

Iran condemns U.S. sanctions against Zarif in letter to UN chief



United Nations, August 7 (RHC)-- Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht-e Ravanchi has censured the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump over imposing sanctions on Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, terming the measure as gross violation of international regulations.

Takht-e Ravanchi, in a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Tuesday, stated that the sanctions point to "yet another unlawful and undiplomatic move" by US officials against Iran.

"Infatuated with rogue, unreasonable conducts at the international level, this well signifies that the US regime despises diplomacy, which is one of the greatest achievements of humanity to preserve and uphold peace and security among nations. It reveals the deeply-rooted hypocrisy of the United States' authorities in their different but paradoxical claims," the letter read.

The Iranian diplomat further noted that sanctions are part of Washington's "overall policy in waging economic terrorism against the Iranian people and bringing pressure to bear on their representatives."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran deems such illegal action a flagrant infringement of the fundamental principles of diplomatic law, in particular the principle of inviolability and immunity of high-ranking foreign officials, including immunity of incumbent ministers of foreign affairs, as a universally accepted norm and rule of customary international law," Takht-e Ravanchi underscored.

Major General Qassem Soleimani says imposing bans on Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif is a sign of the US's "absolute defeat" in its anti-Iran agenda.

"The US' illegal action is also in brazen violation of Article 105(2) of the United Nations Charter regarding the privileges and immunities of representative of Member States in exercising their functions in connection with the United Nations. In this context, any restriction on discharging the duties of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is also in contravention of the Convention on the Privileges and immunities of the United Nations, the well-established customary principles enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations.

"Likewise, it is in contradiction with many relevant consensual resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the latest of which is resolution 73/212 that, by underlining the obligation of the United States for the observance of the privileges and immunities of the missions accredited to the United Nations, "which cannot be subject to any restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country", "urges the host country to remove without delay any restrictions applied" and "to ensure respect for such privileges and immunities," the letter noted.

The Iranian administration says by targeting Iran's foreign minister with sanctions, the U.S. has forfeited its right to engaging diplomatically with the Islamic Republic. The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations went on to say that U.S. sanctions on Zarif violates the principle of sovereign equality of states and the principle of "par in parem non habet imperium," which forms the basis of state immunity.

"Coercing nations into complying with the United States' illegal demands threatens multilateralism, as the foundation of international relations, and sets a dangerous precedent, paving the way for those who aspire to rather divide, not unite, nations," the letter said.

Takht-e Ravanchi then called upon the international community to condemn the United States' unlawful behavior against multilateralism promotion, and stand firm in defending the established principles of international law.

In separate statements on July 31, the U.S. departments of State and Treasury announced the imposition of sanctions against Zarif because he "acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran".

Back on June 24, US President Donald Trump announced new sanctions against Iran, targeting Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and top commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

The U.S. administration has put Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on its sanctions list, calling him the 'primary spokesperson' of the Islamic Republic around the world. In his statement on Zarif's designation, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed that the top Iranian diplomat is a "key enabler" of Iran's policies throughout the region and the world.

The U.S. Treasury Department also said in its statement that Zarif is Iran's "primary spokesperson around the world," and that the ban "is sending a clear message that Iran's "recent behavior is completely unacceptable."

The European Union has regretted the U.S. decision, stating that it intends to keep working with the Iranian foreign minister. "We regret this decision, and from our side, we will continue to work with Mr. Zarif as Iran's most senior diplomat, and in view of the importance of maintaining diplomatic channels", said Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela, the spokesman of the European Commission for the international cooperation and development.

Moreover, Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy, slammed the U.S. move to impose sanctions on Zarif, arguing that the measure will block the way for any dialogue. Polyanskiy described sanctions as against diplomacy, stressing that Moscow is against any type of bans, as they do not help find a solution.

Separately, France expressed concern over U.S. sanctions on Iran's foreign minister, emphasizing that it disagrees with the decision along with Britain and Germany.

President Rouhani says a 'childish' decision to sanction Foreign Minister Zarif shows the US is 'afraid of' the top Iranian diplomat's logic and interviews. "We consider that all diplomatic channels should stay open, particularly in a context of high tensions," the French Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Tensions have been running high between Tehran and Washington since last year, when Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and unleashed the "toughest ever" sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

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