

Greece Unable to Pay June IMF Installments



Athens, May 25 (RHC)-- Greek Interior Minister Nikos Voutsis says his country will not be able to pay the next installments of a huge debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) scheduled for early next month.

"The four installments for the IMF in June are 1.6 billion euros (\$1.8 billion). This money will not be given. There isn't any to be given. This is a known fact," said Voutsis in an interview with Greek television network Mega TV on Sunday. Voutsis, however, added that Athens and its international creditors are still holding talks "on the basis of cautious optimism that there will be a strong agreement."

Earlier in the day, hardliners in Greece's ruling Syriza party submitted a proposal to the party's central committee which urged the government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to refrain from paying international debts and nationalize the country's banks. "It would not be a catastrophe to exit the euro (nor) a terrorist act not to pay the next installment to the IMF," said Panayiotis Lafazanis, the leader of the party's Left Platform, who spoke in support of the proposal. The proposal was rejected on a vote of 95-75, reports said.

Earlier in the week, Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis noted that Athens would have to choose between reimbursing the IMF installments in June and covering running costs in the European country. "I am not going to pay the IMF and not pay pensions in the next few weeks," he added.

The confrontational tone of the Greek officials runs counter to the earlier conciliatory remarks made by Gabriel Sakellaridis, the Greek government's spokesman, who stressed that Athens does not aim to renege on its promises to its international creditors.

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