



IRAN:

View from the LEFT

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Word of the Month: Drone Strike on Iranian Commercial Vessel Raises Legal and Geopolitical Questions

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The reported Ukrainian drone strike on the Iranian commercial vessel Ana has intensified concerns about the legal boundaries of the Russia–Ukraine war and the risk of its geographic expansion into the Caspian Sea. The incident has prompted renewed debate over the legality of targeting commercial shipping, the evidentiary standards required to justify such attacks under international law, and the broader implications of extending military operations into regions that have largely remained outside the direct theatre of the conflict.

The strike also underscores a growing convergence between the war in Ukraine and tensions involving Iran. Analysts have warned that military actions in the Caspian Sea could draw additional regional actors into the conflict, increase risks to commercial shipping, and deepen the strategic links between separate geopolitical crises. If such incidents continue, they could contribute to a broader pattern of regional escalation with consequences extending beyond Eastern Europe.

According to reports, on 25 July 2026, the Iranian commercial vessel Ana, sailing from Astrakhan, Russia, to Bandar Anzali, was struck by a Ukrainian drone in the Caspian Sea. The attack killed a young Iranian sailor, Nima Moradi, and injured at least one other crew member. Ukraine has stated that the targeted vessels were involved in transporting military cargo between Iran and Russia. However, no independently verified public evidence has been made public confirming that the Ana was carrying military cargo at the time of the attack.

The incident has led to calls for an independent international investigation to establish the facts surrounding the strike, assess its compliance with international law, and determine the nature of the vessel and its cargo. Legal experts and observers have argued that questions of responsibility and accountability should be addressed through transparent international mechanisms rather than unilateral action. They have also cautioned against military retaliation, emphasizing that diplomatic and legal avenues offer the most effective means of preventing further escalation and helping regional stability.



Continuing Tensions: War, Peace, or Crisis Management?

The International Affairs Committee of the Left Party of Iran has reviewed the recent agreement between Iran and the United States and concludes that it does not necessarily mark the beginning of a sustained easing of tensions. On the one hand, certain elements within the U.S. political establishment, as well as Israel, view the agreement as contrary to their



interests and may seek to weaken or undermine it. On the other hand, within the Islamic Republic of Iran, factions that favour continued confrontation and militaristic policies may also pose a significant obstacle to reducing tensions. The central question is which of these two factors will play the more decisive role in shaping future developments.

If you'd like, I can also make it sound more analytical, diplomatic, or suitable for publication as a political statement. From this perspective, the United States' long-term strategy is not limited solely to confronting the Islamic Republic. Still, it views Iran as the first link in a broader geopolitical competition involving Russia and China. Within this framework, concerns have been raised about increasing pressure on Iran, the possibility of intensifying separatist tendencies, and efforts to control strategic regional transportation routes. From this viewpoint, opposition to the Islamic Republic should not prevent recognition of the impact of foreign powers' policies on Iran's national interests. Developments in Gaza and the wider Middle East must also be considered within this broader context.

Accordingly, this perspective warns against excessive optimism regarding the possibility of lasting peace following the recent agreement. It argues that the region is likely to remain in a period of sustained tensions and limited but ongoing conflicts. Under such circumstances, the key question is which policy best serves Iran's security and national interests. This view maintains that slogans such as "No to war, no to the Islamic Republic" or "No to war and warmongers" are not, by themselves, sufficient answers, as they express a value-based position rather than a practical strategy. Therefore, policymaking should be based on a realistic assessment of each

stage of developments and on identifying approaches that contribute to security, peace, and Iran's national interests.

The Caspian Convention and the Attack on an Iranian Commercial Vessel.



The International Affairs Committee of the Left Party of Iran has reviewed two recent developments with important implications for regional security in the Caspian Sea: the Iranian government's approval of a supplementary bill related to the 2018 Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, and the reported Ukrainian drone attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian.

The Committee notes that the legislation recently approved by the Iranian government is **not the 2018 Aktau Convention itself**, which was signed by Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan on 12 August 2018 but has remained unratified by the Iranian Parliament. Rather, it is a supplementary bill of the convention intended to complete the legal framework. According to public reports, the bill removes the unresolved issue of seabed delimitation, previously the principal point of disagreement between Iran and the other littoral states, and has been submitted to the Parliament for consideration.

The Committee emphasizes that the Caspian Convention constitutes an

important regional framework based on cooperation among the five littoral states. While it does not prevent bilateral agreements between any of the signatories, such agreements should remain consistent with the principles of the convention. Of particular importance is the convention's prohibition on the military presence of states that are not parties to the agreement, a provision that has contributed to preserving the Caspian Sea as a region free from external military competition.

The Committee also discussed broader regional issues, including maritime transport, environmental protection, offshore oil and gas development, and the strategic significance of the Volga–Caspian route linking the Caspian to the Black Sea. Particular concern was expressed about the environmental consequences of offshore energy extraction and the ongoing debate over proposed trans-Caspian energy pipelines connecting Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to European markets through Azerbaijan, a project that remains without the unanimous agreement of all five Caspian states.

The Committee further examined the reported Ukrainian drone attack on the Iranian commercial vessel *Ana*, which was travelling from Astrakhan to Iran and resulted in the death of one Iranian sailor and the injury of another crew member. Such attacks on commercial shipping risk extending the Russia–Ukraine conflict into the Caspian region, undermining the stability established by the Caspian legal regime, and creating new security risks for all littoral states.

The International Affairs Committee condemns attacks on civilian commercial vessels and calls for an independent international investigation into the incident and its legal basis. It also warns against any military escalation that could transform the Caspian Sea into another arena of international conflict. Preserving the Caspian as a zone of peace, regional cooperation, environmental protection,

and freedom of civilian navigation should remain a shared responsibility of all five littoral states.#

 **Islamic Republic Executes
Abolfazl Sepahi Badjani and
Amirhossein Safari Hosseinabadi.**



The Islamic Republic executed two young men, Abolfazl Sepahi Badjani and Amirhossein Safari Hosseinabadi, at dawn on Tuesday, 28 July, in a public execution in Malekshahr, Isfahan.

They were denied a fair trial, and the validity of the charges against them remains unclear. It is evident that, through this brutal action, the Islamic Republic seeks to create fear and intimidation among the public and to send a warning to society. This occurred despite the large-scale killings in December of last year, as people still gathered around the execution site and protested against executions and the violence and crimes of the Islamic Republic by chanting slogans against the death penalty and the regime.

Hamgami calls for an immediate halt to executions, an end to the security crackdown, respect for the right to peaceful protest, the rejection of violence, and full respect for human rights to break the cycle of violence.



Environment Iran

■ Draft Environmental Service Regulations for the Strait of Hormuz

Iran's Department of Marine Environment and Wetlands at the Environmental Protection Organization has begun preparing a new regulatory framework for environmental services in the Strait of Hormuz. The proposed regulations aim to organize maritime services and establish legal and environmental guidelines related to the passage and operation of ships in this strategically important waterway.

According to Ahmad Reza Lahijan-Zadeh, Deputy Head of Marine Environment and Wetlands, the preparation of the regulations began about two weeks ago following an order from the head of the Environmental Protection Organization. International sources, expert opinions, and input from various internal departments have been used in drafting the document.

The initial draft has reportedly been completed and is ready for review by the organization's advisory council before being submitted to relevant authorities for final approval.

The proposed framework includes environmental indicators for determining maritime service requirements and related fees in the Strait of Hormuz. These indicators include factors such as ship capacity, vessel type, cargo type, potential pollution risks, fuel consumption, compliance with the International Maritime Organization's MARPOL Convention, and records of previous environmental violations.

The regulations are expected to cover risk factors, which include the type of cargo, environmentally sensitive areas, and potential pollutant emissions. Final details regarding the amount of fees and environmental impact charges have not yet been determined and will be



announced after legal approval and completion of the regulatory process.

The Environmental Protection Organization has also held coordination meetings with government officials, including the Vice President's office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to advance the proposal. The initiative is intended to strengthen environmental management, reduce maritime pollution risks, and improve oversight of shipping activities in the Strait of Hormuz.

Source: Emna Website

Sport

■ The World Cup, FIFA, and the Shadow of Trumpism Over Global Sports



In recent decades, the FIFA World Cup has evolved beyond a sporting event and has become a platform for political, economic, and geopolitical competition. Recent experiences have shown that the connection between political power, economic interests, and sports institutions can create conditions for increased corruption, reduced transparency, and weakened independence of organizations such as FIFA.

The rise of Trumpism, with its emphasis on economic nationalism, political deal-making, and the use of power to advance interests, has contributed to these trends. The growing closeness between politicians, major corporations, wealthy

investors, and sports administrators increases the risk that global sports will be used as an instrument for political and economic objectives. Under such circumstances, World Cup hosting decisions, commercial contracts, broadcasting rights, and behind-the-scenes relationships may increasingly be shaped by the interests of powerful actors rather than by sporting values.

Past FIFA scandals, including allegations of corruption in hosting decisions and non-transparent financial dealings, have demonstrated the vulnerability of the organization to political and economic influence. The main concern is that the spread of a political culture similar to Trumpism, where power and short-term interests outweigh principles of transparency and accountability, could further weaken international sports institutions.

Protecting the independence of FIFA and global sports requires greater financial transparency, democratic oversight, leadership accountability, and preventing events such as the World Cup from becoming instruments of political competition among powerful states.

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