

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian killed in helicopter crash



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (L) and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (R)

Tehran, May 20 (RHC)-- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian have died in a helicopter crash in the northwestern province of East Azarbaijan.

The helicopter carrying President Raisi and his accompanying delegation crashed on Sunday in the Dizmar forest, nestled between the cities of Varzaqan and Jolfa in East Azarbaijan Province.

It was transporting Raisi, Amir-Abdollahian, East Azarbaijan Governor Malek Rahmati, Friday Prayers leader of the city of Tabriz Seyyed Mohammad Ali Al-e Hashem and a member of the president's bodyguard team Mahdi Mousavi. The helicopter's pilot, co-pilot and crew were also among others on board the chopper.

President Raisi and his accompanying delegation were returning from a ceremony to inaugurate a dam on the Aras River with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev.

Following the announcement of the martyrdom of Raeisi and his team, the cabinet held an emergency session headed by Vice President Mohammad Mokhber.

In a statement, the cabinet extended condolences to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and the Iranian nation over the martyrdom of President Raisi and his companions. It assured the "loyal, appreciative and beloved" Iranian nation that President Raisi's path will continue and not even a slight disruption will be caused in administrating the country's affairs.

Ayatollah Khamenei on Sunday said the nation should not be worried or anxious, because "there will be no disruption to the work of the country." In televised remarks in the wee hours of Monday morning, Pir-Hossein Kolivand, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), said rescue teams have located the wreckage of the helicopter.

He later told the Islamic Republic of Iran News Network (IRINN) that the search operation for the bodies of the victims has finished and the bodies are being transferred to the provincial capital of Tabriz.

Secretary of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations Abbas Araqchi said in a televised interview that he was shocked by the news of the Iranian foreign minister's martyrdom. Araqchi, who also serves as an advisor to the foreign minister, added that the sad incident will cause no disruption in Iran's foreign policy.

He also commended Amir-Abdollahian's great diplomatic efforts, particularly during the seven months of Israel's war in Gaza and Iran's retaliatory response to the regime's attack on the consular section of the Islamic Republic's embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus, dubbed Operation True Promise.

The late Iranian foreign minister has run foreign diplomacy with patience, calm and good attitude, the diplomat noted.

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