

Iran says U.S. cannot veto its request for IMF loan



Tehran, April 9 (RHC)-- President Hassan Rouhani has called on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to consider Iran's request for \$5 billion without "discrimination" after reports said that Washington seeking to block the loan.

While the IMF has said it is in dialogue with Iranian authorities to understand Iran's needs and what is required for Tehran's request to be processed, several reports say the fund is under intense U.S. pressure to forego the request.

"We urge all international organizations to fulfill their legal duties. Iran is a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and has always paid its share; some of our resources are at their disposal," Rouhani said on Wednesday.

Iran's Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati wrote last month to the IMF to request a \$5 billion emergency loan for funding Tehran's needs to fight the novel coronavirus. Iran is currently the worst-hit country by the coronavirus in the Middle East, where the respiratory disease has killed more than 3,800 people and infected over 62,000 others.

"We haven't asked for anything from this fund for the last 50 years even as we have fulfilled our obligations. If they [IMF] do not fulfill their duties in these difficult circumstances, the world will have a

different take on this issue," Rouhani said.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani said over the weekend that the United States was using its clout within the IMF to stonewall the loan request. The U.S. has the largest number of shares within the IMF, giving it 16.5% of the body's total votes. Technically, other IMF member countries could amass a majority of votes to approve Iran's loan even with U.S. opposition. The Europeans and many other countries have reportedly come out in favor of the loan.

"Many countries around the world and thinkers have also stated that the International Monetary Fund must fulfill its obligations to the Iranian people," Rouhani said.

Iran's Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian said Tuesday night that the U.S. has no right to block the loan after media reports said Washington planned to veto the Islamic Republic's request.

"No country in the International Monetary Fund has the right of veto and the IMF's policy is to be fair in assessing and approving loan requests," Nahavandian told CNN's Christiane Amanpour. The official said Iran's request is currently "passing its legal process," adding that many countries "wholeheartedly" support Iran's loan request.

"When we face the outbreak of disease worldwide, it is important to understand each other and if the disease is not contained in a part of the world, we actually help its spread in other parts of the world," Nahavandian said. "Therefore, this is not an internal issue; rather, it is a global issue that should be taken into serious consideration," he added.

Several reports, however, cited U.S. officials as saying that the Trump administration was adamant in its opposition. A State Department spokesperson justified its opposition by claiming that Iran was "seeking cash to fund its adventurism abroad, not to buy medicine for Iranians," Al-Monitor reported.

President Rouhani said the American rulers will carry "the historic shame for retaining their pressures on the great Iranian nation in these conditions." "America has always been a unilateralist and in this disease case, it continues with the same wrong trend and inaccurate thinking," he said. "This is a historic issue. History will remember that the White House, which has been a terrorist in economic matters, is also a terrorist in medical matters," the Iranian president added.

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