

President calls youth employment, people's livelihoods top priorities

National Desk

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said youth employment and people's livelihoods are the country's top priority.

"Today, on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, youth employment and people's livelihoods are top two priorities of the country, and we should not allow people to face problems," President Rouhani said at a cabinet session on Wednesday.



president.ir

Rouhani pointed to three major events after the Islamic Revolution which have affected the country's economy.

He described change in the country's structure following the Islamic Revolution, Iraq's imposed war on Iran and the international sanctions against Tehran as three issues that have affected the country's economy after the 1979 Revolution.

The president however said the country has experienced development under these circumstances.

Leader: US will face unprecedented defeat

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The Leader was referring to comments by US National Security Advisor John Bolton, a long-time regime change advocate, who often speaks at gatherings of the anti-Iran MKO terrorist outfit.

"Before 2019, we here will celebrate in Tehran," Bolton told an MKO meeting in July 2017. Bolton was on the payroll of the terrorist MKO group for his lectures to its gatherings. The MKO assassinated a number of American nationals in Iran during the Shah's time.

Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Christmas was a few days ago. This is how US calculations work."

Ayatollah Khamenei's address to an audience from the city of Qom were meant to mark the anniversary of protests in 1978 that challenged Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last monarch of Iran.

They would spiral into the nationwide demonstrations that saw the Shah leave Iran and give rise to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iranians will commemorate the revolution's 40th anniversary in February.

Press TV, AP and Reuters contributed to this story.

Zarif: Accusing Iran won't absolve EU of responsibility for housing terrorists

Iran says it will reciprocate

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif lambasted the European Union for harboring notorious MKO (also known as MEK) terrorists, warning that "accusing" Iran and imposing sanctions against the Islamic Republic will not "absolve" Europe of responsibility for housing members of the terror outfit.

Iran's top diplomat made the remarks on Tuesday, hours after the customs union froze the assets of an Iranian intelligence unit and two of its staff over terror charges. It was the first time the EU imposed sanctions on Iran since lifting an array of embargoes following Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, Press TV reported.

"Europeans, incl Denmark, Holland & France, harbor MEK — who killed 12000 Iranians & abetted Saddam's crimes against Iraqi Kurds — as well as other terrorists staging murder of innocent Iranians from Europe. Accusing Iran won't absolve Europe of responsibility for harboring terrorists," Zarif said in a post on his official Twitter account.

The Iranian foreign minister referred to the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO), a terrorist group which is detested for collaborating with the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during his war on Iran in the 1980s and killing thousands of Iranians in a violent campaign of assassinations and bombings, particularly in those years.

Earlier on Tuesday, Danish Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen said in a tweet that the "EU just agreed to enact sanctions against an Iranian Intelligence Service for its assassination plots on European soil."

He further described the step taken by the union as a "strong signal from the EU that we will not accept such behavior in Europe."

Also on Tuesday, the Netherlands government accused Tehran of hatching plots and involvement in two killings in 2015 and 2017, sending a letter, signed by the foreign and interior ministers, to the Dutch Parliament to warn of further economic embargos if Tehran did not cooperate with Euro-



pean probes.

The letter said representatives from Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium had met Iranian officials to convey "their serious concerns regarding Iran's probable involvement in these hostile acts on EU territory," Reuters reported.

"Iran was informed that involvement in such matters is entirely unacceptable and must be stopped immediately ... further sanctions cannot be ruled out," the letter said.

Tehran will reciprocate

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednes-

day Iran will reciprocate after the EU move against Iran.

"Iran will adopt the necessary measures in response to this move and within the framework of reciprocity," Qassemi said in a statement published on the ministry's official site.

The provocative move by the European bloc follows last year's statements by Denmark and France that they suspected a so-called Iranian government intelligence unit pursued killing plots on their territories. Copenhagen at the time sought an EU-wide response.

According to an informed source, Iran will reconsider its intelligence and security cooperation with European coun-

tries following the EU's decision.

The source stressed that Tehran will soon make important decisions in this regard.

Tehran has time and again strongly denied any involvement in the purported plots, saying the accusations were merely intended to damage EU-Iran relations. Iran also stresses that it is a victim of terrorism, particularly inflicted by the MKO outfit, whose members largely live freely in the EU countries.

The MKO was once listed as a terrorist organization in the US and Europe and is still widely viewed as a Marxist cult built around the personality of its leader, Maryam Rajavi.

Former Italian PM underlines close economic ties with Iran



Former prime minister of Italy Paolo Gentiloni highlighted his country's "historical commitment" to broadening trade ties with Iran, stressing that Italy should adopt policies that are independent of the US.

Gentiloni, the 57th prime minister of Italy who ruled the European nation from December 2016 to June 2018, joined a host of diplomats, scholars and political figures, including Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in India for a multilateral conference dubbed the Raisina Dialogue.

In an interview with Tasmim News Agency in New Delhi, Gentiloni expressed his views about international trade with Iran and the US attempts to block relations with Tehran.

Asked about his get-together with Zarif, Gentiloni said, "We are old friends and former colleagues and always pleased to meet Zarif, and we discussed both the relations between Europe and Iran that I deem very relevant, and I hope

in positive revolution in these relations." As to plans for eliminating US dollar from the international trade with Iran, the former Italian premier said, "Well, I think we have to insist on good economic rela-

tions with Iran. This is a historical commitment of my country, and I hope that the international situation allows us to continue."

He was also asked about the latest de-

velopments regarding the special purpose vehicle (SPV) — a financial mechanism devised by the EU to save the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and preserve trade with Tehran — and the impact of the US sanctions on Italy's ties with Iran. Gentiloni said, "We have always considered seriously the positions of the United States, but we need an autonomous policy, independent (policy)."

The EU countries led by France, Germany and Britain — signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal — want to enable non-US trade with Iran to continue in defiance of Washington.

The EU has devised the SPV to continue trade with Iran and neutralize the US sanctions against Tehran.

On May 8, US President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was achieved in Vienna in 2015 after years of negotiations among Iran and the P5+1 group (Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany).

Zarif: Taliban must have Afghan role, but can't dominate

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I understand that the Pakistanis also do not wish to see an Afghanistan dominated by extremists groups, but for Pakistan it is an existential threat. Extremism in Pa-

kistan and Afghanistan is an existential threat for Pakistan," Zarif said.

"We disagreed with Pakistan in the 90s when they created the Taliban or helped create the Taliban. We were the first to offer victims to suffer in the hands of the

Taliban — 11 of my colleagues were murdered by the Taliban, but we cannot be prisoners of the past.

We need to work for a better future and Iran is ready to work with Pakistan in order to realize what the Paki-

stani leaders have been telling us that they believe fighting extremist groups is in their national security interest and we believe analytically, that that is the case."

Reuters contributed to this story.

