

TEHRAN – Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Muhammad Reza Ashtiani on Wednesday said enemies have ceased their threats against Iran, acknowledging the nation's robust defense capabilities.

Speaking to reporters after a cabinet meeting, the minister praised Iran's defense power, stating that it has effectively deterred any threats from adversaries. He said Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei had expressed satisfaction after witnessing the accomplishments of the IRGC Aerospace Forces.

Kayhan International

TEHRAN -- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Wednesday had an interview over the developments in Palestine with five resistance channels – namely Al-Manar of Lebanon, Aletejah TV of Iraq, Palestine Today and Al-Aqsa of Palestine and Almasirah TV of Yemen.

In his interview, the president answered to different questions about Operation Al-Aqsa Storm Operation, Zionist crimes in Gaza and the role of the U.S., the initiatives by the Islamic resistance groups, international supports for Palestine and the future of the war in Gaza.

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Viewpoint

Knocked-Out Israel Sues for Ceasefire

After Four-Day Truce Declared in Gaza War, Iranian FM: Resistance's Finger to Remain on Trigger

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Iranian Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian said here Wednesday six weeks of heroic resistance of the oppressed Palestinian people in Gaza proved that time is not on Israel's side if the war drags on, stressing that the global public opinion would see the occupying regime and the U.S. as the main losers.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks upon his arrival here, where he was expected to discuss the recent developments in the region, including the Zionist regime's war on the Gaza Strip, with Lebanese authorities.

"Without a doubt, the future of Gaza and the future of Palestine will be decided only by the Palestinian people," the top Iranian diplomat said.

"We have heard from the resistance leaders in the region that the finger of the resistance will remain on the trigger until the Palestinian people's rights are fully restored and their fight has achieved its goals," he added.

Amir-Abdollahian said he was in Beirut "to consult with high Lebanese authorities about how to maximize security in the region and how to restore Palestinian rights".

His remarks came hours after Palestinian resistance movement Hamas announced that it had agreed to a four-day truce with Israel.

Hamas said in a statement that the deal, mediated by Qatar and Egypt, will allow the entry of hundreds of humanitarian, medical and fuel aid trucks to Gaza.

The deal will also see the release of 50 Israeli war prisoners in exchange for the release of 150 Palestinian women and children from the occupying entity's jails.

David Barnea, head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, arrived in Qatar to meet Qatar's Prime Minister Muhammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, to discuss details of the deal.

According to the U.S. news outlet Axios, there are still details of the agreement to be ironed out, including when the ceasefire should start and the sequencing of the release of captives held by Israel and Hamas.

Hezbollah will adhere to the truce called between Israel and Hamas, a source from the organization told Al-Jazeera on Wednesday.

"Hezbollah will adhere to the truce announced if the Israeli occupation forces adhere to it," the source told the outlet.

Residents will get a respite from the Israeli genocide, which has seen the number of Palestinians martyred cross 14,000, including at least 5,840 children.

Before the ceasefire, one of the last operating hospitals in Gaza received more than 60 dead bodies overnight Wednesday.

The director of Kamal Adwan hospital, Ahmed al-Kahlout, told Al Jazeera that the hospital did not have a "single drop of fuel" and staff worked using handheld searchlights.

"A lot of buildings have been badly affected. We need to keep in mind this hospital is now the only one operating hospital from Wadi Gaza till northern Gaza," he said.

Meanwhile, the bodies of Palestinians previously held at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City by Zionist forces were finally buried in Khan Younis, in southern Gaza.

Oxfam welcomed the news of a truce but warned that it is only a "band aid" that will not resolve the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

Oxfam GB's head of policy and advocacy, Katy Chakraborty, said she hoped that the agreement could be the beginning of "a road toward a permanent ceasefire" but said that currently looked "distant".

"This pause of the relentless (Continued on Page 7)

Philippines, Iran Hold Joint Meeting After 7-Year Hiatus



Alireza Nasiri Wins Gold at Junior World Weightlifting Championships



Iraq Condemns Deadly U.S. Strikes in 'Dangerous Escalation'



Ayatollah Khamenei: Zionist Regime Knocked Out



Ayatollah Khamenei meets a group of Iranian athletes, sports personalities, and medal winners in Tehran on Wednesday.

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei here on Wednesday summed up the Gaza developments, saying the Zionist regime was "knocked out" in Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

"If I am going to offer you a breakdown on the recent developments, it goes as this: the Zionist regime was knocked out in Al-Aqsa Storm," he told a group of Iranian athletes, sports personalities, and medal winners who participated in the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China.

"Hamas, not as a govern-

ment and country with ample facilities, but as a combatant group, managed to deal a knockout blow to the usurping Zionists with all those facilities," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the Zionists are unable to emancipate themselves from the pressure and disgrace of their defeat and this anger them much.

"They flex their muscles in a show of retaliation by bombing hospitals and schools in Gaza. This is as if an athlete loses on the field, and then in revenge for that loss, he attacks the fans of the opposing

team, insults them and beats them up."

The Leader stressed that the heavy defeat that the Zionist regime suffered will not be amended by such crimes, citing Israel's incessant bombing of Gaza over the past 47 days.

"There is nothing more ignominious than what the Zionist regime has perpetrated. The Zionist regime's heavy defeat will not be compensated by these bombings. Such bombardment campaigns will only shorten the life of the occupying regime and this tyranny and cruelty will not go

unanswered," he said.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution censured the politicization of sports and the double standards that are applied by certain international organizations.

"They say sports is not political, but when they need to politicize sports, they politicize it in the worst way. At the slightest excuse, a country is banned from participating in all international sports events. Why? Because you fought somewhere, but they themselves ignore the 5,000 martyred children in Gaza," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

They ban a country on the pretext of war while ignoring another country's war, war crimes, and even genocide, the Leader added.

Ayatollah Khamenei hailed Iranian athletes who expressed their support for Palestine and the Palestinian cause, and withdrew from competing with the occupying regime's representatives in international tournaments, saying the veracity of their act is now manifested more than ever before in the wake of Israel's genocide in Gaza.

"Today, the whole world has realized why the Iranian athlete will not agree to face the Zionist opponent on the field," (Continued on Page 7)

Seven Killed, Injured in Philadelphia Shooting

PHILADELPHIA (Dispatches) — A shooting in Philadelphia killed two men and wounded five others Tuesday night and police said the violence may have been drug-related.

Reports of shots being fired sent police to Fairhill Street in North Philadelphia at about 8:30 p.m., where they found four wounded men on the ground, interim Police Commissioner John Stanford told reporters.

All were taken to a hospital, where two were pronounced dead, Stanford said.

Three other wounded men walked into three hospitals but there was no immediate word on their conditions.

The men ranged in age from about 19 to 32 or 33, Stanford said. At least 70 shots were fired, Stanford said.

Four handguns and a long gun along with narcotics were found at the scene, and investigators believe several shooters were involved, he said.

The U.S. has one of the highest rate of deaths from gun violence in the world: 4.31 deaths per 100,000 people in 2021. That was more than seven times as high as the rate in Canada, which had 0.57 deaths per 100,000 people — and about 340 times higher than in the United Kingdom, which had 0.013 deaths per 100,000.

On a state-by-state calculation, the rates can be even higher. In the District of Columbia, the rate is 13.93 per 100,000 — the highest in the United States. The second-highest is in Louisiana: 10.91 per 100,000. In Maine — scene of the deadliest recent mass shootings — the rates are much lower than the national average: 1.15 per 100,000. But five other states that were the site of mass shootings over Halloween weekend — Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana and Texas — have rates that are higher than the national average.

The numbers come from a massive database maintained

by the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, which tracks lives lost in every country, in every year, by every possible cause of death.

The 2021 figures paint a fairly rosy picture for much of the world, with deaths due to gun violence rare even in many lower-middle income, and even low-income countries — such as Bangladesh and Burundi, which saw 0.06 deaths and 0.14 deaths, respectively, per 100,000 people.

Prosperous Asian countries such as Singapore (0.003), Japan (0.005) and South Korea (0.01) boast the absolute lowest (Continued on Page 7)