third pillar” of the economy, with over 104,000 cooperatives supporting agriculture, transport, fisheries, housing, and industry, making them key to national growth and resilience

“From the forests of Brazil to the fisheries of Iran, from the coffee plantations of Kenya

to the dairy farms of India – Cooperatives are proving every day that people, when united, can create prosperity with dignity

They are proving that Cooperatives are not just a means of economic empowerment, they are also vehicles of social inclusion,” added the Resident Coordinator

The congress gathered 1,120 participants from government ministries, UN agencies, funds and programs, international organizations, civil society, academia, and diplomatic missions

Other speakers from the UN system agencies included representatives from the UN Development Program (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

The conference's key themes focused on a range of relevant issues, including cooperatives and sustainable development, cooperative justice and community empowerment, the role of women and youth, innovative financing models, and cooperative integration into public sector reform and national value chains

The congress is organized by the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, in coordination with the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), and with support from UN Iran

Cooperatives represent not only an economic model but also a practical philosophy for achieving equitable

growth and sustainable development, the head of ICC said on Tuesday

Addressing the event, Bahman Abdollahi said that the sector's importance is rising in light of mounting global challenges ranging from political and economic rivalries to widening inequality and environmental crises

“Cooperation is about wealth creation and growth without crushing others

It prevents destructive and unhealthy competition,” Abdollahi said

He argued that the cooperative model goes beyond profit maximization by distributing success among all members and fostering collective resilience

The official urged Iranian policymakers to give greater attention to the untapped capacity of cooperatives, saying they can act as engines of social justice, sustainability, and environmental stewardship

“Success in cooperatives is shared by all These businesses can be drivers of justice, sustainable growth, and protection of natural resources,” he further noted

## ENGLISH IN USE

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## \$4m budget allocated to promote non-motorized transport

A total budget of 170 billion rials (around \$4 million) has been allocated to promote bike lanes across the capital city of Tehran, encouraging the residents to ride bicycles, Sakineh Ashrafi, deputy mayor of Tehran for planning, urban development and council affairs has said

One of the main issues taken into consideration through the next year's budget bill, was development of non-motorized transportation, which focuses on active transportation and human powered transportation including walking and bicycling, she explained

According to Tehran third development plan, biking as a green transport has been taken into consideration in order to mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution, she further noted, ISNA reported on Sunday

## تصویب اعتبار ۱۷ میلیاردی برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت

سکینه اشرفی معاون برنامه‌ریزی، توسعه شهری و امور شورای شهردار تهران از تصویب حدود ۱۷۰ میلیارد ریال اعتبار برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت خبر داد وی اظهار کرد: یکی از موضوعاتی که در بودجه سنواتی سال آینده شهرداری تهران به آن توجه شده، موضوع توسعه حمل و نقل عمومی غیرموتوری از جمله دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی است به گزارش روز یکشنبه برگزاری ایسنا وی ادامه داد: در برنامه سوم توسعه شهر تهران، موضوع توجه به دوچرخه‌سواری به عنوان یک حمل و نقل پاک برای کاهش ترافیک و آلودگی هوا مورد توجه و تأکید قرار گرفته است



TEHRAN TIMES



[www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com)

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Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430

**Tehrantimes79**

No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran    **P.o. Box:** 14155-4843    **Zip Code:** 1599814713

SEPTEMBER 6, 2025

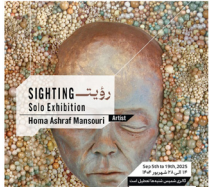
GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be afraid of nothing but sins.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:03    Evening: 18:43    Dawn: 4:15 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 5:41 (tomorrow)

## What’s in Tehran art galleries



**Painting**  
\* Shamis Gallery is showcasing paintings by Homa Ashraf Mansouri in an exhibition.  
The exhibit named “Sighting” will run until September 19 at the gallery located at 8 Daniali St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

\* An exhibition of paintings by Amir Rahati is currently underway at Didar Gallery.

The exhibition named “Narratives” will run until September 19 at the gallery located at 10 Mobini Alley, Mofatteh St.



**فرایافت**  
Rahman Mojarad  
Perception  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
www.AsrGallery.com

\* Paintings by Salar Ardestani are currently on display in an exhibit at Jaleh Gallery.

Entitled “Lone Blue”, the exhibition runs until September 12 at the gallery located at No. 3, Noshahr Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.



**بهشت آبی است**  
Heaven is Blue  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
www.AsrGallery.com

\* Emkan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Younes Marouf-Nejad.

The exhibit will be running until September 19 at the gallery that can be found at No. 3, Second Alley, Mirza Shirazi St.



**هیکی کوموری**  
Hiki Komori  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
www.AsrGallery.com

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

The exhibit will be running until September 26 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



**The Tremor in the Brightest Day**  
Mozhan Yaghoobi  
SEPTEMBER 5 - 17, 2025  
DASTAN'S BASEMENT, 6 BIDAR ST., OFF FERESHTEH ST.  
FRI-SAT 4-9 PM

\* Bashgha Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a few artists including Hawar Amini, Marjan Sabeti, Milad Jahangiri and Lohrasb Bayat.

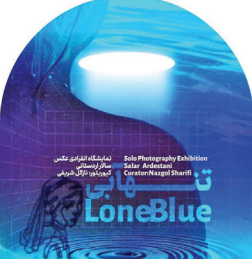
Entitled “Internal Experiences”, the exhibition will be running until September 19 at the gallery located at No.13, Hosseini St., Karim Khan Ave.



**Narratives**  
Amir Rahati  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
www.AsrGallery.com

\* An exhibition of paintings by Rahman Mojarad is underway at Ebtada Gallery.

Entitled “Perception”, the exhibition will run until September 9 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.



**تالون آبی**  
Lone Blue  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
www.AsrGallery.com

\* Asr Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Narges Khademi.

The exhibit entitled “Heaven Is Blue” will run until September 19 at the gallery located at 18 Delaviz St. off North Mirzaye Shirazi St.



**بُجْبُوحَة**  
Younes Marouf-Nejad  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
www.AsrGallery.com

\* An exhibition of paintings by Parisa Amanollahi is underway at Seyhoun Gallery.

The exhibit will run until September 17 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



**دستان's BASEMENT**  
Dastan's Basement  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
www.AsrGallery.com

\* A collection of paintings by Mojan Yaghoobi is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibit named “The Tremor in the Brightest Day” will be running until September 17 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahn St., Sanai St.



**Internal Experiences**  
Mojan Yaghoobi  
A Solo Painting Exhibition by Narges Khademi  
19 تا 26 شهریور ۱۴۰۴ / 5 to 19 Sep. 2025  
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# Iranian mobile game “Shahin: True Promise” unveiled

TEHRAN – The unveiling ceremony of the mobile wargame “Shahin: True Promise” was held at Mehr News Agency with the presence of Mohammad Hajimirzaei, CEO of the Iran Computer Games Foundation, and Sadeh Jebelli, producer of the game.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Hajimirzaei, said: “Wargames are among the most popular genres in the global gaming industry, and many countries invest heavily in this field to connect the new generation with their national values and identity.

The experience of the 12-day (Iran-Israel) war and its aftermath also showed that national unity and cohesion, as one of a country's most valuable assets, requires constant effort to preserve and strengthen,” Mehr quoted him as saying.

“This is not the developers’ first experience in this field, but by building on their previous games and carrying out specialized work on infrastructures, they have managed to design a product capable of supporting a large number of online players,” he added.

Also speaking at the session,



Sadeh Jabbari, who is the CEO of White Designers, an independent game developer studio, said: “We are active in producing computer games, animations, and advanced software.

One of our recent projects is the game ‘Shahin: True Promise,’ which is essentially an upgraded version of our earlier title ‘Shahin,’ which was designed as a knowl-

edge-based platform that provides opportunities for developing games related to aerial combat.”

“This project was designed to provide valuable content in such a way that the younger generation can gain useful information about wars and related events—without undermining the entertainment and appeal of the game,” he added.

According to the game producer,

the target audience for this game is not limited to children; all age groups, including those over 40, can enjoy it. Since it is an action game without bloodshed or extreme violent scenes, it has been rated suitable for ages 7 and above.

The core theme is mechanized warfare, which is why the game does not contain high levels of visual violence.

## Cinema Museum to show Parajanov’s movies

TEHRAN – The Cinema Museum of Iran in Tehran will host the program “Three Days with Parajanov” to review three of the most important films by the acclaimed Soviet director.

The program is set to be held from September 7 to 9. Arthur Martirosyan, deputy minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Armenia, will attend the opening ceremony, Honaronline reported.

Sergei Parajanov (1924-1990) was a Soviet film director and screenwriter. His films are known for their poetic, non-linear and symbolic nature.

Widely considered by filmmakers, film critics, and film historians to be one of the greatest and most influential filmmakers of all time, he has been described as a “magician,” a “master” and a “conjurer of cinematic worlds”.

On September 7, the first day of the program, “The Color of Pomegranates,” one of the filmmaker's most important and influential works, will be screened. After the screening, a review session will be held with the presence of re-

searcher and film critic Robert Safarian.

The 1969 Soviet Armenian avant-garde film “The Color of Pomegranates” is a poetic treatment of the life of 18th-century Armenian poet and troubadour Sayat-Nova.

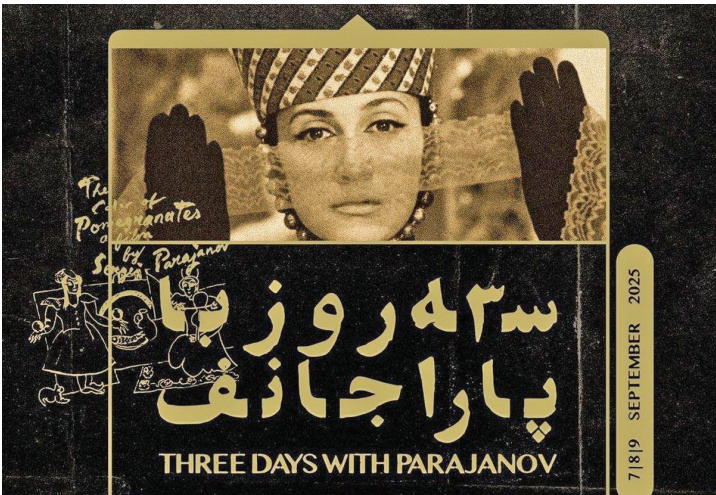
The film is regarded as a landmark in cinema history, and was met with widespread acclaim among filmmakers and critics. It is often considered one of the greatest films ever made.

On the second day of the program, September 8, “The Lovelorn Minstrel” will be shown. This film is also considered one of Parajanov's signature works.

After the film screening, Ramtin Shahbazi, a well-known movie critic, will analyze and review the film in a specialized session.

“The Lovelorn Minstrel” is a 1988 Soviet art film directed by Dodo Abashidze and Parajanov that is based on the short story of the same name by Mikhail Lermontov.

It was Parajanov's last completed film and was dedicated to his close friend Andrei Tarkovsky, who



had died two years previously. The film also features a detailed portrayal of Azerbaijani culture.

On the final day of the program, September 9, “The Legend of Suram Fortress” will be screened, and the final session of this series will be held with the presence of filmmaker Anahid Abad.

“The Legend of the Suram Fortress” is a 1985 Soviet art film directed by Parajanov and Georgian actor Dodo Abashidze.

Parajanov's first film after 15 years of censorship in the Sovi-

et Union, it is a film stylistically linked with his earlier “The Color of Pomegranates”.

The film consists of a series of tableaux; once again minimal dialogue is used; the film abounds in surreal, almost oneiric power.

Parajanov's films will be screened, during these three days, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Ferdows Hall of the Cinema Museum.

The Cinema Museum of Iran is located in Tehran's upscale Baghe-Ferdows neighborhood, Valiasr St., near Tajrish Square.

## Venice honors film about killing of 5-year-old Gaza child with record 23-minute standing ovation

With tears and chants of “Free, Free Palestine” and the waving of Palestinian flags, the true-life drama, “The Voice of Hind Rajab,” recounting the final plea of a five-year-old Gaza girl who was brutally killed by the Israeli forces in Gaza City last year, received a more than 23-minute standing ovation at its premiere at the iconic Venice Film Festival.

At Wednesday's premiere, the emotional docudrama focused on recordings from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which tried for hours to reassure Rajab as she lay trapped in a car where her aunt, uncle, and three cousins were killed by Israeli fire, Al Jazeera reported.

In original recordings taken from the attack on January 29, 2024, Rajab is heard sobbing and telling the Red Crescent Society, “Please come to me, please come. I'm scared”, while bullets were fired in the background.

After a three-hour wait, rescuers were allowed, by the Israeli military, to dispatch an ambulance to the car where Rajab spoke from. However, contact with the girl was cut off just after the ambulance arrived.

Days later, Rajab's body was found along with her relatives. The remains of the two killed ambulance workers who tried to rescue her were also recovered from their vehicle, which had been destroyed.

The emotional reception at the premiere has many considering the film a frontrunner for the Golden Lion.

The film will make its North American debut at the Toronto International Film Festival. It is then set to screen at the San Sebastián, Busan and London film festivals this fall.

Saja Al-Kilani, the lead actress of The Voice of Rajab, told reporters in a statement she read on behalf of the entire cast and crew, “Hind's story carries the weight of an entire nation.”

Al-Kilani began her speech with a simple question: “Isn't it enough?” She emphasized that it is time to put an end to the mass killings, starvation, dehumanization, destruction, and the ongoing occupation.

She stressed that this film is not a matter of opinion or fantasy saying it is “anchored in truth”.

She said that Hind's story carries the weight of an entire people and that her voice is one among tens of thousands of children killed in Gaza over the past two years alone.

“And these are only the voices we know” She continued. Behind every number is a story that never got to be told. Her story is about a child crying out, “Save me”.

Al-Kilani concluded her speech by emphasizing, “The real question is, how have we allowed a child to beg for her life?”

No one can live in peace while even one child is forced to plead for survival. Let Hind Rajab's voice echo around the world.”

Director of the docudrama, Franco-Tunisian Kaouthar Ben Hania, told reporters in advance

of the screening that the narrative from the media of those dying in Gaza was that of “collateral damage”.

“And I think this is so dehumanizing, and that's why cinema, art, and every kind of expression is very important to give those people a voice and face,” Ben Hania said.

Rajab's mother, Wissam Hamada, told the AFP news agency that she hoped the film would help end the war.

“The whole world has left us to die, to go hungry, to live in fear, and to be forcibly displaced without doing anything,” Hamada told AFP by phone from Gaza City, where she lives with her five-year-old son.

In June 2024, Al Jazeera's Fault Lines investigated the attack, providing a detailed reconstruction of the incident, in collaboration with nonprofit investigative groups Forensic Architecture and Earshot, and revealed that an Israeli tank was just 13 to 23 meters away when it opened fire on Rajab's car.

Moreover, a United Nations report in July 2024 found, citing forensic analysis, that Rajab's car was shot at from “very close range using a type of weapon that can only be attributed to the Israeli forces”.

While the Israeli military has previously said its troops were not in firing range of the car Rajab was in, earlier this week, the military was asked again about the attack and said the incident was still under review, declining to comment further.