

TEHRAN – Iran’s Foreign Ministry on Wednesday announced sanctions against 34 individuals and entities from the European Union and the United Kingdom, days after Brussels and London imposed a fresh round of sanctions targeting Iranian officials and organizations.

The ministry said the individuals and entities were designated because of “supporting terrorism and terrorist groups, instigating and encouragement to terrorist acts and violence against Iranian people, interference in domestic affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, fomenting

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MOSCOW (Reuters) -- The Russian Defense Ministry said on Wednesday the frigate Admiral Gorshkov tested its strike capabilities in the western Atlantic Ocean.

In a statement, the ministry said the frigate had run a computer simulation on hypersonic Zircon missiles. Zircon missiles have a range of 900 km (560 miles), and can travel at several times the speed of sound, making it difficult to defend against them. The statement did not say the frigate had launched a missile. Tensions between the West and Russia have reached the highest point in years due to the conflict in Ukraine.

237 Iranian MPs Condemn Desecration of Qur'an in Europe



China Fires Back at Yellen, Tells U.S. to 'Cope' With Its Own Debt



Iranian Player Shines in Table Tennis Contests in Qatar



Top Bahraini Cleric: Qur'an Burning Has Nothing to Do With Freedom of Thought



Several Sectors of Europe Hit by Strikes

BERLIN (Dispatches) – Several sectors across Europe have been impacted by strikes as workers demand higher pay and better working conditions.

Around 300 flights were cancelled at the Berlin Brandenburg Airport as workers went on strike on Wednesday, the airport said.

Those flights would have transported some 35,000 passengers.

“Affected passengers are asked to contact their airline for information on rebooking and alternative travel options,” the airport added in a statement.

Employees in security, ground handling services and the company running the airport were striking over a pay dispute.

The airport opened in 2020 after significant delays and construction problems. Berlin Brandenburg Airport continues to struggle financially with a lot of debt but is working on becoming “financially independent,” a spokesman said.

Despite the strike, however, Italian law requires that at least 50% of stations in urban areas remain open. On motorways, there should be at least one station operating every 100 kilometers.

The leaders of France’s eight biggest unions were holding a press conference in Paris over the government’s controversial pension reform, which aims to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64.

According to a poll conducted in January by IFOP, the reform is opposed by 68% of French people.

The proposal has already triggered fierce protests in the country, with opposition parties arguing the retirement age should be reduced instead.

Last week, over one million people took to the streets against the planned overhaul. In Paris, police clashed with protesters, with doctors having to amputate the testicle of a young man after he was clubbed in the groin by a police officer.

Iran’s Intelligence Minister: More Than 12 Terrorist Groups Dismantled



Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib says the Iranian nation successfully weathered the recent sedition.

TEHRAN -- Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib says Iran’s security forces have disbanded more than 12 terrorist groups linked to the occupying regime of

Israel and captured their members.

The terrorists, who planned to carry out acts of sabotage as revenge for their recent failures in

stoking sedition through riots, were arrested “in a short span of time”, he told national television Tuesday night.

The minister said the enemies

will never stop their hostile acts against Iran and will always be thinking of new conspiracies.

The conspiracies have helped the Iranian nation know their enemies better, Khatib said, stressing that the country successfully weathered the recent sedition, thanks to the guidance of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and the unity of the Iranian people.

Khatib said the enemies seek to use Iran’s neighbors as a launchpad to attack the Islamic Republic, but Tehran will decisively hit back as far as its security and national interests are concerned.

Earlier this month, reports said Iran’s intelligence forces had captured 13 members of two Mossad spying teams across the country, marking the second dismantling of Israeli operations in less than six months.

Last month, the intelligence ministry said it had discovered four Mossad cells and captured their members.

More Carnage in U.S.: 24 People Dead

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- A series of shootings in three states has made for a heart-wrenching several days, leaving 24 dead as more cities join a growing list of American communities scarred by gun violence.

“Only in America do we see this kind of carnage, this kind of chaos, this kind of disruption of communities and lives and confidence and sense of safety and belonging,” California Gov. Gavin Newsom said after his state suffered three mass shootings in about 44 hours.

Forty mass shootings have been recorded in the U.S. so far in 2023 – more than at this point in any year on record, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

Newsom was still visiting victims of Saturday night’s Monterey Park shooting that claimed 11 lives when he was told of a second shooting Monday afternoon in Half Moon Bay, which officials later described as an apparent “act of workplace violence” that left seven dead.

“I feared two days ago that Monterey Park would give way to other headlines. Little did I know I’d be up here,” Newsom said, speaking from Half Moon Bay.

“Meanwhile, the trauma and the damage the devastation is felt for generations in some cases – communities being torn asunder, no one feeling safe.”

Hours after the Half Moon Bay shooting, five people were shot, including an 18-year-old who

died, Monday in Oakland, California.

Also on Monday, a man in Des Moines, Iowa, opened fire at a building that houses an educational program for at-risk youth, killing two students and leaving the program’s founder seriously injured, police said.

Then, early Tuesday, a man shot and killed three people at or near a Circle K convenience store in Yakima, Washington, police said.

Those are just some of the communities grieving following recent acts of gun violence, including mass shootings in which four or more people were shot, not including a gunman.

The suspect – identified as Chunli Zhao – killed seven people and injured one in a mass shooting in Half Moon Bay, California Monday, officials said. Four people were shot at a mushroom farm, where the suspect was an employee, and three more were killed at a nearby farm, authorities said.

The Half Moon Bay massacre was an apparent workplace violence case. The suspect had been accused of violence against a coworker in 2013, court records show.

“All of the evidence we have points to this being the instance of workplace violence,” San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus said Tuesday, adding the victims were either Asian or Hispanic.

Zhao was a “coworker or for-

mer coworker” of the victims at each shooting site, the sheriff’s office said.

The suspect, who was not known to local law enforcement prior to the shooting, owned a semi-automatic weapon that was registered to him, the sheriff told CNN Tuesday.

The suspect had been accused of trying to suffocate and threatening to kill a former coworker at another job nearly a decade ago, according to court records obtained by CNN, which show he was subject to a temporary restraining order after a former coworker and roommate accused him of attacking and threatening him in 2013.

Authorities still don’t know what motivated the Saturday night shooting at Star Ballroom Dance Studio in Monterey Park, which came as the city’s majority Asian community was celebrating the Lunar New Year.

Investigators served a search warrant at the home of the suspected gunman – 72-year-old Huu Can Tran – and found “hundreds of rounds” of ammunition as well as evidence leading officials to believe he was “manufacturing homemade firearm suppressors,” Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said.

The gunman fired 42 rounds from a semi-automatic handgun at the dance hall before heading to a second dance studio in nearby Alhambra, where a civilian

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U.S., Germany Decide to Send Battle Tanks to New Level

BERLIN (Dispatches) — After weeks of hesitation that created impatience among Germany’s allies, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced Wednesday that his government would provide Ukraine with Leopard 2 battle tanks and approve requests by other countries to do the same.

The German government said it would initially provide Ukraine with one company of Leopard 2 A6 tanks, or 14 vehicles. The goal is for Germany and its allies to provide Ukraine with 88 of the German-made Leopards, which comprise two battalions.

“This is the result of intensive consultations, once again, with our allies and international partners,” Scholz said in an address to German lawmakers.

“It was right and it is important that we didn’t let ourselves be driven (into making the decision),” he added.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed satisfaction at the news. Several European countries have equipped their armies with Leopard 2 tanks, and Germany’s announcement means they can give some of their stocks to Ukraine.

The long-awaited decision came after U.S. officials revealed Tuesday a preliminary agreement for the United States to send M1 Abrams tanks to help Ukraine’s troops push back Russian forces

that remain entrenched in the country’s east.

It is not clear when or how the tanks would be delivered to Ukraine, or how soon they could have an impact on the battlefield. Military analysts have said Russian forces are thought to be preparing for a spring offensive.

Russia’s ambassador to Germany, Sergey Nechayev, called Berlin’s decision to send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine “extremely dangerous.”

The move “shifts the conflict to a new level of confrontation and contradicts the statements of German politicians about their reluctance to get involved in it,” Nechayev said in a statement.

“We’re seeing yet again that Germany, as well as its closest allies, is not interested in a diplomatic resolution of the Ukraine crisis. It is determined to permanently escalate it and to indefinitely pump the Kyiv regime full of new lethal weapons,” the statement read.

Scholz had insisted that any decision to provide Ukraine with powerful Leopard 2 tanks would need to be taken in conjunction with Germany’s allies, chiefly the United States. By getting Washington to commit some of its own tanks, Berlin hopes to share the risk of any backlash from Russia.

Ekkehard Brose, head of the German military’s Federal Academy for Security Policy, said tying the

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