

22 Million... (Continued From Page One)

KARBALA/TEHRAN — In a display of defiance that stunned Western observers, more than 22 million pilgrims converged on the Iraqi holy city of Karbala on Tuesday for the annual Arbæen pilgrimage, transforming the sacred plaza into a unified demand for justice and vengeance for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Karbala Governor Nasseif Jassim al-Khattabi confirmed that approximately 5 million of the pilgrims were foreigners from 172 countries.

The gathering, considered one of the world's largest annual religious events, took place against the backdrop of the ongoing U.S. terrorist war on Iran and the region. It commemorates the 40th day of mourning for Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him), who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD.

In a ceremony that captured the geopolitical defiance of the pilgrimage, the largest blood-seeking flag ever raised in modern Arbæen history was hoisted above the space between the twin shrines of Imam Hussein (AS) and his martyred brother Abbas (AS).

The colossal red banner, inscribed with the ancient battle cry "Ya Latharat al-Hussein" (O Avengers of Hussein), was dedicated explicitly to the martyred Leader, assassinated in U.S.-Israeli terrorist strikes at the beginning of the recent war on Iran.

For millions of faithful, the flag was a public re-covenanting with the ideals of the fallen Leader and a deafening demand for retribution, seamlessly welding the historical tragedy of Karbala to the recent war of aggression waged by Washington and Tel Aviv.

Regional media outlets broadcast live images of the Bayn al-Haramayn plaza saturated in red. For days, pilgrims walking the ancient 76-kilometer route from Najaf to Karbala had carried identical red flags, passing them hand to hand.

At Pole 553, near a mawkib named for the martyred commander Haj Qasem Soleimani, the flags moved continuously among Iranian and Iraqi marchers under a sun pushing temperatures toward 50 degrees Celsius.

Iraqi-Iranian Unity on Display
The Najaf-Karbala road became a mobile demonstration of the unbreakable Iran-Iraq bond. Hassan al-Sarai, a 35-year-old pilgrim from Baghdad, told the Associated Press that he saw countless Iraqi and Iranian flags, calling it a message to Washington that American bombs had permanently fused the two nations together.

Aqeel al-Rubaie, a 45-year-old pilgrim from Baghdad, noted that Iranian flags were particularly visible along the road, while there were fewer flags than usual from European, Arab and other Islamic countries—which he attributed to the war and regional instability.

This year's Arbæen marked the first such pilgrimage since the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei. The scale defied Western expectations that war and economic strangulation would fracture the Resistance.

More than 1.7 million Iranians registered for the pilgrimage, with nearly 3 million crossing into Iraq through various border crossings in the run-up to Arbæen. Iraqi authorities reported that more than 4.88 million foreign pilgrims had entered Iraq since the beginning of Muharram.

Iranian Foreign Minister Joins Pilgrimage

Among the highest-profile foreign visitors was Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who arrived in Najaf on Monday before traveling to Karbala to participate in the pilgrimage.

Araghchi described the Arbæen ceremony as "a symbol of the unity of the Iraqi and Iranian nations" and noted that "a large portion of the participants are pilgrims from the two countries". His presence served as a reminder that diplomacy and devotion are inseparable.

Tehran Marches for Vengeance

In Iran, hundreds of thousands who could not travel to Karbala joined the annual symbolic procession known as "Those Left Behind from Arbæen," marching nearly 20 kilometers through Tehran to the shrine of Shah Abdol-Azim Hasani in Rey. The procession, held under the slogan "We Must Rise," drew vast crowds of worshippers.

Throughout the route, participants carried Iranian flags alongside black mourning banners and red flags bearing the phrase "Ya Latharat al-Hussein" (O Avengers of Hussein), while portraits of martyred leaders and resistance figures were prominently displayed.

Mourners chanted slogans calling for retaliation for the martyrdom of the beloved Leader in terrorist dastardly strikes by the U.S. and Israel, while demonstrators trampled on U.S. and Israeli flags. Similar rallies were held in other Iranian cities and towns.

Kataib Hezbollah Rejects Disarmament

The pilgrimage also delivered a direct rebuke to American pressure on Baghdad. Washington wants the Popular Mobilization Forces and other Iraqi Resistance groups disarmed. From the heart of the Arbæen crowds, Kataib Hezbollah, one of the most powerful anti-terror resistance groups, issued a statement explicitly rejecting disarmament, vowing to retain the "weapons of the resistance" as a sacred trust.

This year's Arbæen cemented itself as a powerful referendum on the U.S.-Iran war. The red flag in Bayn al-Haramayn transformed the sacred plaza into a tribunal where the United States and Israel stand condemned. The Resistance Front crystallized anew as a civilizational covenant.

As one observer put it, "No intelligence assessment or security model can account for why millions march through scorching heat; the answer resides in a magnetic pull that assassination only made absolute." The pilgrims proved that no empire's warplanes can break a civilization that refuses to kneel.

Tehran... (Continued From Page One)

He dismissed reports that China had taken over mediation, stating that Beijing was merely "helping" like several other countries, but "to say that we have added a new mediator to the existing mediators is not, in the strict sense of the word, the case".

Asked whether Saudi efforts or Iran's decisive response prevented a recent U.S. attack, Baghaei emphasized: "It is good that regional countries consider themselves part of the region's future, but the war is not just against Iran—it is against the security of the entire region. U.S. military presence and its use of southern Persian Gulf countries' territory has intensified insecurity for the entire region."

"Experience has proven that what stops the enemy is noth-

ing but Iran's strength and deterrence," he said.

He added: "The fact that all countries in the region consider themselves stakeholders in the future of the region is a positive thing. America's war against the Islamic Republic of Iran is not just a war against one country; it is a war against the entire region and against the security of all countries in the region."

Baghaei emphasized that Iran's talks with Oman are "purely bilateral and concern no one else," adding that sovereignty, national security, sovereign rights, and maritime services would be considered in any final agreement.

"There is absolutely no intention of returning the situation in the Strait of Hormuz to the conditions that existed before February 28," he said. He stressed that the Strait's problem stemmed not from any Iran-Oman disagreement but from "U.S. and Israeli military aggression".

The Iranian spokesman's comments come after Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described the Iran-Oman negotiations as in their final stages. According to a source familiar with the talks, discussions began shortly after the April ceasefire and have progressed positively despite U.S. efforts to obstruct the process.

Baghaei said U.S. intervention had repeatedly disrupted the talks rather than facilitating them, and that Iran would not let its national interests be affected by threats from U.S. officials.

Trump's... (Continued From Page One)

striking Iran, prompting Tehran to resume missile and drone strikes against U.S. assets and close the Strait of Hormuz once again.

The loss of MQ-9 Reaper drones comes as the United States has depleted "virtually all" of its stockpile of Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) and Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) weapons.

According to CSIS, the U.S. has expended approximately 65% of its Patriot interceptors, more than half of its THAAD interceptors, and nearly half of its global Tomahawk cruise missile supply. Retired US Marine Corps Colonel Mark Cancian warned that the depletion has created a "window of vulnerability" for the U.S. military.

The latest downing underscores the mounting costs of Washington's prolonged terrorist campaign against Iran, which has involved sustained airstrikes on infrastructure including bridges, hospitals, and energy facilities.

With Tehran's air defenses proving increasingly effective and U.S. stockpiles dwindling, the trajectory of the war raises profound questions about America's capacity to sustain its warmongering policies in the face of determined Iranian resistance and the potential for a wider regional conflagration.

Leader's... (Continued From Page 2)

entity, placing command and support far from the battlefield.

"Iran disrupted their plan. Trump's third war against Iran was defeated midway, adding a severe failure to his previous setbacks. We continued our strikes for two days after the Americans stopped," he added.

Rezaei explained that the Zionist regime stayed out of the latest confrontation because it remains entangled in Gaza, the occupied West Bank and Lebanon, and because Trump sought to create the

appearance of acting independently of Israeli pressure.

On the current situation, he said no formal ceasefire exists in the conventional sense, but Iranian strikes have become purposeful. The U.S. recently admitted to 650 killed and wounded in the recent clashes; Iranian estimates place the figure at nearly 500 killed and a large number of wounded.

While a full-scale American ground invasion plan is no longer realistic and has been greatly weakened, limited operations cannot be entirely ruled out.

Washington is already preparing a fourth round, including plots to stir internal unrest and attempts to drag other countries into the conflict, as seen in the Ukrainian attack on the Iranian ship and claims of Saudi involvement in bombings of Iraq, which Riyadh has denied and which Iran is investigating.

Rezaei warned that America's desperate maneuvers risk igniting the sparks of a third world war. West Asia today holds far greater potential for escalation than Europe on the eve of World War II. The Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf form a highly sensitive point; U.S. efforts to dominate the strait could draw other powers into a wider conflict.

He noted Trump's desire to activate NATO and growing interventionist signals from Britain's new prime minister, describing these moves as signs of desperation following defeats in the 40-day and 17-day wars. Netanyahu's recent efforts to drag the U.S. into further escalation largely failed this time.

Rejecting claims that Iran is the aggressor, Rezaei stressed that America is the warmonger. "If a global poll were held, the overwhelming majority of people worldwide would identify the United States as the warmonger."

"Iran always sought to prevent war and entered negotiations despite knowing America's bad faith. The enemy miscalculated Iran's political nobility and acceptance of talks as weakness, betrayed negotiations three times and imposed war on Iran," he stated.

"It was America that attacked our country and our people, martyred our Leader and our children. Did we attack them and massacre their nation?" he asked.

Iran does not seek to expand the war or welcome conflicts involving other countries, as such developments risk global war. Diplomacy remains necessary, but as the Leader has stated, America must change its behavior and honor its commitments. Only such a change can signal seriousness, he said.

In a separate tweet on Monday night, Rezaei said, "If the blockade continues, American vessels and forces will face serious risks and casualties. The U.S. must change its behavior — or we will not tolerate this. We will never permit the opening of a second corridor in the Strait of Hormuz."

The Leader's advisor emphasized that Iran has acted responsibly in the Strait of Hormuz, ensuring security for all, because global economic security matters to Tehran. It is the United States that creates insecurity. The war-negotiation-ceasefire cycle must end and the shadow of war be lifted. America must take the first step by changing its conduct. Continued blockade will endanger U.S. warships and vessels.

Finally, Rezaei called on the Iranian people, who have turned the streets into the frontline of a great national uprising, to extend this awakening into the economic

sphere. Sanctions relief alone will not produce economic rebirth.

Obstacles and restrictive laws must be removed, the state-dominated economy transformed, and the people made partners in economic activity, he noted.

Through collective savings, Iran can generate \$100 billion annually, with benefits returning to the people, Rezaei noted.

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"eagerness to continue the regional rounds in establishing security and stability, in order to achieve the common interests of all the countries and peoples of the region."

The United States has perpetrated numerous violations against Iranian territory since April 7, when U.S. President Donald Trump announced a unilateral ceasefire in the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression targeting the Islamic Republic that began on February 28.

These violations continued even after Washington and Tehran signed a Pakistan-mediated memorandum of understanding in June, whose first clause clearly mandated cessation of aggression on all fronts.

The U.S. has also sought to help vessels evade the maritime route designated by the Islamic Republic for safe and legal passage through the Strait of Hormuz by attempting to escort trespassing vessels through an illegal passageway.

Iran's Armed Forces have staged uncompromising retaliation in the face of each instance of violation, including those supporting illegal vessel movement in the strategic waterway.

Iran remains fully committed to defending its rights and sovereignty while prioritizing diplomatic and regional solutions to counter external aggression and ensure lasting stability in West Asia.

The... (Continued From Page 3)

The emergence of the "Indian Style" (Sabk-e Hindi) in Persian poetry, known for its complex imagery, innovative metaphors and refined expression, marked one of the significant developments in the history of Persian literature.

Beyond poetry, Persian played a crucial role in historiography, religious thought, Sufi literature and manuscript culture. Thousands of Persian manuscripts preserved in libraries across India and Pakistan testify to the depth of this legacy. Many of these works remain important sources for understanding the social, political and intellectual history of the region.

Persian also left a lasting impact on local languages, particularly Urdu. A significant portion of Urdu vocabulary, literary traditions and poetic conventions developed through interaction with Persian. Persian influence can also be found in languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Kashmiri and Bengali, especially in administrative, cultural and literary terminology.

The decline of Persian began in the 19th century with the consolidation of British colonial rule. As colonial authorities transformed administrative and educational systems, English gradually replaced Persian as the language of government and higher learning.

This shift weakened the institutional foundations of Persian and reduced its role among new generations of scholars and officials.

However, Persian never disappeared from the subcontinent.

Universities and research institutions in India continue to maintain Persian studies programs, while scholars work on Persian manuscripts, literature, history and mysticism.

In Pakistan, Persian remains an important part of cultural and literary understanding, particularly for the study of classical Urdu works.

The history of Persian in the Indian subcontinent represents one of the most significant examples of a language flourishing beyond its original geographical boundaries.

Persian was not simply a language of administration; it was a carrier of memory, creativity and intellectual exchange.

Although its official position has changed, its influence continues to live through literature, languages, manuscripts and the cultural traditions of South Asia.

New... (Continued From Page 3)

He further called for a cultural approach toward changing trends in clothing and lifestyle, stressing the importance of using artistic, media and social capacities to engage with evolving patterns of dress and consumption.

Hojatoleslam Hussein Maleki, adviser to the minister of culture and director general of the Tehran Province Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance, called for regular meetings of the working group with active participation from all member institutions.

He also stressed the importance of including clothing producers, unions and market representatives in discussions, saying those directly involved in production and distribution could provide practical perspectives on industry challenges and possible solutions.

Maleki noted that changes in social attitudes and values had been influenced by factors including education, technological developments and the expansion of digital platforms. He said cultural education and responsible use of technology should be prioritized alongside policy measures.

According to Maleki, cultural awareness should begin from early childhood and continue through schools, universities, families and social institutions.

He also highlighted the role of young people, grassroots groups and digital content creators in shaping cultural trends, saying cultural change requires public participation rather than relying only on official directives.

The meeting also discussed the role of online platforms and short-form digital content in communicating cultural messages, with participants emphasizing the need to use social media capacities more effectively.

Among the proposals raised was the possibility of developing an ethical framework for clothing producers through cooperation with industry associations and unions. Such a framework, participants suggested, could establish professional standards and encourage producers working within the country's cultural priorities.

The working group also stressed the importance of studying Iran's historical clothing traditions and using research on social attitudes and cultural values to improve policymaking in the fashion sector.

The meeting concluded with a call for continued cooperation among government institutions, professional organizations and industry representatives to advance the cultural and economic goals of Iran's fashion and clothing sector.