

Dutch embassy in Tehran flagged for excessive electricity usage



Netherlands embassy in Iran is a major consumer of electricity at heavily subsidized prices.

Tehran, January 26 (RHC)-- The embassy of the Netherlands in Iran has been flagged for its heavy electricity consumption at a time the country is restricting the energy supply to its households and industries.

A Saturday report by the semi-official Fars news agency said the Dutch embassy in Tehran had used some 29,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in 42 days, according to a copy of a utility bill it had obtained from the embassy.

The report said the electricity bill was 340 million Iranian rials (less than \$425) at heavily subsidized prices of energy in Iran, adding that it would amount to the equivalent of more than \$10,000 based on the rates existing in the Netherlands.

It said the Dutch embassy's electricity consumption is equal to the usage of 150 Iranian households, adding that more than 70% of Iranians use less than 200 kWh of electricity in 42 days.

Without naming the embassy, Fars published a report in late November that disclosed excessive electricity use in a foreign embassy in Tehran. Some readers of the report commented that the usage was not normal for a diplomatic mission while suggesting that people in the embassy might have used cheap electricity to mine cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin.

There have been calls in Iran to restrict the supply of cheap energy to foreigners or to charge international prices for them. Reports have also shown that nearly 5 million refugees living in Iran are benefitting from more than \$3 billion worth of annual energy subsidies.

Fars said the Iranian parliament is discussing a motion that can enable the government to force embassies to pay energy prices based on the rates applied in their respective countries.

That comes as Iran's state electricity company has introduced scheduled power cuts for customers across the country in recent months amid a shortage of alternative energy feedstock at the country's gas-fired power plants.

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