

Iran summons French envoy over JCPOA remarks

National Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Sunday summoned French Ambassador to Tehran Philippe Thiebaud to officially protest recent remarks by French envoy to Washington, Gerard Araud, about the Iran nuclear deal.



The Foreign Ministry described Araud's remarks about the future of the nuclear deal as unacceptable and urged Paris to explain, according to the Foreign Ministry's official website.

Araud, who has served as France's ambassador to Washington since 2014, tweeted on Saturday that "it is false to say that at the expiration of the JCPOA, Iran will be allowed to enrich uranium."

He added that according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its Additional Protocol, Iran must prove, under strict monitoring, that its nuclear activities are civilian.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araqchi deplored the remarks by French diplomat, urging Paris to give clarification.

Araqchi said if they represent France's position, it would be a major violation of the agreement, Tasnim News Agency reported.

"If tweets by @GerardAraud represent French position, we're facing a major violation of the object and purpose of the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) and UNSCR 2231," Araqchi said on his Twitter account on Monday.

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China plus Germany - signed the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015 and started implementing it on January 16, 2016.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against the country.

US President Donald Trump withdrew Washington in May 2018 from the landmark nuclear agreement and decided to re-impose unilateral sanctions against Tehran.

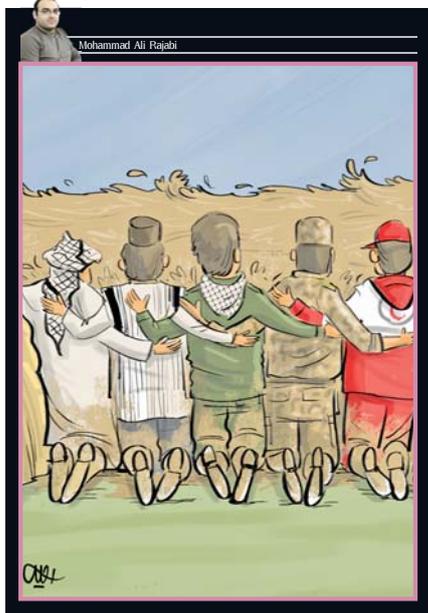
In a quarterly report in February, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Iran continues to comply with the restrictions on its nuclear activities under the JCPOA.

The UN nuclear agency added that Iran remained within caps on the level to which it can enrich uranium and its stock of enriched uranium in accordance with the nuclear accord.

In another Twitter post, the French diplomat said under the NPT, it is "illegal" to enrich uranium "without a credible civilian program."

Araud claimed that there is no "sunset" after the JCPOA, adding that Iran has no "conceivable reason" to "massively" enrich uranium since Russia is providing enriched uranium to Bushehr power plant in southern Iran. Russia has built a nuclear power plant in Bushehr in southern Iran. The agreement for the Bushehr nuclear power plant was finalized in 1995, but the project was delayed several times due to a number of technical and financial issues. The 1,000-megawatt plant, which is operating under the full supervision of the IAEA, reached its maximum power generation capacity in August 2012. In September 2013, Iran officially took over from Russia the first unit of its first 1,000-megawatt nuclear power plant for two years.

The construction of the power plant's second and third phases began in November 2017. It was reported at the time that the two phases would begin supplying electricity to Iran's power grid in 10 years.



Larijani lauds Italy's sensitivity about region's security

National Desk

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani praised sensitivity of Italian Government regarding the restoration of peace and security in the region.

During a meeting with visiting President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Italy's Senate Vito Rosario Petrocelli, Larijani pointed to the new crises in the region, saying that "While the issue of Daesh has not yet been resolved, new crises such as immigration have been created [in the region]."

The Iranian official also referred to importance of recent developments in Libya, Sudan and Algeria which have been the scene of armed clashes and protests in recent weeks.

The Italian official expressed concern about the ongoing crisis in Libya, saying that it will have damaging consequences and will lead to new wave of immigration to the European countries.

Petrocelli also highlighted Iran's constructive role in resolving the crisis in Syria, saying that, "We are aware that if Iran did not have presence in Syria, we have not seen the return of thousands of Syrian families to their country."

Petrocelli also pointed to relations with Iran, saying that "Italian Parliament is vehemently interested in boosting and enhancing bilateral ties with other countries such as Islamic Republic of Iran."



He said that Italian Parliament and government are stressing multilateralism and avoiding unilateralism in the world, adding that a small group of countries should not be decision-makers for all the countries of the world.

During the meeting, Larijani underlined that Iran attaches great importance to its relationship with Italian government.

Larijani also thanked the Italian government for expressing sympathy with

flood-hit Iranians and dispatching humanitarian aid.

Since March 19, many of Iranian cities have been hit by severe floods which have so far claimed the lives of at least 76 people.

Iran, Oman discuss military cooperation

Military delegations from Oman and Iran held the 15th meeting of the joint military commission of the two countries on Sunday in the capital city of Muscat to discuss ways to further increase military and security ties in the future.

Deputy Chief of the Iranian Armed Forces for International Affairs Brigadier General Qadir Nezami and Oman's Assistant SAF Chief of Staff for Operations and Planning Brigadier General Hamad bin Rashid al-Balushi jointly chaired the meetings which will continue until Thursday, Fars News Agency reported.

Iran and Oman will also review the progress of agreements



signed between the two sides.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Iranian delegation is scheduled to meet with a number of high-ranking officials in Sultanate of Oman.

Early in March, the Iranian Navy's 60th Flotilla comprising a destroyer and two warships docked at Oman's Port Sultan Qaboos in Muscat for four days.

Interior minister: Iran floods caused billions in damage

From Page 1

Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami said 14,000 kilometers of road had been damaged and more than 700 bridges completely destroyed by landslides and flood water.

The government has said it will pay compensation to all those who have incurred losses, especially farmers.

Morteza Shahidzadeh, the head of Iran's sovereign wealth fund, said President Hassan Rouhani had asked permission from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei to withdraw \$2 billion from the fund for reconstruction in flood-hit areas.

Shahidzadeh said the Leader has in principle agreed to the request.

Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Friday some oilfields in southwestern Khuzestan Province had been shut down to control damage from floods and prevent possible environmental pollution.

Karim Zobeidi, an official at the National Iranian Oil Company, said on Sunday that it was still too early to estimate the extent of the flood damage to Iran's energy sector.

Zobeidi said that some oil wells in western Iran had been closed as a precaution to guard against any flooding. Reuters and Press TV contributed to this story.

Zarif raps Europe for delaying INSTEX launch

From Page 1

The top diplomat further hailed mechanisms similar to INSTEX that were launched with Iran's neighbors and were operating in an optimum manner.

"I wonder how much time do the Europeans need [to set up] a preliminary mechanism?" Zarif exclaimed.

In late January, Iran's European partners in the JCPOA unveiled INSTEX with the aim of protecting their companies against US sanctions and enabling them to continue trade with Iran.

In its initial stage, INSTEX will facilitate trade of humanitarian goods such as medicine, food and medical devices, but it will later be expanded to cover other areas of trade, including Iran's oil sales.

American sanctions were reimposed against Iran last year following Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA.

IRGC blacklisting

Zarif touched on Washington's recent



blacklisting of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

The foreign minister said that he had personally written letters to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council about Washington's latest illegal move as well as other

erroneous policies adopted in the region.

Zarif noted that he would soon send messages to foreign ministries of all countries, urging them to adopt a stance against the "unprecedented" US move targeting the IRGC and its "dangerous consequences."

On April 8, the White House labeled Iran "a state sponsor of terrorism" and the IRGC a "foreign terrorist organization," claiming that the elite force "actively participates in, finances, and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft."

Iran swiftly retaliated, with its Supreme National Security Council designating the US government a supporter of terrorism and its West Asia force, known as the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), a terrorist organization.

'US crimes'

Zarif also said Iran has collected documents that prove Washington's active contribution to measures that can amount to crimes against humanity by hindering international humanitarian aid to flood-hit Iranians.

Iran would soon release the documents that show banks - even European ones - are refusing to accept cash offered by Iranians abroad due to their fear of US measures, he added.