

TEHRAN -- The upcoming parliamentary elections in Iran on May 10 will determine the fate of 45 remaining seats across 22 constituencies nationwide.

In Tehran, 16 remains seats are up for grabs. The outcome of the elections will shape the trajectory of key issues facing the new parliament. As the second round approaches, various political factions are closely monitoring the results, recognizing the pivotal role Tehran's representatives have historically played in shaping Iran's political landscape.

MOSCOW (AFP) -- President Vladimir Putin vowed on Tuesday to deliver victory to Russians, embarking on a record-breaking fifth term with more power than ever.

Putin, however, conceded that Russia was going through a "difficult" period, an apparent reference to the unprecedented sanctions packages the West has imposed on Moscow for having launched full-scale military hostilities in Ukraine more than two years ago.

The 71-year-old Kremlin chief secured a fresh six-year mandate in March after winning presidential elections.

Putin, who has said that his forces will be victorious (Continued on Page 7)

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### Viewpoint

## West Harps on Holocaust Myth While the Real Holocaust Rages in Gaza

## Small Town of 1.5-Million Displaced Palestinians Carpet-Bombed Zionist Regime Invades Rafah After Hamas Accepts Ceasefire

CAIRO (Dispatches) — An Israeli tank brigade seized control of Gaza's vital Rafah crossing Tuesday as the Zionist regime brushed off urgent warnings from close allies and launched an onslaught into the southern city even as ceasefire negotiations with Hamas remained on a knife's edge.

The UN warned of a potential collapse of the flow of aid to Palestinians from the closure of Rafah and the other main crossing into Gaza, Kerem Shalom, at a time when officials say northern Gaza is experiencing "full-blown famine."

The Israeli invasion overnight came after hours of whiplash in the now 7-month-old war on Gaza, with Hamas saying Monday it accepted an Egyptian-Qatari mediated ceasefire proposal. The occupying regime of Israel, however, insisted the deal did not meet its core demands.

The Zionist regime intensified its carpet-bombing campaign on Rafah on Monday night and accompanied the strikes with ground advances shortly after Hamas agreed to the U.S.-mediated ceasefire proposal.

The small town, home to some 1.5 million displaced Palestinians, was struck with airstrikes and artillery shelling, according to Palestinian news outlets.

The strikes on Rafah come after Hamas announced it accepted a ceasefire proposal from Qatar and Egypt.

The proposal involves three phases, with the first phase calling for a complete withdrawal of Zionist troops from the Netzarim corridor and the return of displaced Palestinians to their homes. The second phase involves an announcement of a permanent cessation of military operations. In the last phase, there would be a complete end to the blockade of the Gaza Strip.

In exchange, Israel would be expected to release an unspecified number of Palestinian prisoners, withdraw its troops from certain regions of the Gaza Strip, and allow Palestinians to travel from the south of the territory to the north.

Fighting forced the evacuation of the Abu Youssef al-Najjar Hospital, one of the main medical centers that has been receiving people wounded in airstrikes on Rafah in recent weeks. It was not immediately clear how many patients had been moved to other facilities.

The fate of around 1.3 million Palestinians crammed into Rafah, most of whom have fled fighting elsewhere, is set to turn into a new lightning rod in Israeli genocidal campaign in the Gaza Strip. On Monday, the Zionist re-

gime ordered 100,000 Palestinians to evacuate from parts of Rafah. Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's extremist coalition partners have threatened to bring down his regime if he calls off the invasion or makes concessions in ceasefire talks.

Palestinians' cheers of joy over Hamas' acceptance of the ceasefire turned to fear Tuesday. Families fled Rafah's eastern neighborhoods on foot or in vehicles and donkey carts piled with mattresses and supplies. Children watched as parents disassembled tents in the sprawling camps that have filled Rafah for months to move to their next destination — which for many remained uncertain.

"Netanyahu only cares about coming out on top. He doesn't care about children. I don't think he'll agree" to a deal, said Najwa al-Saksuk as her family packed up while Israeli strikes rang out amid plumes of black smoke.

Families of the captives also saw their hope turn to despair. Rotem Cooper, whose father, Amiram, was among scores captured during Hamas' Oct. 7 operation, slammed what he said was the Zionist regime's inaction on a deal.

Israel's 401st Brigade took "operational control" of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing early Tuesday, the military said. Military footage showed Zionist tanks in the area. It also said troops and airstrikes targeted what it called suspected Hamas positions in Rafah.

Hamas said its fighters clashed with Zionist troops barricaded in a building in Rafah and that it fired rockets on a military facility close to Kerem Shalom.

The Rafah crossing with Egypt and the Kerem Shalom crossing are critical points of entry for food, medicine and other supplies keeping Gaza's population of 2.3 million alive. They have been closed for at least the past two days.

Israeli authorities denied the UN humanitarian affairs office access to the Rafah crossing Tuesday, said its spokesman, Jens Laerke, warning the disruption could break the fragile aid operation. All fuel for aid trucks and generators comes through Rafah, and Laerke said there was a "very, very short buffer of about one day of fuel."

Israeli strikes and bombardment across Rafah overnight martyred at least 23 Palestinians, including at least six women and five children, according to hospital records.

Mohamed Abu Amra said his wife, two brothers, sister and niece (Continued on Page 7)

## Nuclear Chief: Israel's Hostile Acts Should Not Affect Iran-IAEA Ties



## Amir Esmaili Wins Gold Medal in Asian Youth Boxing Championships



## UN Agencies: Gaza 'Choked Off' From Aid Since Crossings Shut



# Police Attack Pro-Palestine Protests Across Europe



Clockwise from top left, pro-Palestinian demonstrators at Paris' Sciences Po University, 'Freie Universität Berlin' university in Berlin, Oxford University and the University of Amsterdam.

AMSTERDAM (AP) — German police on Tuesday broke up a protest by several hundred pro-Palestinian activists who had occupied a courtyard at Berlin's Free University earlier in the day, the latest such action by authorities as protests that have roiled campuses in the United States spread across Europe.

Some demonstrators have even called for a break in academic ties with Israel over the war on Gaza.

In Berlin, the protesters had put up about 20 tents and formed a human chain around them. Most had covered their faces with medical masks and draped kufiyah scarves around their heads, shouting slogans such as "Viva, viva Palestina."

Berlin police called on the students via loudspeakers to leave the campus. Police were seen carrying some students away as scuffles erupted between officers and protesters. Police also used pepper spray against some of the protesters.

The organizers say the protests are made up of students from various Berlin universities and other individuals.

In recent days, students have

held protests or set up encampments in Finland, Denmark, Italy, Spain, France and Britain, mirroring earlier protests at U.S. campuses.

Earlier on Tuesday, Dutch police broke up a similar pro-Palestinian demonstration camp at the University of Amsterdam. Police spokeswoman Sara Tillart said about 140 protesters were arrested, two of whom remain in custody on suspicion of committing public violence.

Video from the scene aired by national broadcaster NOS shows police using a mechanical digger to push down barricades and officers with batons and shields moving in, beating some of the protesters and pulling down tents. Protesters had formed barricades from wooden pallets and bicycles, NOS reported.

In Austria, protesters camped out in about 20 tents set up in the main courtyard of the University of Vienna for a second day Tuesday. With police monitoring, protesters cordoned off the encampment, which is near a memorial for Austrian Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

Pro-Palestine protest camps

have sprung up at about a dozen universities in Britain, including at Oxford and Cambridge, urging the institutions to fully disclose investments, cut academic ties with Israel and divest from businesses linked to the country.

Dozens of students have pitched up Gaza solidarity encampments on lawns outside King's College at Cambridge University and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

"Oxbridge's profits cannot continue to climb at the expense of Palestinian lives, and their reputations must no longer be built on the whitewashing of Israeli crimes," said a joint statement from protesters at the two universities.

Over 200 Oxford academics have signed an open letter supporting the protests.

In Finland, dozens of protesters from the Students for Palestine solidarity group set up an encampment outside the main building at the University of Helsinki, saying they would stay there until the university, which is Finland's largest academic institution, cuts academic ties with Israeli universities.

In Denmark, students set up a

pro-Palestinian encampment at the University of Copenhagen, erecting about 45 tents outside the campus of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

On their Facebook page, members of the activist group Students Against the Occupation said their attempts to talk to the administration over the past two years about withdrawing the school's investments from companies with ties to activities in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories have been in vain.

"We can no longer be satisfied with cautious dialogue that does not lead to concrete action," the group said.

In Italy, students at the University of Bologna, one of the world's oldest universities, set up a tent encampment over the weekend to demand an end to the war in Gaza as Israel prepared an invasion of Rafah. Groups of students organized similar protests in Rome and Naples, which were largely peaceful.

More than a dozen tents were set up in a piazza named for a university student who fought against fascist rule during World War II. Some were decorated with Palestinian flags and a banner read "Student Intefadeh," or "Student Uprising."

In Spain, dozens of students have spent over a week at a pro-Palestinian encampment on the University of Valencia campus. Similar camps were set up Monday at the University of Barcelona and at the University of the Basque Country. A group representing students at Madrid's public universities announced it would step up protests against the war in the coming days.

In Paris, student groups called for gatherings in solidarity with Palestinians later Tuesday.

On Friday, French police removed dozens of students from a building at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, known as Sciences Po, after they had gathered in support of Palestinians.

On Tuesday, students at the prestigious institution, which counts (Continued on Page 7)

## Iraqi Fighters, Hezbollah Target Zionist Positions

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) — Iraq's Islamic Resistance, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, has announced striking several Israeli targets in its latest round of pro-Palestinian operations.

In early Tuesday, the coalition released a statement, saying it had struck the "Speer military site" in the occupied territories, "using drones."

Earlier, it reported attacking three Israeli military bases in

the occupied Palestinian territories and Syria's occupied Golan Heights, as well as the Leviathan gas platform in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of occupied Palestine.

The operations, the group said, came "in support of our people in Gaza, and in response to the massacres committed by the usurping entity against Palestinian civilians, including children, women, and the elderly."

On Monday, the Iraqi resistance

said it had targeted two Israeli military bases in the occupied territories with drones.

Staging its most daring attack since the onset of the Israeli war on Gaza, the coalition carried out a series of strikes, including against the regime's spy agency of Mossad's "Gllilot" intelligence center in Tel Aviv on Friday, using advanced "al-Aqrab" cruise missiles.

Using the same type of projectile, the group also targeted the

"Abraham" intelligence headquarters in the city of Beersheba in the southern part of the occupied territories.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's Hezbollah claimed responsibility for a drone attack that targeted northern occupied Palestinian territories, sparking a fire at one location.

The resistance movement said its operation targeted "enemy officers and soldiers" around Yiftah.