

Iranians defend historic bridges against US-Israel bombings

Independent journalist Ahmad Saadaldin of PropandCo joins The Grayzone's Max Blumenthal to discuss his reporting from Iran, and the people's defense of historic sites threatened by US President Donald Trump, who vowed to destroy the "entire civilization" of Iran. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

#Max

Yeah, it's sort of hard to see how this—the ignorance going into this war really stunned me. The ignorance of Trump. The Israelis obviously know better, but they had to draw Trump in by exploiting his ignorance and the ignorance of those around him. And it really stunned me—the idea that there would be decapitation strikes and then some mass uprising. They really believed their own propaganda. And this is Iran today. Well, this is the oldest usable bridge in the world, the old bridge of Dezful, which was built in 255 A.D. And Iranians have come out to defend this bridge against the terrorist threats of the Mad King, Donald Trump.

#Speaker 1

This is today. Yeah, I've seen this video and a few others like the ones you described.

#Ahmad Saadaldin

They're starting to form human chains around different civilian sites to protect them. But this place in particular—you actually went to this bridge, right?

#Max

I went to the bridge in Isfahan, which is over the Zayandeh River, and yeah, this is it. I was under the bridge.

#Ahmad Saadaldin

This is an important cultural heritage site that they want to protect because, on our trip, we went to several cultural sites. In Isfahan, we went to Chehel Sotoun, which is this pavilion in a garden that's hundreds of years old. And in Tehran, we went to Golestan Palace. There are many such locations.

#Max

Golestan has been bombed in this so-called war on civilization by Trump. Exactly. And this is me under the Khaju Bridge. The Zayandeh River flows through Isfahan. Isfahan is a city on the central plain with farming areas around it, and the river has been dammed to irrigate those plains. Iran has a water problem—it has droughts. When we arrived in Isfahan, they had actually opened up the river, and people came out to picnic and sing under the bridge. It was like a citywide festival, really inspiring, just a kind of magical moment. And here I am under the bridge—they saw a non-Iranian in the crowd and just brought me out to sing for me, or to make me part of the festival. Classic Persian hospitality.

#Ahmad Saadaldin

That's incredible.

#Max

And, you know, at the end of the song, he said he wished for peace between the U.S. and Iran. That's what everyone would say to me. People were very hospitable when they realized I was an American. I don't know if they would have been so hospitable if I had ejected from a plane that was on its way to bomb a university or a bridge. I actually came to build bridges, not to bomb them. So I think there was a recognition there. He also explicitly called for an end to sanctions. He asked me to tell America to end them. It didn't matter whether people supported the Islamic Republic or not—they all hated the sanctions because they were wrecking their lives by design.

#Ahmad Saadaldin

Right. Yes. I spoke with a young couple in Tehran at a mall. They were out on a date—young college kids, like 21 or 22 years old. It was interesting because the guy supported the government, but his girlfriend, or his soon-to-be fiancée, did not. Ultimately, after a series of questions, what it really came down to was just the crushing weight of the sanctions—just not being able to make money, save money, or travel. I'm aware that I'm incredibly privileged. I look like I'm from Iran, so when I go, people are shocked to find out I'm not Iranian.

But I get to move freely, go wherever I want, and then leave. But, you know, a lot of people in Iran don't get that opportunity because they live under sanctions. They're living paycheck to paycheck. And their government, honestly, has done, from what I can tell, as good a job as any in trying to

alleviate the suffering of people under sanctions. They subsidize everything. They use the nation's resources for the people. There was one post I made that went viral—it showed that it cost about fifteen cents, Max, to fill up a fifteen-passenger van with fuel. And it was funny because that really irked a lot of people who support Trump in this war.

So one guy commented, he goes, "Yeah, but you're—" he was mad. He said, "Why aren't you pointing out that these are subsidies?" I was like, "Who cares? The point is it's a good thing the government does for its people. It doesn't have to do that." Like, Saudi Arabia has a ton of oil, and they could make gas cheap as well, but they don't, for different reasons. It probably doesn't even make sense to compare the two. But the point is, Iran subsidizes food, they subsidize oil, they do whatever they can to make life affordable for people—including mass transportation, like being able to go across the entire country for eight dollars. Yeah. Yeah.

#Max

There have been lots of benefits for the population, including free college. Women's education has surged since the revolution in 1979. A lot of this isn't recognized, and we take for granted in the U.S. that we're going to be paying thousands of dollars a month for health care that does nothing for us and could be dropped at a moment's notice. It's almost like people are masochists in this country, and that might explain the lack of resistance here. As diesel surges to, like, what—eight dollars a gallon in some areas? Yeah, gas is over five dollars a gallon for regular, and in California people are just kind of like, "Oh, we're just sitting here taking it. We expect this. Uh, let's keep bombing some universities in Iran." And, you know, you really have to pay very close attention to see the writing on the wall.