

Leader Stresses Need to Tackle Population Decline

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday warned against the dire consequences of aging, reminding officials of their vital responsibility to increase Iran's population, rejuvenate the workforce and support families. In a message, the Leader thanked all officials and experts who have focused on population growth with serious consideration and foresight and are figuring out how to save the country from the daunting prospect of aging. Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated that efforts to increase Iran's population, rejuvenate the country's workforce, and support families are an overriding responsibility of the authorities and people. The Leader noted that influential individuals and centers that can shape culture have a higher degree of responsibility in this regard because population growth is a "vital policy" in the long-term future of Iran.

Kayhan International



Foreign Ship With Smuggled Fuel Seized in Persian Gulf

TEHRAN – Iranian naval forces seized a foreign ship attempting to smuggle fuel out of the country and detained its crew, official news agency IRNA said on Wednesday. The ship, carrying more than 550,000 liters of smuggled fuel, was seized in Persian Gulf waters and escorted to harbor in the southern province of Hormozgan, where it was handed to judicial authorities for investigation, the agency added. "We were able to identify and detain a ship carrying smuggled fuel intended to transport large-scale smuggled fuel shipments east of Maru Island," chief of provincial border guards Hussein Dehaki said. Several ships in recent months have been detained for smuggling fuel in the Persian Gulf by Iranian authorities.

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Viewpoint
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Hamas Warns Against Resumption of Zionist Assassination Policy



Islam's Grand Victory Over Joint Arab-Israelite Army

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"Allah sent back the faithless in their rage, without their attaining any advantage, and Allah spared the faithful of fighting; and Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty." (Holy Qur'an 33:25)
Today the 17th of Shawwal is the anniversary of a very important event in the history of Islam and humanity. It teaches us that the plots of satanic elements, whether at present or in the future, will continue to fail, since it is God Almighty Who has guaranteed the triumph of the righteous, no matter what great armies, strategic alliances, and sophisticated weapons, the wayward muster. It is the day the crucial "Battle of Khandaq" (ditch), also known as "Battle of Ahzaab" (confederates) since the Arabs and Israelites had ganged up together against Islam, ended on a victorious note for Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). It is the day of defeat and humiliating retreat of a formidable 10,000 strong joint Arab-Israelite army that had marched upon Medina to kill the Prophet with the help of the hypocrites amongst the Muslims, and to obliterate Islam. Following the failure of the first ever armed encounter imposed upon the Prophet by the infidels of Mecca at Badr in 2 AH, the Arabs and the Israelites had been fuming with rage and devising plans to uproot Islam. Abu Sufyan, the archenemy of Islam, held talks with the Arabized Jew Ka'b al-Ashraf, and the two after showing reciprocal respect for each other's dubious creeds, pledged to muster a formidable joint force against the Seal of Messengers. God Almighty has pointed to this conspiracy in Ayah 53 of Surah an-Nisa: "Have you not regarded those who were given a share of the Book believing in the idol and the evil spirit, and saying of the pagans: These are better guided on the way than those who have faith (in Islam)?" With the sudden death of Ka'b, the joint plot did not materialize and the Omayyad infidel Abu Sufyan, in his thirst for avenging the defeat at Badr, marched upon Medina in 4 AH, but failed to achieve his goal – thanks to the swordsmanship of Imam Ali (AS) that saved the Prophet and Islam in the Battle of Ohad. The next year in 5 AH, Abu Sufyan assembled warriors from as many Arab tribes as he could, and in league with the Israelite tribes of Banu Nadheer and Banu Quraydha (the latter having breached their pledge of neutrality to the Prophet), descended upon Medina with a strong army that boasted in its ranks the warlord Amr bin Abduwad, who was a veritable giant known for his brute strength. Having been informed of the Arab-Israelite plot against Islam, the Prophet prepared the defences of Medina, whose natural fortifications were rocky heights and thick palm groves, and on the suggestion of his Iranian companion, Salman al-Farsi, dug a deep trench on the strip of the city that was vulnerable to attack. While digging the ditch and removing of huge boulders which emitted sparks when struck by pickaxes, the Prophet gave tidings of the liberation of Syria, Iran, and Yemen in the future, at which the hypocrites amongst his companions expressed disbelief and hoped that this battle would result in the end of Islam. When the confederate army arrived, it found its entry blocked by the newly dug ditch. For fifteen days, the joint Arab-Israelite forces maneuvered, shooting arrows at the Muslim defenders on the other side, but couldn't find a way to enter the city. With patience stretched thin, on the 17th of Shawwal, Amr bin Abduwad, along with two other horsemen found the narrowest point of the ditch and managed to spur their horses for a giant leap to the other side. Amr hurled a spear at the Prophet's tent and challenged the defenders to single combat, at which most of the Muslims quaked with fear, while the hypocrites amongst them, devised plans to seize the Prophet and hand him over to the enemy. The Prophet of Peace, in order to impart an immortal lesson to mankind that anyone who dares to desecrate the sanctity of the Messenger of God and whatever he possess, is worse than an animal, said: "Who will confront this dog?" Thrice he repeated these words and on all three occasions no one got up, except his dear cousin, son-in-law and Divinely-designated heir, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS). Some of the Muslims, who were actually the 5th column, instead of responding to the Prophet's call, started to praise the strength and physical power of Amr bin Abduwad in a bid to demoralize the ranks of the faithful – similar to what the self-styled Muslims in the service of the US and the West do today, by extolling the military might of the illegal Zionist entity and the benefits for the Arabs to ally with the Israelis against Islamic Iran. The Prophet gave permission to the Imam to face the challenge of the Arab-Israelite warlord, saying "the embodiment of faith is all set to fight the embodiment of infidelity." The rest is history. As recorded in all books of hadith and history, by both Sunni and Shi'a Muslim authorities, Imam Ali (AS), after inviting Amr to Islam, and telling him to leave in peace instead of risking his life – conditions which the arrogantly ignorant pagan spurned – engaged in combat and won the fray. With a flashing stroke of his famous twin-bladed sword Dhu'l-Feqar, Imam Ali (AS) dispatched Amr to the netherworld, but not before allowing him to renew the life-and-death combat, because the cowardly representative of the Arab-Israelite force, when hurled to the ground, had dared to spit at him. That was among the reasons the Prophet had hailed his cousin's selfless feat which was solely for the sake of God and without personal emotions involved in the combat, as "The stroke of Ali on the Day of Khandaq is superior to the worship of the Thaqaalayn (mankind and jinn combined)." At this spectacle, the Arab-Israelite force, which was viewing the combat from the other side of the ditch, lost heart, and as God Almighty sent strong gales to disrupt their encampment, the enemies fled. Thus, Imam Ali (AS) saved the Prophet and Islam from yet another nefarious plot, and spared the rest of the Muslims (the weak of faith and the hypocrites combined) from a fight for which they had no stomach. The lessons of the Battle of Khandaq are all too obvious for us and teach us that victory for Islam and Muslims is only possible through firm adherence to the path of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). The true path of the Prophet means allegiance to Imam Ali (AS) and the rest of the blessed Ahl al-Bayt, in these crucial times, when Global Arrogance led by the US has in its ranks an alliance of the devilish Zionists and the reactionary Arab regimes for splitting the unity of the Islamic Ummah through cowardly crimes against Muslims and the rest of humanity. In commemoration of this glorious triumph of Islam over the Arab-Israelite force, mosques were built near the site of the Ditch in Medina, such as the Fath or Victory Mosque, the Mosque of Imam Ali (AS), the Mosque of the Prophet's Daughter Hazrat Fatema Zahra (SA), and the Mosque of Salman Farsi. Over the past millennium and four centuries pilgrims to the Land of Revelation and local believers used to offer prayers at these mosques. Unfortunately, these mosques have now been destroyed by the heretical Wahhabi cult, which despite its claim to be Muslim, follows Abu Sufyan, the infidel Arabs and the Israelites, as is evident by the open dalliance of Bahrain, the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco, with the illegal Zionist entity called Israel – along with the secret relations between Tel Aviv and the Riyadh regime. We pray to God Almighty for the reappearance of the Prophet's 12th and Last Infallible Heir, Imam Mahdi (AS), and establishment of the global government of peace, prosperity and justice, in order to end tyranny and root out all these heretical cults, which have tarnished the image of Islam and Muslims.

UN Expert Urges Immediate Release \$120 Billion of Iran's Assets Illegally Trapped



UN Special Rapporteur Alena Douhan speaks at a press conference in Tehran on May 18, 2022.

TEHRAN -- Iran has between \$100 billion and \$120 billion trapped in foreign accounts because of U.S. sanctions, a United Nations human rights envoy told reporters in Tehran on Wednesday. Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures, is visiting Iran to assess the impact of Washington's penalties on the Islamic Republic. "I urge the states that have frozen the assets of Iranian Central Bank to immediately unfreeze Iran's funds based on international law," she told

reporters here. Douhan said decades of sanctions have wholly affected Iranian people's lives and have particularly hit the low-income section of the society. She called on Washington to abandon its hard-nosed policy of maximum pressure against Iran and other countries. Douhan arrived in Tehran earlier this month. She said she had met with many civil society members, representatives of financial centers, diplomatic community during her visit. Douhan's mission from May 7 to

18 is the first to Iran by a UN special rapporteur. She said she will address her concerns about the legality of U.S. sanctions in her final report, which will be released at a later date. The U.S., she said, has since the 1970s imposed crippling economic and trade sanctions on Iran and significantly expanded them since the early 2000s. In May 2018, former president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal and reinstated harsh economic sanctions on Iran and slapped new ones in an unprecedented move that was

widely decried by various countries. His successor, Joe Biden, who was vice president when the nuclear deal was inked in 2015, promised to return his country to the deal, but his administration has failed to undo Washington's past wrongs. According to the UN special rapporteur, the U.S. continues to illegally ban trade and investment in Iran, forcing foreign companies to leave the country for fear of sanctions. Douhan's landmark visit to Iran came amid the stalemate over reviving the nuclear deal, with the U.S. refusing to respond to Iran's proposals. Decrying the U.S. decision to abandon the nuclear deal and continue with its sanctions regime, she said the deal had been endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231. "Applying extraterritorial sanctions on Iranian companies or companies working with Iran ... is illegal under international law," she asserted. Douhan began her 11-day visit to Iran on May 7, a day before the fourth anniversary of the U.S. illegal withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as the nuclear deal is officially called. Last week, Iran's top human rights official Kazem Gharibabadi said Douhan's visit was only aimed at gathering information on the impact of sanctions to hold countries to account. "Nations hit by sanctions should use all available resources to hold the countries calling for and enforcing unilateral sanctions liable," Gharibabadi said. His comments came in response to reports in Western media accusing Iran of exploiting the visit to avoid accountability (Continued on Page 7)

Russia Expels 85 European Diplomats in Retaliation

LONDON (Dispatches) -- Russia said on Wednesday it was expelling a total of 85 embassy staff from France, Spain and Italy in response to similar moves by those countries, highlighting the damage to relations with leading European Union members since it launched its war on Ukraine. The Foreign Ministry said it was ordering out 34 diplomatic staff from France, 27 from Spain and 24 from Italy. The three countries are among European nations that have collectively thrown out more than 300 Russians since the Feb. 24 war. In many cases, they accused Russian diplomats of spying, which Moscow has denied. Russia's response has included sending home 45 Polish staff and 40 German last month. It has also announced tit-for-tat moves against Finland, Romania, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Japan, among others. On the frontlines, Russia said nearly 700 more Ukrainian fighters had surrendered in Mariupol, but Kyiv was silent about their fate, while a pro-Russian separatist leader said commanders were still holed up in tunnels beneath the giant Azovstal steelworks. More than a day after Kyiv announced it had ordered its garrison in Mariupol to stand down, the ultimate

outcome of Europe's bloodiest battle for decades remained unresolved. Ukrainian officials halted all public discussion of the fate of fighters who had made their last stand there. "The state is making utmost efforts to carry out the rescue of our servicemen. Let's wait. Currently, the most important thing is to save the lives of our heroes," military spokesman Oleksandr Motuzaynik told a news conference. "Any information to the public could endanger that process." Russia's ministry of defense said 694 more fighters had surrendered overnight, bringing the total number of people who had laid down arms to 959. The leader of pro-Russian separatists in control of the area, Denis Pushilin, was quoted by a local news agency DNA as saying the main commanders were still inside the plant. Ukrainian officials had confirmed the surrender of more than 250 fighters on Tuesday. But they did not say how many more were inside or what might become of them. The negotiations over the surrender of Mariupol came as Finland and Sweden formally applied to join NATO, bringing about the very expansion that Russian President Vladimir Putin has long cited as one of his main reasons for launching the "special military operation" in February. The final surrender of Mariupol (Continued on Page 7)

Watchdog: U.S. Handed Over Afghanistan to Enemy

WASHINGTON (AP) — A government watchdog says decisions by Presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden to pull all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan were the key factors in the collapse of that nation's military. The new report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, mirrors assertions made by senior Pentagon and military leaders in the aftermath of the U.S. troop withdrawal that ended last August in the chaotic evacuation of Americans and other civilians from the embattled country. Military leaders have made it clear that their recommendation was to leave about 2,500 U.S. troops in the country, but that plan was not approved. In February 2020, the Trump administration signed an agreement with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, in which the U.S. promised to fully withdraw its troops by May 2021. The Taliban committed to several conditions, including stopping attacks on American and coalition forces. The stated objective was to promote a peace negotiation between the Taliban and the Afghan government, but that diplomatic effort never gained traction before Biden took office in January 2022. Just a few months later, Biden announced he would complete the U.S. military withdrawal. The announcement fueled the Taliban's campaign

to retake the country, aided by the Afghans' widespread distrust of their government and entrenched corruption that led to low pay, lack of food and poor living conditions among the Afghan troops. "Many Afghans thought the U.S.-Taliban agreement was an act of bad faith and a signal that the U.S. was handing over Afghanistan to the enemy as it rushed to exit the country," the interim report said. "Its immediate effect was a dramatic loss in (Afghan troops') morale." U.S. officials have said they were surprised by the quick collapse of the military and the government, prompting sharp congressional criticism of the intelligence community for failing to foresee it. At a congressional hearing last week, senators questioned whether there is a need to reform how intelligence agencies assess a foreign military's will to fight. Lawmakers pointed to two key examples: U.S. intelligence believed that the Kabul government would hold on for months against the Taliban, and more recently believed that Ukraine's forces would quickly fall to Russia's invasion. Both were wrong. Military and defense leaders have said that the Afghanistan collapse was built on years of missteps, as the U.S. struggled to find a successful way to train and equip Afghan forces. (Continued on Page 7)