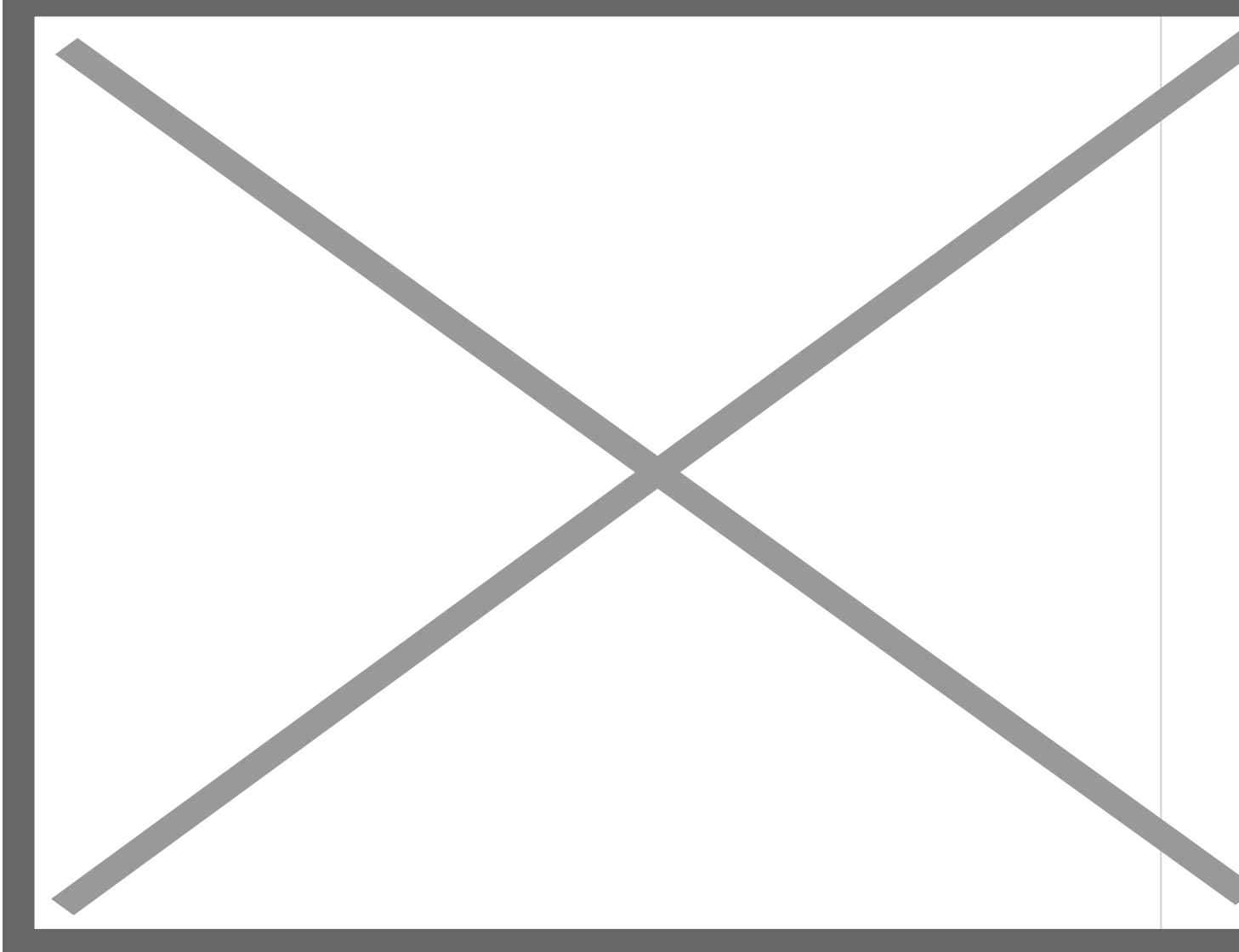


Iran says Israel's war on Gaza unmasks so-called human rights advocates

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Tehran, February 26 (RHC)-- Iran's foreign ministry spokesman says Israel's U.S.-backed genocidal war on the Gaza Strip has ripped the mask from the face of self-proclaimed champions of human rights.

Nasser Kan'ani made the remarks at a weekly press briefing, as 136 days of the Israeli aggression has killed a shocking number of Palestinians in Gaza and led to a humanitarian catastrophe in the besieged territory. Kan'ani said that the Gaza war demonstrated that human right is "nothing more than a lie" as it is advertised in the media run by the countries claiming to be rights advocates.

"The disaster in Gaza has ripped the mask from the face of the so-called advocates of human rights and showed the extent of vileness, brutality and lies hidden within the nature of the Israeli regime, whose supporters used to refer to as a symbol of democracy," he added.

The Iranian diplomat also noted that the occupying regime should be held to account over its almost five months of crimes against the oppressed Palestinian nation. The United States is the main accomplice in Israel's atrocities, he said, stressing that the usurping entity is not capable of handling the Gaza war without Washington's support.

According to Gaza's Government Media Office, 130 Palestinian journalists are among those killed in Gaza. Kan'ani said that killing of journalists in Gaza is an Israeli war crime that can be prosecuted.

The spokesman also said while most countries and nations want an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and an end to Israeli crimes, the Zionist regime is not willing to stop its onslaught as it has failed to achieve its declared goals in the Palestinian territory.

"The Zionist regime and its criminal prime minister pursue their interests by fueling the expansion of insecurity in the region," he emphasized. He also noted that the Islamic Republic is making diplomatic efforts to bring about an immediate end to Israeli crimes. Tehran, he added, does accept intertwining the issue of a ceasefire to that of the post-war Gaza.

Kan'ani also said Iran has expressed its readiness to host a second meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the Gaza war.

Recently, Algeria has proposed a new resolution that seeks an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" in Gaza. It will be put to a vote at the UN Security Council on Tuesday. The U.S., however, has said it will block the motion.

"What is happening in Gaza is not only an obvious crime and genocide, but also a threat to international peace and security," Kan'ani said. "The international community and bodies must stop these actions."

In January, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel must increase its efforts to protect Palestinians and provide humanitarian aid to Gaza. The ruling came as part of a case South Africa brought against the occupying regime for its genocidal acts against Palestinians in Gaza.

Last week, South Africa made an urgent request to The Hague-based ICJ to consider whether Israel's decision to extend its assault in the Gaza city of Rafah requires that the court use its power to prevent further breach of the rights of Palestinians. But, the court rejected the request to impose urgent measures to safeguard Rafah.

Kan'ani said that Iran expects the ICJ to have the "necessary seriousness" regarding its first ruling and take additional steps in this regard. Iran supports a series of legal actions taken by countries aimed at prosecuting the Israeli regime, he asserted.

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