

Iranian foreign minister says he's ready to visit Saudi Arabia for discussions



Tehran, October 22 (RHC)-- Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says he is ready to visit Saudi Arabia to help reduce tensions between Riyadh and Tehran if suitable conditions existed. Iran's top diplomat made the remarks while answering a question posed by Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah news agency on the sidelines of a conference held in Tehran on Monday themed "Unilateralism and International Law."

"If suitable conditions are provided, I would be ready to travel to Riyadh to settle differences" between the two countries, Zarif was quoted by ISNA as saying.bb"Tehran welcomes any initiative that aims to ease tensions in the region and will cooperate [with other parties] to end Yemen's war," he added.

Zarif once again reiterated the Islamic Republic's policy for supporting the Yemeni people, saying, "Iran will always stand by the Yemeni nation and we believe that the end of war will first of all help the Yemeni people."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian foreign minister said he is in constant contact with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in relation to developments in Yemen.

The Pakistani prime minister made an official visit to Tehran earlier this month and held talks with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

In his meeting with Khan, Ayatollah Khamenei said a proper end to the ongoing war waged by Saudi Arabia and its allies on Yemen can have "positive" effects on the region, highlighting Iran's plan as a suitable solution to this crisis.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has for a long time presented a four-point plan to end the war in Yemen," Ayatollah Khamenei said, adding, "The end of this war in the proper way can have positive effects on the region."

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating military campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 91,000 lives over the past four and a half years.

The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

Speaking at a press conference in the Yemeni capital city of Sana'a on Saturday, the Yemeni minister of public health and population criticized the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) for their failure to open a humanitarian medical air bridge for Yemeni civilians, who are suffering from conditions that cannot be treated inside the war-battered Arab country.

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