

TEHRAN -- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said Friday Zionist dictators have been unmasked in the wake of their crackdown on protestors.

In a tweet, Kanaani referred to the Zionist suppression of the protestors, noting that this is while the occupying and criminal Zionists have been trying for many years to make their fake regime appear as the most democratic entity in the West Asian region. The heads of the protestors have warned Netanyahu that Israel is on the brink of collapse, the spokesman said.

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) -- Around 160,000 Hollywood performers went on strike at midnight Thursday in Los Angeles, halting most U.S. film and television productions. The leaders of SAG-AFTRA, the union representing television and movie actors, announced the strike after negotiations with studios over a new contract failed. "This is a moment of history, a moment of truth -- if we don't stand tall right now, we are all going to be in trouble," SAG president Fran Drescher told a press conference, following the union board's unanimous vote to strike.

Viewpoint

Iran Needs to Work Overtime to Regain Lost Influence in Africa

Armed Forces to Safeguard Every Inch of Iran



Mehdi Olad Wins Gold at Para Athletics World Championships



Thousands Protest in Tel Aviv Against Netanyahu



U.S. Sets Grim Milestone in Mass Shootings

NEW YORK (AP) — Slain at the hands of strangers or gunned down by loved ones. Massacred in small towns, in big cities, inside their own homes or outside in broad daylight. This year's unrelenting bloodshed across the U.S. has led to the grimest of milestones: The deadliest six months of mass killings recorded since at least 2006.

From Jan. 1 to June 30, the nation endured 28 mass killings, all but one of which involved guns. The death toll rose just about every week, a constant cycle of violence and grief.

"What a ghastly milestone," said Brent Leatherwood, whose three children were in class at a private Christian school in Nashville on March 27 when a former student killed three children and three adults. "You never think your family would be a part of a statistic like that."

Leatherwood, a prominent Republican in a state that hasn't strengthened gun laws, believes something must be done to get guns out of the hands of people who might become violent. The shock of seeing the bloodshed strike so close to home has prompted him to speak out.

"You may as well say Martians have landed, right? It's hard to wrap your mind around it," he said.

A mass killing is defined as an occurrence when four or more people are slain, not including the assailant, within a 24-hour period. A database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University tracks this large-scale violence dating back to 2006.

This year has seen more mass killings to date than any other year since data collection started in 2006.

The 2023 milestone beat the previous record of 27 mass killings, which was only set in the second half of 2022. James Alan Fox, a criminology professor at Northeastern University, never imagined records like this when he began overseeing the database about five years ago.

"We used to say there were two to three dozen a year," Fox said. "The fact that there's 28 in half a year is a staggering statistic."

Experts attribute the rising bloodshed to a growing population with an increased number of guns in the U.S. Yet for all the headlines, mass killings are statistically rare and represent a fraction of the country's overall gun violence.

"We need to keep it in perspective," Fox said.

But the mass violence most often spurs attempts to reform gun laws, even if the efforts are not always successful.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, a Republican, had urged the General Assembly in the wake of the Nashville school shooting to pass legislation keeping firearms away from people who could harm themselves or others, so-called "red flag laws," though Lee says the term is politically toxic.

Getting such a measure passed in Tennessee is an uphill climb. The Republican-led Legislature adjourned earlier this year without taking on gun control, prompting Lee to schedule a special session for August.

Leatherwood, a former executive director of the Tennessee Republican Party and now the head of the influential Southern Baptist Convention's public policy arm, wrote a letter to lawmakers asking them to pass the governor's proposal.

Leatherwood said he doesn't want any other family to go through what his children experienced at the time of the shooting when they were in kindergarten, second grade and fourth grade. One of his kids, preparing for a recent sleepaway camp, asked whether they would be safe there.

"Our child was asking, 'Do you think that there will be a gunman that comes to this camp? Do I need to be worried about that?'" Leatherwood said.

The Nashville shooter, whose writings Leatherwood and other parents are asking a court to keep private, used three guns in the attack, including an AR-15-style rifle. It was one of at least four mass killings in the first half of 2023 involving such a weapon, according to the database.

Nearly all of the mass killings in the first half of this year, 27 of 28, involved guns. The other was a fire that killed four people in a home in Monroe, Louisiana. A 37-year-old man was arrested on arson and murder charges in connection with the March 31 deaths.

Despite the unprecedented carnage, the National Rifle Association maintains fierce opposition to regulating firearms, including AR-15-style rifles and similar weapons.

Tito Anchondo's brother, Andre Anchondo, was among 23 people killed in a 2019 mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. The gunman was sentenced last week to 90 consecutive life sentences but could face more punishment, including the death penalty. The prosecution of the racist attack on Hispanic shoppers in the border city was one of the U.S. government's largest hate crime cases.

Andre Anchondo and his wife, Jordan, died shielding their 2-month-old son from bullets. Paul, who escaped with just broken bones, is now 4 years old.

Tito Anchondo said he feels like the country has forgotten about the El Paso victims in the years since and that not nearly enough has been done to stem the bloodshed. He worries about Paul's future.

"I hope that things can drastically change because this country is going down a very, very slippery slope; a downward spiral," he said. "It's just a little unnerving to know that he's eventually going to go to school with kids that also may bring a gun to school."

Iran Boosts 'Strategic Depth' Around Globe

President Raisi's Africa Tour: 21 Deals Sealed



Picture above shows President Raisi inspecting an honor guard upon his arrival at the Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport in Harare. Pictures below show Raisi meeting Kenyan President William Ruto, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

HARARE/TEHRAN -- President Ebrahim Raisi on Thursday wrapped up his three-nation African tour with a visit to Zimbabwe where the two sides signed 12 memorandums of understanding to strengthen bilateral ties.

Raisi, who visited Kenya and Uganda earlier in the week, met Thursday with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa who urged nations targeted by Western

sanctions to band together.

The two presidents signed "a record" 12 agreements on topics ranging from energy to telecommunications, Mnangagwa said. These will help Zimbabwe access innovation and technology from Iran and envisage the creation of a tractor factory to support agricultural mechanization, he added.

The two countries also signed cooperation agreements for ener-

gy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications as well as research, science and technology projects.

President Raisi touched on U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran and Zimbabwe, saying the Islamic Republic would work hard to forge closer economic ties.

"It is critically important that we, the victims of Western sanctions, are talking to each other... that we show them that we're united," Mnangagwa told a press briefing after talks with Raisi.

"I am happy you have come to show solidarity," Mnangagwa told President Raisi on arrival, calling him "my brother".

Hundreds of people waving

Nasrallah: Resistance Thwarted Greater Middle East Plot

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah says the resistance front thwarted the so-called Greater Middle East project through its victory in the 2006 war on Lebanon.

Speaking at a televised address, Nasrallah said the 2006 war was a key part of America's Greater Middle East project, which he said aimed to solidify Israeli dominance and American influence in the region.

In an address on the 17th anniversary of the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, he said the victory of the resistance front in 2006 also foiled the so-called greater Israel project.

Nasrallah said the 2006 war's goal was to crush the Lebanese resistance and to subjugate Lebanon, but it was never realized and the Zionists and the Americans both admitted the failure of the war on Lebanon on several occasions.

He said the 2006 victory marked a defining moment in Lebanon's

history, shaping its destiny in the region for the years to come.

The victory also laid the groundwork for putting up deterrence that continues to exist to this day and has led to the erosion of Israeli deterrence, he added.

Nasrallah, meanwhile, said the occupying regime of Israel had suffered defeat in its recent operation against the city of Jenin and its refugee camp in the northern part of the occupied West Bank.

"The goal sought by the Israelis in the aggression against Jenin was deterrence," he said, adding the "continuation of the resistance's operations in the West Bank serves as the evidence of the defeat of the incursion into Jenin."

Nasrallah condemned the Zionist regime's setting up of barbed wires and erection of a wall in the border village of Ghajar, considering the move to be a "re-occupation" of the village in question.

"Sovereignty cannot be divided up," he said, warning that the resistance

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- A senior Iraqi politician has denounced the United States' control of the Arab country's economic affairs that has been preventing Baghdad from clearing its debt over Iranian gas imports.

Hadi al-Ameri, head of the Fatah (Conquest) alliance in Iraq's parliament, laid emphasis on Thursday on the need for his country to grow economically independent of the U.S.

"It is a source of ignominy to be controlled by a U.S. Treasury Department employee. All politicians should unite to realize the country's economic sovereignty," he said.

Iraqi leaders have cited U.S. sanctions for not paying some 11 billion euros (\$12.1 billion) that it has deposited in an account in

Zimbabwean and Iranian flags had gathered at Robert Mugabe International Airport in Harare during the morning to greet President Raisi.

The Iranian president had already been to Kenya and Uganda this week holding talks with his counterparts William Ruto and Yoweri Museveni.

On Thursday, Raisi described Africa as "the continent of capacities and potentials", adding stronger cooperation would benefit "the advancement" of both parties.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kana'ani has described President Raisi's continental tour as "a new turning point" which could bolster economic and trade ties with African nations.

He also said that Tehran and the three African countries share "common political views".

Iran's trade with Africa will increase to more than \$2 billion this year from about \$1.2 billion in recent years, its foreign ministry said on Saturday.

Raisi's African visit, the first by an Iranian president since 2013, follows a visit in June to three Latin American countries also saddled with U.S. sanctions.

Speaking at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport early on Friday, the president stressed the need to promote ties with African nations, describing the continent as the land of opportunities where its potential should not be overlooked.

"We value our ties with the African continent, just as we do with the countries of Asia and other regions, and we should not overlook this continent, which is full of opportunities," he said.

(Continued on Page 7)

Ameri: U.S. Control of Iraqi Money Source of Ignominy

the Trade Bank of Iraq for imports of gas and electricity from the Islamic Republic.

Washington has threatened to sanction Baghdad in case the latter tried to pay up its debt in cash.

It was reported earlier this month that Iran had cut gas supplies to Iraq in a renewed attempt to force the Arab country to pay its debts over energy imports.

Later, it was reported that Iraq had reached an understanding with Iran to trade its crude oil for Iranian natural gas supplies as means of settling the long-running dispute.

Ameri said, "I call on Iraqi politicians to courageously announce our economic independence and our extrication from the thrall of servitude" to the U.S.

(Continued on Page 7)