

Iran's Industry Ministry (MIMT) Has Announced That a Company Producing and Marketing Feature Phones Under the Brand Name of Nokia Is Not Authorized to Operate in the Country

IRAN NEWS

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Iran, Malaysia Slam Western Military Support for Israel



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Malaysia agree that the arms support provided by the United States and other Western countries to Israel contradicts their claims about human rights and undermines efforts to establish a ceasefire in Gaza.

In a phone conversation on Monday, President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran and Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia discussed the latest developments in the region, particularly the ongoing Gaza ceasefire negotiations.

The two sides underscored the importance of fostering unity and coherence among Muslim states to fight the crimes of Israel and end the genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip.

They said holding a summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) will be effective in this regard.

Israel launched its barbaric campaign of genocide in Gaza on October 7, 2023, after Palestinian resistance groups conducted surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm into the occupied territories.

The regime has imposed a near-total siege on the coastal territory, significantly reducing the flow of food, medicine, electricity, and water into the Palestinian region to a trickle.

So far, Israel has killed more than 40,000 Gazans, most of them women, children, and adolescents.

Int'l Community's Inaction Root Cause of Israel's Unrelenting Crimes



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says the inaction of the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, has emboldened the Israeli regime to continue its crimes against the people of Palestine.

"There is no doubt about the necessity of establishing a ceasefire [in Gaza]. The world is fed up with more than 10 months of acts of brutality and audacity of the Israeli regime and cannot accept this amount of crime anymore," Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani told reporters.

He added that Iran welcomes any sincere effort to establish a ceasefire in the war-stricken Gaza Strip and was among the leading countries that used all its capacities to stop the Israeli regime's "killing machine".

Iran believes that the US lacks the competence to pursue the ceasefire negotiations as it is one of the Israeli regime's supporters and is not committed to preserving international security and peace, the spokesman emphasized.

"The U.S. has so far proved that it is a party to the war and killing," Kanaani said.

He added that the ceasefire talks have been held between Palestinian groups and the Israeli regime, which has so far killed more than 40,000 Palestinians.

As announced by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, which is the main Palestinian negotiating party, the Israeli regime has no intention to establish a ceasefire in Gaza, he explained.

"Therefore, the ball is in the court of Israel and the U.S.," Kanaani said.

Osama Hamdan, who represents Hamas in Lebanon, said on Saturday that there is no real will on the part of the United States to establish a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Egyptian sources, requesting anonymity, were quoted as saying on Saturday that indirect negotiations between representatives from Hamas and Israel on a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip will resume on Wednesday in Cairo.

Negotiating delegations of the three mediators - Egypt, Qatar, and the United States - and the Israeli team will attend the talks scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, according to the sources.



Stronger Response Awaits Israel for Hamas Leader's Assassination

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has vowed to respond to the Israeli regime's assassination of senior Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in the Iranian capital Tehran with a reprisal that would be stronger than the previous time when the Islamic Republic retaliated against Tel Aviv's aggression.

"The usurping Zionist regime committed a great crime by assassinating martyr Haniyeh, and will be punished more severely than the last time," the Corps' Deputy Commander Brigadier General Ali Fadavi said on the sidelines of his visit to Shalamcheh Border on the eve of Arbeen great rally.

He asserted that the punishment would come "at the proper time and in the right place." "It is us who will decide the time and place of the revenge," the commander noted, adding, "It will definitely take place."

Haniyeh, the Palestinian resistance movement's former Political Bureau chief, was assassinated in a targeted killing operation in Tehran late last month. He was in the Iranian capital to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian.

The Israeli regime has denied responsibility, but Iran has held it squarely responsible for the atrocity and vowed to serve it with a harsh response.

Earlier this year, the IRGC targeted the occupied Palestinian territories with a barrage of drones and missiles in a set of retaliatory strikes dubbed Operation True Promise.

The operation had come after the regime carried out terrorist airstrikes on the consular section of Iran's Embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus, killing two of the Corps' generals as well as five of their accompanying officers.

Still addressing the issue of Iran's pending response over Haniyeh's assassination, Fadavi said, "There is such turmoil in the occupied territories" as the regime was awaiting the prospect "day and night."

He pointed out that the Arbaeen pilgrimage has gained global recognition despite Western media blackouts and stated: "The enemy has launched numerous attacks and conspiracies to dismantle the Islamic system, but with the grace of God and the vigilance of the people and officials, these pressures have been neutralized and have been fruitless."

The deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) regarded the service to Arbaeen pilgrims as a blessing and a generous view from the Lord, adding: "Visiting Arbaeen is a recommended act, but serving the pilgrims is considered a mandatory duty, and the reward for a mandatory duty is greater than that for a recommended act." He noted that this year's movement during Arbaeen has been smoother compared to previous years, and a larger number of people have traveled to Iraq to participate in the grand Arbaeen procession.

He described understanding Imam Hussain (PBUH) as essential for the intellectual development of Muslims and as a precursor to the appearance of the Mahdi. He reminded that Arbaeen and the significance of this spiritual visit are among the ways to understand the leader of the martyrs and the Ashura movement.

The deputy commander of the IRGC stated: "Enemies have always tried to prevent the reflection of the millions of pilgrims' movements and cover them up to keep this grand global congress from being reflected internationally, while the grandeur of the Arbaeen movement will never be silenced by these desperate measures."

Brigadier General Fadavi added: "The enemy's eyes are set on Arbaeen and, recognizing the importance of this congress, monitors all the Arbaeen activities. Despite all their poisonous propaganda, every year the hearts of all Shia and those devoted to Arbaeen are focused on it, although the opportunity to visit is granted to only a few."

Arbaeen Million-Man Ceremony Is a Display of Islam's Power



TEHRAN - Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, during a visit to the Arbaeen Headquarters of Hazrat Abolfazl in the Command Headquarters of the National Police, told reporters: "I am grateful to God for the opportunity to be among the servants of Hazrat Abu Abdullah al-Hussain (PBUH) at the National Police Command Headquarters."

Major General Bagheri added: "In addition to the reports and field inspections conducted by the inspectors of the General Staff of the Armed Forces on the missions of the National Police regarding Arbaeen, reports from the headquarters stationed at the terminals also indicate the establishment of order and security during this event."

The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces added: "Reports received from Tehran to the border terminals show that the sincere and honest service of our comrades in the National Police Command is evident, and all the disarray seen in previous years regarding road traffic, border crossings, and security and services issues have, thankfully, been resolved with the management of our dear ones and the cooperation of various national institutions."

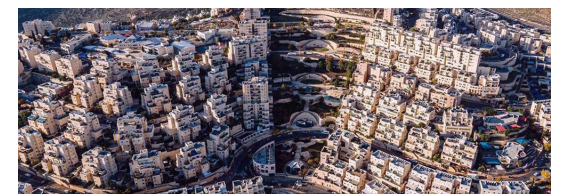
Referring to the passage of more than 2.5 million of our compatriots from the borders towards the holy shrines, Major General Bagheri said: "During this period, more than 200,000 non-Iranian pilgrims have also crossed the borders and visited the shrines."

The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces added: "Fortunately, the waiting time for pilgrims at the borders has been reduced to just a few seconds, which shows the preparedness of infrastructure and the establishment of security and service provision by the volunteers to the pilgrims."

He pointed out the oppressive heat during this year's ceremony and added: "Despite this, the work is being carried out satisfactorily, and the National Police Command has announced its readiness to welcome all the opinions of the pilgrims. Pilgrims can share their views upon their return so that existing issues can be resolved by next year."

Major General Bagheri continued: "The Arbaeen ceremony, with its multi-million participant volume, is in fact a display of Islam's power and the devotion of our people and many other countries to Islamic teachings and the Imams (PBUH). This grand exercise is showcased by the companions of Hazrat Baqiyatullah al-Azam (PBUH), and fortunately, the National Police Command has the honor of successfully carrying out this mission, with no issues observed so far, and all actions are being carried out properly."

Alarming Israeli Settlement Expansion Flies in Face of Int'l Law



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The UN Human Rights Office says the alarming Israeli settlement expansion and legal changes in the occupied West Bank fly in the face of international law.

In a press release on Monday, the UN body said such measures violate a landmark ruling by the International Court of Justice in July.

In its Advisory Opinion of July 19, the ICJ held that Israel's policies and practices amount to annexation of large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It called for the evacuation of all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

According to the press release, illegal settlements, settler violence and the presence of settlers are the root causes of the majority of human rights violations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

It emphasized that the recently-announced construction of new settlement plans in Nahal Heletz west of Bethlehem all remain unlawful under international law.

"In the case of Nahal Heletz, the building of a new settlement in this strategic area severely compromises the livelihoods, safety and movement of Palestinians living in five surrounding villages, while posing a significant threat to the contiguity and viability of a Palestinian state," it pointed out.

Israel on Wednesday approved the construction of a new settlement on a UNESCO World Heritage Site near the occupied West Bank city of Bethlehem as the regime's forces continue to raid areas across the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israel's finance minister Bezalel Smotrich said that his office had "completed its work and published a plan for the new Nahal Heletz settlement in Gush Etzion."

Most United Nations member states consider settlements built in the West Bank and other territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war to be illegal under international law.

Iran Rejects Unsubstantiated U.S. Election Campaign Hacking Claims



NEW YORK (IRNA) - Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations has roundly rejected allegations about Tehran's interference in the 2024 US presidential election, calling the claim "unsubstantiated".

According to IRNA, the Iranian mission issued a statement on Monday night local time, in response to questions regarding the claim of American intelligence and cyber agencies. "Such allegations are unsubstantiated and devoid of any standing. As we have previously announced, the Islamic Republic of Iran harbors neither the intention nor the motive to interfere with the US presidential election," the statement said.

"Should the US government genuinely believe in the validity of its claims, it should furnish us with the pertinent evidence—if any—to which we will respond accordingly," it added.

In a joint statement, the FBI and several other US intelligence agencies claimed that Iran was involved in hacking of the campaign of Donald Trump, the Republican candidate for the 2024 US presidential election, as well as trying to hack the campaign of Kamala

Harris, the Democratic presidential candidate.

Last week, the Iranian mission at New York, rejected a report published by an American digital newspaper claiming that it has access to documents about Iran's role in hacking the Trump campaign.

"Iran itself is a victim of various cyber-attacks targeting the country's infrastructure, public service centers and industries. Iran's cyber power is defensive and in proportion to the threats it faces", Iran's mission clarified last Friday.

Iran does not have a goal or a plan for a cyberattack. The American election is an internal issue of this country, and Iran has no involvement in it, the statement from the Iranian mission then elaborated further.

Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN had issued several such statement recently over claims implicating the Islamic Republic in the US election campaign hacking or a shooting incident during Trump's rally, calling those allegations "absurd, baseless and biased".

IRAN NEWS



Record in the Transit of Oil Products "Broken"

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Mehrdad Bazrpash, the Minister of Roads and Urban Development, announced today (Monday, August 19) on his personal social media page: "14.5 million tons of essential goods have been imported into the country through the Imam Khomeini Port in the year 2023."

He further stated: "The operational capacity for unloading and loading at this port has increased to more than 25 million tons, and with the recording of a 15-year record, over 4.2 million tons of various oil products were transited through this port in 2023."

Iran, FAO Collaborate with the Green Climate Fund to Enhance Climate Resilience



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Environmental Protection Agency, as the designated national authority, have initiated a collaboration with the support of the Green Climate Fund to enhance resilience against climate change.

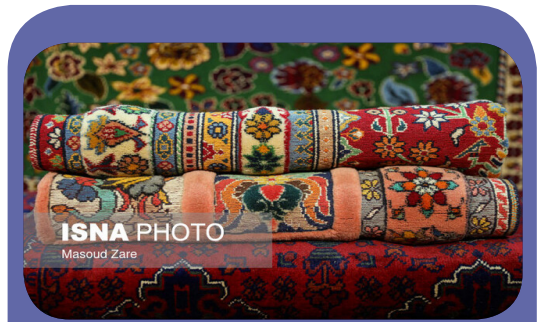
FAO and the Environmental Protection Agency have recently signed a project titled "Enhancing Iran's Access to the Green Climate Fund through National Ownership, Knowledge-Based Policies, and Sustainable Technologies." This project marks a significant step towards aligning national strategies with climate action and promoting sustainable development.

Like many countries, Iran faces the challenges of climate change and is striving to effectively address its adverse effects, including exacerbated droughts and catastrophic floods that worsen water shortages and impact ecosystems, biodiversity, food production, and the economy.

Iran's National Strategic Action Plan for Climate Change provides a comprehensive roadmap for adaptation and mitigation of climate change effects, contingent on securing financial and technical support within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations on climate change.

With the participation of all key stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and non-governmental organizations, a kickoff workshop for this project was held today (Monday, August 19), marking the official start of this important initiative. This sets the stage for joint efforts to achieve climate resilience in the country.

This transformative initiative between Iran, FAO, and the Green Climate Fund aims to strengthen the country's resilience to climate change through a multifaceted approach.



Decline in Hand-Woven Carpet Exports

TEHRAN - The CEO of the Hand-Woven Carpet Cooperatives Union reported that the value of hand-woven carpet exports last year was \$50 million. He stated that the cooperative sector could help achieve the year's slogan, adding that pooling small investments from the public into cooperatives and collective participation is possible.

Abdollah Bahrami described hand-woven carpets as a product that is 100% Iranian, with 95% of it being exported. He emphasized that the government should regard this industry as a national, employment-generating, and strategic sector and should allocate funds and investments to it. He noted that it is necessary to include the comprehensive management of this large industry in planning and to establish an independent organization with a strategic role for it.

He continued, stating that fortunately, the strategic document for hand-woven carpets has been reviewed for the second time at the National Carpet Center, with significant revisions made. He expressed hope that the proposal to establish a National Carpet and Handicrafts Organization would be approved and that the strategic document would be implemented concurrently with its establishment.

The CEO of the Hand-Woven Carpet Cooperatives Union emphasized that the current state of the carpet industry requires moving in this direction. He mentioned that they had proposed this idea both verbally and in writing during a meeting with the President and expressed hope that it would become a priority for the 14th government, as it is in the country's best interest.

Bahrami stated that carpet production has a 70% added value, and apart from generating significant foreign currency for the country, the most important feature of this industry is job creation in urban and rural areas and income generation for families.

Senegal Seeks to Expand Cooperation with Iran in the Mining Sector

TEHRAN - The Senegalese Ambassador in Tehran has called for strengthening cooperation with Iran in the mining sector, stating that a new joint agreement for the exploitation of an iron ore mine in Senegal could be signed swiftly between the two countries.

During a meeting with Fazlollah Heydari Farzan, Director of International Relations at the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Saliou Niang Dieng expressed his readiness to quickly draft a new joint agreement for the exploitation of an iron ore mine in Senegal.

He added that he would personally be responsible for coordinating the necessary steps to exchange this agreement.

In this meeting, which was attended by the CEO of IRITEC and the Director of Exploration at IMIDRO, Heydari Farzan emphasized the importance of exploring the potential for activities in the Senegalese iron ore mine, as highlighted by the Chairman of IMIDRO. He mentioned that this meeting was based on the agreements made during the Fifth Joint Commission of Iran and Senegal (held in December 2023 in Dakar) and

aimed at updating the memorandum of understanding and exploring new cooperation opportunities in the mining sector.

Heydari Farzan also noted that training in geology, exploration, and mineral production processes for Senegalese engineers, Iran's interest in exploiting the iron ore mine, and participation in the production of cement, phosphate fertilizer, etc., could mark a fresh start for bilateral cooperation.

He further mentioned that Senegal's government's interest in establishing a technical and engineering company in the mining sector with IMIDRO could be a significant step forward, suggesting that inviting the Senegalese Minister of Mines and Energy for bilateral negotiations could be effective in this regard.

Ahmad Fattahi Mojallaj, Director of Exploration at IMIDRO, also highlighted IMIDRO's exploratory achievements during the meeting. He mentioned that "producing baseline data up to the mining phase" and the ongoing program to "convert the evaluation and validation of old data through artificial intelligence into promising areas for exploration activities" are among the organization's capabilities for bilateral cooperation.

Benefits of FTA With EAEU States Highlighted

MOSCOW - The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Russia, highlighting the benefits of the Free Trade Agreement with the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in boosting national production and exports, called for the acceleration of the approval process of this agreement in Iran's Parliament.

In an interview with IRNA on the sidelines of his visit to the Pavilion of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the "Automechanika Moscow" International Exhibition of Auto Parts and Accessories, Kazem Jalali stated: "We must admit that some countries have taken more appropriate steps to secure a suitable share of the Russian automobile and auto parts market, taking advantage of the opportunities created by international developments."

He emphasized the need to increase interactions between Iranian companies active in the automotive industry and their Russian counterparts, while also considering government assistance in areas such as logistics and the transportation of cars and their parts to Russia to expedite exports.

The Iranian Ambassador to Russia also noted that the growth of Iran's automotive industry exports to Russia is not only influenced by factors such as marketing but that if certain actions are taken more swiftly, they could help achieve this goal.

Referring to the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the five member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, and its approval in the parliaments of most of these member countries, he called for the acceleration of its approval in the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

Jalali pointed out that the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union, and the elimination of customs tariffs on 87% of goods, depends on the approval of all the contracting countries' parliaments. He mentioned that if this agreement is approved quickly by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the customs tariffs on 87% of goods in trade between Iran and the member countries of the union would be reduced to nearly zero, which would benefit exporters.

He continued, "Therefore, if we remove the obstacles facing the export of Iranian products, including in the automotive industry, we have the potential for significant growth in exports and can establish a strong presence in the Russian market."



In response to another question from an IRNA reporter regarding the assessment of Iran's third participation in the "Automechanika Moscow" exhibition as a national pavilion, the Iranian Ambassador to Russia said: "We are pleased that Iranian companies are participating in this exhibition for the third time as an independent pavilion of Iran, and it is also gratifying that the automotive cooperation between the two countries is taking shape."

Jalali, referring to the reports provided by those involved in the automotive industry and private sector participants in the Automechanika exhibition, said: "Over the past three years, we have witnessed a steady increase in trade contracts between Iranian companies and Russian companies for the export of auto parts."

He continued: "In terms of auto parts manufacturing, Iran has made significant progress, and some in the Russian automotive industry find it hard to believe the advancements our country has made in this industry under sanctions. In this context, the Automechanika exhibition has provided a good opportunity to strengthen mutual understanding among industry players and to enhance exports in this sector."

According to another report, the Iranian Ambassador to Russia held a friendly meeting with a group of automotive industry activists and parts manufacturers to discuss and exchange views on the development of cooperation between the two countries in this sector.

This meeting, held on Monday evening, was attended by some automotive industry participants in the Automechanika exhibition, Farshad Moqimi, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and CEO of the Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization, Mr. Aghaei, acting deputy for transportation at the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, and also the head of the Parts Manufacturers Association.

In this meeting, Jalali mentioned the neighborhood factors and the approach of both countries towards regional and international issues as influential elements in bilateral relations and emphasized the need for mutual understanding between Iran and the new Russia regarding industrial capacities. The Iranian Ambassador, noting that Russia is a large market for Iranian-made goods, assessed the automotive and parts manufacturing industry as a suitable platform for entering this market.

40% Progress in Fiber Optic Project Implementation



TEHRAN - Isa Zarepour, the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, stated that the fiber optic project for homes and businesses is the most important initiative of the Ministry of Communications in the 13th government. So far, more than 8 million households in various cities have been covered by this project, and they can request this high-speed service, which can reach up to 1000 Mbps, to be activated within the next month.

He further added that citizens can enter their postal code on the website to check if they are covered. The major event of today's meeting was the commitment made by service providers to increase the current 600,000-700,000 fiber optic subscribers to 2 million by the end of the year. This means that the number of fiber optic subscribers will be nearly 4 to 5 times higher than the current level, potentially improving our fixed communications ranking by at least 20 to 30 places.

The Minister also mentioned that, according to the Seventh Development Plan, the Ministry of Communications is obliged to have 20 million fiber optic subscribers within the next five years, with the support of these service providers. The law requires nearly 4 million new subscribers each year, which has now become a legal mandate and a promising development for the public.

In February, Zarepour said that some six million households are currently using internet services provided by the country's high-speed optic fiber network.

He added that some 20 million people in Iran will have access to optic fiber services until August 2025.

According to government statistics, more than 91% of Iranian villages with a population of over 20 households have been connected to the existing high-speed network in the country.

In May, the late President Raisi called fiber optic network an important infrastructure for smart technology.

Latest Achievements of Footwear Industry Put on Display at 11th Int'l Exhibition



TEHRAN - The 11th International Exhibition of Footwear, Bags, Leather, and Related Industries (MPEX13) opened at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, showcasing the latest achievements in the industry.

This exhibition has brought together footwear, bag, and leather industry professionals and producers from various provinces of Iran and other countries worldwide. They are presenting their latest products and services to interested visitors.

The 11th International Exhibition of Footwear, Bags, Leather, and Related Industries (MPEX13) features over 150 domestic and international companies and production units at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Rasoul Shajari, President of the Handmade Footwear Union and head of the exhibition's organizing committee, mentioned that, in addition to domestic producers, companies and manufacturers from countries such as Italy, Turkey, and China are participating and showcasing the latest products in the leather industry and related crafts.

He added that more than 150 companies are participating in the 11th International Exhibition of the Leather, Bags, Footwear, and Related Industries.

Shajari also noted the presence of delegations from various provinces of Iran, including Razavi Khorasan, East Azerbaijan, Isfahan, Qom, and Hamedan. Additionally, several foreign trade delegations from different countries are expected to visit the exhibition and engage in face-to-face negotiations with Iranian companies.

The 11th International Exhibition of the Leather, Bags, Footwear, and Related Industries is being held in a space covering over 14,000 square meters. On the sidelines of the exhibition, several scientific and specialized meetings and workshops with university professors, specialists, and leather industry leaders are scheduled.

Israeli Strikes on Yemen Port Possible War Crime

DUBAI (Dispatches) - An Israeli air raid last month on a key Yemeni rebel-held port was a "possible war crime" that has threatened food and aid supply for millions, Human Rights Watch said on Monday. The July 20 attack on the western port city of Hodeida, controlled by Yemen's Iran-backed Huthis, came a day after the rebels claimed responsibility for a drone attack on Israel's commercial hub of Tel Aviv. New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) said the Tel Aviv strike that killed one person could also constitute a war crime by the Huthis. The Israeli response decimated the Hodeida port's fuel storage capacity and killed at least nine people, according to the Huthis who hold much of Yemen including the capital Sanaa. HRW said "at least six civilians" were killed in the strikes which "reportedly injured at least 80 others". The rights group noted that the Hodeida port "is critical for delivering food and other necessities to the Yemeni population". The damage "could have a long-term impact on millions of Yemenis who rely on the port for food and humanitarian aid", it said. The Israeli military has said the Huthis used the Hodeida port to receive Iranian weapons.



IRAN NEWS

Nicaragua Outlaws 1,500 NGOs, Including Religious Charities



MANAGUA (Dispatches) - Nicaragua on Monday shuttered 1,500 NGOs, bringing to more than 5,000 the number of such entities scrapped in a crackdown on opponents by President Daniel Ortega.

The government has jailed hundreds of critics, real and perceived, since protests against his regime in 2018 that were met with a crackdown the UN said left more than 300 people dead.

Monday's announcement was the single-largest targeting of NGOs to date, bringing the total to more than 5,100.

Charges against the latest batch of entities, most of them religious, are that they had failed to declare their income, according to a government notice.

They will have their assets seized.

Ortega's government considers the 2018 protests an attempted coup d'etat promoted by the United States and backed by the religious community.

Last week, it passed a regulation requiring NGOs to work exclusively in "partnership alliances" with state entities.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross and several Catholic charities are among the NGOs shuttered to date, with many hit by charges dismissed as spurious.

Other targets have included rotary and chess clubs, sports associations and groupings of small traders, rural people and pensioners, as well as Catholic radio stations and universities.

Ortega's wife and vice president, Rosario Murillo, has described religious people as "children of the devil" or "agents of evil" who carry out "spiritual terrorism."



DNC's Pro-Palestinian Protests Draw Thousands in Chicago

CHICAGO (Dispatches) - Thousands of mostly peaceful pro-Palestinian protesters marched in Chicago on the opening day of the Democratic National Convention on Monday, in a show of anger against the Biden administration's support for Israel in the Gaza war.

After hours of peaceful demonstrations, dozens of protesters broke through part of the perimeter security fence, drawing riot police to the site, a Reuters witness said.

The DNC's security team confirmed that protesters breached a portion of the fencing on the outer perimeter near the convention arena but said law enforcement personnel acted quickly and there was no threat to attendees.

Reuters witnesses saw four people detained and placed in handcuffs. Chicago police confirmed at a press conference that arrests were made but did not say how many.

Chanting intensified ahead of the fence breach, as protesters reached a neighborhood park on Chicago's West Side and paused to amplify their calls for a ceasefire. Amid the noise, the crowd turned its frustration toward Vice President Kamala Harris, referring to the Democratic candidate as "Killer Kamala".

Chicago police formed a perimeter around the park on foot to contain protesters, with some police members on bikes. Still, the umbrella group "March on the DNC" drew fewer supporters than expected to a park outside the convention arena, hours before President Joe Biden was to address the gathering.

They started a one-mile march near where Democratic delegates will nominate Harris as their candidate to face Republican Donald Trump in November's presidential election.

Organizers had expected tens of thousands of protesters - enough to fill the park and the march route - Hatem Abudayyeh, a spokesman for March on the DNC, said early Monday. By afternoon though, several thousand protesters had gathered for speeches and the park was only half full.

The coalition of more than 200 groups includes those advocating for a variety of causes from reproductive rights to

racial justice. Many people were coming from Palestinian and Arab communities in Illinois and neighboring states, organizers said last week.

Dozens of Muslim delegates and their allies, angry at U.S. support for Israel's offensive in Gaza, are seeking changes in the Democratic platform and plan to press for an arms embargo, putting the party on guard for disruptions to high-profile speeches at the convention.

Roman Fritz, at 19 one of the youngest Wisconsin delegates, wore a scarf imprinted with the traditional Palestinian keffiyeh pattern. He said he supported Harris as the party nominee to beat Trump.

Some protesters were doubtful that the party will change its platform.

"It'll never happen," said Mwalimu Sundiata Keita, who traveled from Cincinnati, Ohio, to join the protest. "It's the policy of the party to support Israel, and until that policy changes, that's the way it's going to be."

Another large protest was scheduled for Thursday, when Harris is due to formally accept the nomination. Pro-Palestinian groups have for months protested the Biden administration's military and financial support for Israel in its war against Hamas, which has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to Gaza health officials.

Israel launched the offensive after it was attacked on Oct. 7 by Hamas militants who killed 1,200 people and abducted about 250 hostages, according to Israel tallies.

Protests swelled on U.S. college campuses in the spring, with police clearing student encampments, at times after confrontations between protesters and counterprotesters.

"The Democrats are the ones in power," Abudayyeh said on Monday. "It's their war. They're responsible for it, they're complicit, and they can stop it."

Kyiv Says Kursk Attack Shows Kremlin Red Lines Are Bluff



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Monday his country's assault on Russia's Kursk region showed that Kremlin threats of retaliation were a bluff, and he urged Kyiv's allies to loosen curbs on using foreign-supplied weapons.

Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces now controlled more than 1,250 square kilometres (483 square miles) and 92 settlements in Kursk region, while Russia said Ukraine had struck a third bridge in the region, complicating Russian efforts to repel the Ukrainian attack.

Ukraine launched its surprise strike on the Russian region on Aug. 6, the biggest invasion of Russia since World War Two, in an operation that Kyiv says is aimed at carving out a buffer zone and wearing down Russia's war machine.

Speaking to a gathering of Ukrainian diplomats, Zelenskyy singled out allies who have supplied long-range weapons but told Kyiv they cannot use them deep inside Russia for fear of crossing "red lines" set out by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"We are witnessing a significant ideological shift - the naive, illusory concept of so-called red lines regarding Russia, which dominated the assessment of the war by some partners, has crumbled apart these days," Zelenskyy said.

He said Ukraine, because of the restrictions imposed by allies, could not use the weapons at its disposal to hit some

Russian military targets. He urged allies to be bolder in their decisions about how to help Kyiv in the war.

"The world sees that everything in this war depends only on courage - our courage, the courage of our partners. On brave decisions for Ukraine, on courage in supporting Ukraine," Zelenskyy said.

Doctors' thrust into Russia, Ukraine's forces are on the defensive elsewhere. They face a battle to protect the strategic eastern city of Pokrovsk, where Russia has steadily advanced in recent weeks in heavy fighting more than two years since Russia's full-scale invasion.

Ukraine's military said late on Monday its forces had fought 63 skirmishes over the course of the day against Russian forces on the Pokrovsk front, and it expected that area to remain the focus of Russian attacks.

Russia said a third bridge had been struck and damaged on the Semy River that winds through the Kursk region bordering northeastern Ukraine.

Ukraine has not yet commented on the strike, but Kyiv's air force chief has said his forces have destroyed two bridges to weaken enemy logistics.

Military analysts said the bridges were part of critical supply lines for Russian troops defending the area. Reuters could not independently confirm the damage to the bridges or the battlefield situation in Kursk.

Taiwan Shows Off Missile Firepower on Rare Trip to Sensitive Test Site

JIUPENG (Dispatches) - Taiwan showed off its missile firepower on Tuesday, launching a battery of surface-to-air missiles in front of reporters during a visit to a sensitive test site on a remote part of the island's southeastern coast.

Democratically-governed Taiwan, which China views as its own territory, has complained of stepped up Chinese military activity as Beijing seeks to assert its sovereignty claims, and Taipei has been strengthening its deterrence abilities.

Missiles are a key part of Taiwan's defence strategy, both U.S.-made and domestically-developed.

At the Jiupeng base in Taiwan's Pingtung County, the military test fired both U.S.-made Patriot and Taiwan-made Sky Bow III missiles into the skies as dawn broke, while a warship off the coast fired a RIM-66 Standard missile.

"All the missiles that were fired today have smoothly hit their mark and have proven two points - the first being that the training of our soldiers is very solid, the other being that our weapons systems have been verified during this process of live firing missiles," said Defence Ministry spokesperson Sun Li-fang.

"All in all we have achieved our objectives," he told reporters on a rare trip to the base.

Jiupeng is also where the government-run weapons developer National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology tests new missiles, like the longer-range version of the Hsiung Feng which is designed to hit targets deep in China.

Taiwan's government rejects China's territorial claims, saying only the island's people can decide their future.

Thousands in India Join Nationwide Protests Over Doctor's Murder



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Thousands of outraged Indian protesters, including arch-rival football fans and lawyers, called for justice Monday after the rape and murder of a doctor as widespread strikes by healthcare workers entered a second week.

The discovery of the 31-year-old doctor's bloodied body at a state-run hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata on August 9 sparked medical strikes and protests across India, channelling anger at the chronic issue of violence against women.

Doctors' associations from government-run hospitals in many cities across India continued strikes on Monday that cut non-essential services.

"We have forgotten our rivalries to make common cause in calling for justice for the doctor and her family," said Bablu Mukherjee, a supporter of Kolkata's Mohun Bagan soccer team.

"The cause is bigger than our club, even bigger than politics."

The murdered doctor was found in the teaching hospital's seminar hall, suggesting she had gone there for a break during a 36-hour-long shift.

An autopsy confirmed sexual assault and, in a petition to the Kolkata High Court, her parents said they suspected their daughter was gang raped.

In a rare case of unity, fans from Kolkata's usual rivals the East Bengal club marched alongside them in a midnight rally that lasted into the early hours of Monday.

"We are with the doctors," the fans chanted in unison, shrugging off torrential monsoon rains and police seeking to break up the rally. "We want justice."

Many of the protests in multiple cities have been led by doctors and other healthcare workers but have also been joined by tens of thousands of ordinary Indians demanding action.

"It's not just a protest, but a call to humanity," said 23-year-old student Sristi Halder, from Kolkata's Presidency University, who joined the candlelit rally.

"We are angry," she said. "It's about the safety of all women everywhere."

Doctors from the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, where the murder occurred, rallied outside the building on Monday.

"We are determined that we don't give in to pressure to remain silent," said Shreya Shaw, a woman doctor. "The protests will go on until we get justice."

With non-essential medical procedures closed, some of the striking doctors in the capital New Delhi offered to see patients for free outside India's health ministry.

India's Supreme Court has also taken up the case, overseeing the process in Kolkata's High Court, with a hearing.

One man, who worked at the hospital helping people navigate busy queues, has been detained.

Hundreds of lawyers, mostly women, joined the protests in Kolkata, marching in legal black gowns.

"No mercy to rapists", one banner read.

Doctors have also demanded the implementation of the Central Protection Act, a bill to protect healthcare workers from violence.



Sinner, Sabalenka Win ATP Cincinnati Open

CINCINNATI (Dispatches) - World number one Jannik Sinner on Monday lifted his third ATP Masters trophy as the world number one beat Frances Tiafoe 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 to win the Cincinnati Open.

The Italian top seed warmed up for next week's US Open in style, biding his time in a hard-fought first set before breaking the match open in the second.

Tiafoe, whose game faded after losing the first-set tiebreaker, still made an impression.

The American, who moves into the ranking top-20, saved three match points before Sinner claimed his 15th career title.

Cincinnati is the fifth trophy of 2024 for the 23-year-old Italian, who began the season with an Australian Open crown in Melbourne.

"I'm happy, this was a very difficult week," Sinner said. "It was tough mentally but I tried to do my best."

"Frances and I were both tired from the (Sunday) semi-finals and there was a lot of tension."

"I'm just glad I kept my level in the important moments. I handled the situations on court well."

"There were many ups and downs, but that's normal. At the big moments of each match I played well."

Sinner heads to the August 26 start of the US Open as a major favourite, standing more than 2,000 points clear of world number two Novak Djokovic.

"I'm confident, but it's important to be able to recover to be ready for New York," the Italian said afterwards.

"That is the main goal of this US Open swing. "I'm happy to be in the position I'm in. I have the hunger to keep playing. I hope to show good tennis in New York."

Against Tiafoe, Sinner hit 29 winners, including 13 aces and broke the American twice from eight attempts.

"I'm really tired," Tiafoe told Sinner at the net afterwards.

"I'm not used to playing so many matches like you big guys. Well-played."

The pair duelled for nearly an hour in the opening set, with the Italian making 10 aces on the way into a tiebreaker.

One crack in Tiafoe's defence was enough to hand Sinner two set point chances, with the first converted by the top seed for the early lead.

Tiafoe dropped serve to start the second as his reserves began to run dry, Sinner achieved a double break in a fifth game lasting for more than 10 minutes with seven deuces.

With a 4-1 lead, the Italian still had to fight, with Tiafoe saving three match points to climb to 5-2 before the top seed completed his work a game later.

Sinner is the youngest champion here since Andy Murray in 2008.

Meanwhile Aryna Sabalenka thrust herself into US Open title contention on Monday with a 6-3, 7-5 defeat of Jessica Pegula to win the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Open.

The third seed who missed Wimbledon with a shoulder injury won a trophy for the first time since collecting her second Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January.

Sabalenka had it all her way against the American sixth seed until the closing stages when she lost serve for the first time leading a set and 5-4.

But a quick re-break and another hold of serve solved that problem and produced a first Masters-level trophy on hardcourt since 2021 for the Belarus player.

"I really couldn't have wished for more -- it was a really great day at the office," Sabalenka said afterwards.

Gundogan Retires From Int'l Football



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany captain Ilkay Gundogan announced his retirement from international football on Monday after leading his country at Euro 2024, citing "a certain tiredness" both physically and mentally.

"After a few weeks of reflection, I have come to the conclusion that it is time to end my national team career," Gundogan wrote on social media.

"I look back with great pride on 82 international matches for my home country - a number that I could never have dreamed of when I made my debut for the senior national team in 2011."

His retirement follows those of Toni Kroos and Thomas Mueller. Kroos hung up his boots for good after Euro 2024, while Mueller called time on his Germany career last month.

Gundogan, who turns 34 in October, skipped the Germany team that reached the Euro 2024 quarter-finals before losing to eventual champions Spain after extra time.

Despite the pain of that defeat Germany demonstrated they are a force to be reckoned with again after the disappointment of successive World Cup group-stage exits either side of a last-16 loss to England at Euro 2020.

"My highlight was clearly the huge honour of being able to lead the team as captain at our home European Championship last summer," said the Barcelona midfielder.

Gundogan, who won five Premier League titles and the Champions League in seven seasons with Manchester City before moving to Barcelona last year, admitted to feeling the effects of a busy schedule before the start of Euro 2024.

"I felt a certain tiredness in my body and also in my head, which got me thinking. And the games at club and national level are not going to get any less," he said.

"I will definitely continue to be a fan of this national team and very much hope that the upward trend can continue together - and then there is nothing to stop us from being one of the main title contenders at the 2026 World Cup."

Juve Give Motta Perfect Start Against Como

MILAN (Dispatches) - Juventus made light work of Como on Monday with a 3-0 win on Thiago Motta's Serie A debut with the Turin giants, while Atalanta brushed aside transfer upheaval with a 4-0 thumping of Lecce.

Impressive first-half strikes from promising youngster Samuel Mbangula, a surprise starter on the left flank, and Timothy Weah before a thumping Andrea Cambiaso finish in stoppage time gave Juve and Motta a perfect start against promoted Como, who were playing their first top-flight match in over two decades.

"Como are a good team and we had the right attitude tonight, when we had the ball we did really well all throughout the match," said Motta to DAZN.

Juve could have easily won by a larger margin at the Allianz Stadium as the hosts created a series of chances against Como who were outclassed on the night.

Dusan Vlahovic had a particularly unlucky evening up front for Juve as he struck the woodwork in each half and had what looked like a perfectly good headed goal ruled out just after half-time.

The Serbia striker was baffled as to why his strike was chalked off but Cambiaso had strayed offside earlier in the move, denying him a goal.

Motta, who arrived in the close season after guiding Bologna to the



Champions League, already has Juve playing a brand of football which is easier on the eye than was played under his predecessor Massimiliano Allegri.

That is despite Juve being a work in progress as a clutch of Allegri's favourites, including Italy forward Federico Chiesa, have been sidelined in order to make space for players deemed more suited to Motta's style of play.

Cesc Fabregas's Como, an ambitious club backed by tobacco giant Djarum active in the summer transfer window, will get a better indication of their chances of staying in the division in their next two

fixtures at Cagliari and Udinese.

"Today was a reality check. We need to be better," said Fabregas to DAZN.

"What I sure was a difference in quality... They were devastating when they took the ball off us and we gave away too many easy balls. That's not tactics, that's down to individual quality."

New boys Marco Brescianini and Mateo Retegui gave Europa League holders Atalanta a hugely impressive start at Lecce after turbulent summer which has featured long-term injuries and star players agitating for transfers.

Brescianini, who only arrived from relegated Frosinone on Friday, opened the scoring on the rebound 10 minutes before half-time and confidently rolled home the fourth in the 66th minute.

The 24-year old's strikes topped and tailed a near-perfect away performance as Italy striker Retegui netted with a bullet header on the stroke of half-time before winning and then scoring a penalty just before the hour mark.

"It's better than even I could have imagined," said Brescianini, who is from just outside Bergamo, where Atalanta are based.

"I'm really happy to be wearing this jersey and I hope to repay the faith the club and fans have shown in me."

Van Aert Holds Off Groves to Claim Vuelta Stage Three Win



BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Wout van Aert held off Kaden Groves to claim Vuelta a Espana stage three victory on Monday in another bunch sprint finish.

The Belgian charged to victory at the end of the 191.2 kilometre run from Lousa to Castelo Branco in Portugal, having the power to stay ahead of Australian stage two winner Groves.

General classification leader Visma-Lease a bike rider Van Aert holds on to the red jersey, finishing in four hours 40 minutes and 42 seconds ahead of Groves and Spaniard Jon Aberasturi.

Van Aert secured his 10th Grand Tour stage victory having finished third and second on the opening two days of the Vuelta.

"It's worth it to be patient, it's been quite a while since I could raise my hands (in celebration) and this feels so good," said Van Aert after his first win since February.

"To use my strength and launch early... I think I surprised (Groves) by going even before 200 metres... it was the perfect sprint for me."

"The team was so strong, we had the whole race in control, they got me the perfect position in the end so this gave me the confidence to finish it off."

Van Aert will take a supporting role for his team-mate and last year's champion Sepp Kuss for stage four, the first chance for the general classification riders to take control.

"Unfortunately the fun is over, tomorrow I'll be happy to give the role as team leader to Sepp and Cian (Uijtendbroeks), it will be the first test for the GC guys and I will try to enjoy (wearing red) one more time," added Van Aert.

Kuss is one minute six seconds behind Van Aert, while three-time Vuelta champion and this year's favourite Primoz Roglic trails the Belgian by 30 seconds.

Spaniards Ibon Ruiz and Luis Angel Mate made an early breakaway for the second day running, with compatriots Unai Iribar and Xabier Isasa joining them.

Vardy Strikes as Leicester Hold Misfiring Spurs

LEICESTER (Dispatches) - Ange Postecoglou admitted "wasteful" Tottenham lost their composure as Jamie Vardy's second-half equaliser gave Leicester a 1-1 draw against his profligate team on Monday.

Promoted Leicester survived a series of costly Tottenham misses either side of Pedro Porro's first-half opener for the visitors at the King Power Stadium.

Vardy made Tottenham pay for their erratic finishing with a typically predatory header, capping his surprise appearance just days after he had been ruled out by Steve Cooper after suffering a pre-season injury.

The 37-year-old has now scored nine Premier League goals in 17 appearances against Tottenham, who trudged off wondering how they had failed to demolish Leicester during their dominant first-half display.

Tottenham finished fifth in Postecoglou's first season following a campaign in which the Australian's commitment to all-out attack was eventually exposed at the cost of Champions League qualification.

Once again, Tottenham were hampered by poor finishing and unfocused defending.

Dominic Solanke was especially culpable on the striker's debut after moving from Bournemouth for a fee that could rise to £65 million (\$84 million).

"Disappointing night for us. First half excellent and controlled the game but wasteful in front of goal. Once



Leicester scored, the crowd lifted and we lost our composure," Postecoglou said.

"It was an issue we had last year as well. We need to keep working hard and be a bit more ruthless in front of goal. At times we made poor decisions."

"The dominance is great but if you don't score it is meaningless. We have to be stronger in our mindset in the front third. To be that wasteful is disappointing. We just weren't clinical."

Leicester are back in the Premier League after winning the Championship to end their one-year absence.

Amid reports the Foxes could face a points deductions for breaking financial rules, new boss Cooper needs to hit the ground running if they are to avoid relegation and this gritty display was an encouraging start.

"I was as fit as a fiddle until I got to about 65 minutes if I'm honest!" Vardy said.

"Tottenham are a really good team but we have them too much respect. We started getting after them and it changed the momentum."

"When we are at the top of our game we can give anyone a run for their money."

Tottenham went close to an early lead when Wilfred Ndidi cleared Rodrigo Bentancur's effort off the line before Mads Hermansen saved Brennan Johnson's fierce effort from the rebound.