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U.S.-Iran ceasefire on tenuous ground

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'We feel there is no plan'



Joseph Mazori, 7, holds out the flag of Kurdistan from his father's truck during the Kurdish holiday, Newroz, fire lighting ceremony at Whitfield Park in Nashville on March, 20. Nashville is home to one of the nation's largest Kurdish immigrant communities. NICOLE HESTER/THE TENNESSEAN

Tennessee's Kurds, Iranian-Americans react to latest events in the Iran war

Liam Adams and Gabrielle Chenault

Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Before a last-minute ceasefire in the U.S. and Israeli war in Iran, members of Nashville's Iranian-American community were doubtful about President Donald Trump's escalatory remarks about U.S. strikes on civilian targets in the country.

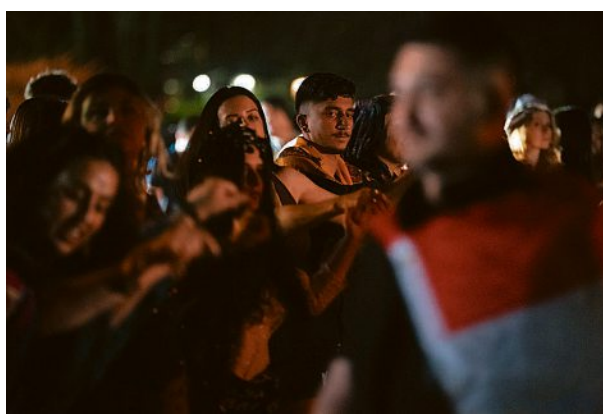
"A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will," Trump wrote on social media on April 7 at 7:00 a.m.. The president's stark warning came hours ahead of an 8 p.m. ET deadline that day for Iran to make a deal or face broad attacks targeting the country's power plants and bridges. That then transformed into a ceasefire the president announced later that night.

Trump's original threat concerned Abraham Shadman, who recently moved to the U.S. and has heard conditions are worsening for his Kurdish Iranian family back home.

Shadman said he's still unable to reach his family directly due to an internet blackout, but he's heard about them from others who have fled Iran and crossed the border into a nearby country. Those reports have been that economic conditions are worsening partly due to the high price of goods.

Shadman worried the potential attacks on power plants, for example, would make it difficult for loved ones back home to have clean water.

"We are far from our family, and in addition we worry about their life and our homeland," Shadman said. He fled Iran a few months ago to come to Nashville, which is home to the largest Kurdish immigrant population in the U.S. Kurds are considered the largest



Community members gather to dance and celebrate Newroz, the Kurdish holiday, with a fire lighting ceremony hosted by members of the Kurdistan Diaspora Center of Nashville at Whitfield Park on March 20. Nashville is home to one of the nation's largest Kurdish immigrant communities.

stateless ethnic group in the world and have faced repression in the four Middle Eastern countries that encompass the area known as Kurdistan.

Shadman, like many other Kurdish Iranians, welcomed the news of the late Iran Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's death and hoped it would bring about regime change soon. But the war has been slogging on and "now opposition is weak," Shadman said. "We feel there is no plan for what will happen."

Hassan Nazi, who's been in Nashville for much longer than Shadman, shared a similar sentiment. But he added, "It's so complicated and not easy to say this regime can go easily."

Nazi fled the Kurdish region of Iran in 1992 and has been unable to return home because of the regime. He's lived in Nashville since 1996, and he said since then there have been about 100 Kurdish Iranian

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Feds to TN: Stop taking orphans' benefits

Kids in state care saw more than \$31.5 million in payments taken since 2019

Vivian Jones

Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

After Tennessee diverted more than \$31.5 million in benefits from orphans in state care since 2019, federal officials are telling the Lee administration to stop confiscating those survivor benefits, saying the state's existing policy is "contrary to the best interests of children."

When guardians of a child in custody of the Department of Children's Services die, that child is entitled to federal Social Security survivor benefits.

In Tennessee, instead of ensuring the funds are maintained to support the child, DCS uses survivor benefits to care for children until they leave custody or turn 18. Leftover funds are then returned to the Social Security Administration.

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Record \$3.1M fine issued after fatal TN plant explosion

Kelly Puente and Evan Mealins

Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

The Tennessee Occupational Safety and Health Administration (TOSHA) has issued more than \$3.1 million in penalties to a Tennessee explosives plant where 16 workers were killed in a massive explosion.

The Oct. 10 blast at Accurate Energetic Systems leveled a production building on the company's 1,300 acre campus near the town of McEwen west of Nashville. It clocked a 1.6 magnitude on the Richter scale and ranks among the deadliest industrial disasters in U.S. history.

The six-month investigation into the explosion is the largest conducted by TOSHA and resulted in the agency's highest ever total penalty, TOSHA said in an April 7 statement.

AES CEO Wendell Stinson in a statement said the company is carefully reviewing the findings.

"We believe that TOSHA's findings do not represent the standard of safety we strive to achieve every day, nor our commitment to the wellbeing of our team members and their loved ones," the company said,

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