

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi says Iran should be compensated for the seizure of an oil supertanker off the coast of Gibraltar after it was released on Thursday. Raisi said the release is not enough and Iran has to be compensated by those behind the seizure which Iranian officials have described as "state piracy". "The amount of time that it was seized will not be compensated just by it being freed," the judiciary chief was quoted as saying Monday. "Damages must be paid so that it becomes a lesson for all those who act contrary to international regulations," he added.

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- A new version of the official website of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei offering French, Russian, and Spanish editions has been unveiled.

The new versions, which are run by the office for preservation and dissemination of Ayatollah Khamenei's works, were unveiled during a ceremony in Tehran on Monday, ISNA reported.

**Leader Grants Clemency to Over 1,000 Irania Inmates**



**Iran Street Theater Festival Hosts 9 Countries**



**Ehsan Hadadi Wins Gold at Finland Event**



**Hamas Downplays Zionist PM's War Threats**



## Terrorists Flee Khan Shaykhun, Hama

MAARET AL-NOMAN, Syria (Dispatches) – Takfiri terrorists and allied militants withdrew from a key area of northwestern Syria Tuesday as government forces pressed an offensive against the terrorist-run Idlib region, a war monitor said.

The town of Khan Shaykhun on the region's southern edge has been a key goal for the government as it lies on the main highway through Idlib province connecting the capital Damascus with second city Aleppo.

After eight years of war, the Idlib region on the border with Turkey is the last major stronghold of foreign-backed terrorists.

Since January, it has been administered by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance, which is led by Takfiri terrorists from Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate.

The region of some three million people was supposed to be cleared of terrorists under a buffer zone deal signed last year by Moscow and key supporter of militants in Idlib Ankara, but Turkey failed to separate its proxies from the rank of Takfiri militants.

And in recent weeks, Syrian government forces have inched forward, nibbling away at the southern edges of the Takfiri bastion.

In the early hours of Tuesday, foreign-backed militants and their Takfiri allies pulled back from Khan Shaykhun and the countryside to its south, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights based in London said.

The withdrawal means an important Turkish observation point in the nearby town of Morek as well as a string of surrounding villages are effectively surrounded by government forces, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Tuesday Turkey will not move the military observation post.

On Monday, a Turkish military convoy of around 50 armored vehicles crossed the border into Idlib and headed south along the highway, drawing condemnation from Damascus which denounced it as any act of aggression.

The convoy was at a standstill just north of Khan Shaykhun on Tuesday, after government forces cut the road on into the town.

An AFP correspondent said airstrikes and machine gunfire from government helicopters peppered the road leading north to the town of Maaret al-Noman on Tuesday.

Pro-government newspaper Al-Watan said Monday morn-

ing's strike targeted a militant vehicle scouting the road in front of the Turkish convoy.

"The Syrian army in its own way sent a clear message to the Turkish regime by forcing convoys sent by Ankara to help the terrorists in Khan Shaykhun to come to a halt," it said.

It was a "clear warning against any Turkish attempt to resuscitate the terrorists".

Cavusoglu said Turkey was in contact with Russia "at every level" following Monday's incident to implement a ceasefire in the Idlib region of northwest Syria.

All roads leading out of the area are either controlled by government forces or within range of their guns, he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, however, said Monday that Moscow supports the Syrian army's offensive against "terrorists" in Idlib, during a press conference with French President Emmanuel Macron.

"We support the efforts of the Syrian army... to end these terrorist threats" in Idlib, Putin said after Macron called for a ceasefire in Idlib.

Russia has military servicemen stationed on the ground in the Idlib region and is following the situation there closely, Interfax news agency cited Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov as saying on Tuesday. He said any attacks carried out by militants in Idlib's de-escalation zone would be forcefully suppressed.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham controls most of Idlib province as well as parts of the neighboring provinces of Hama, Aleppo and Latakia.

Capturing Khan Shaykhun would be an important gain for President Bashar al-Assad into the northwestern region where his bid to recover "every inch" of Syria has run into complications including Turkish forces on the ground.

Syrian state media, in a broadcast from near the town, reported that government forces had widened their control including by seizing a highway running through Khan Shaykhun, which was targeted in a sarin poison gas attack in 2017.

A military source told Reuters the town was under army control after the terrorists were caught in a pincer movement and fled.

The Observatory said terrorists had withdrawn from their last piece of territory in neighboring Hama province in addition to Khan Shaykhun.

Khan Shaykhun has been in terrorist hands since 2014. The terrorists' territorial foothold in neighboring Hama dates back to the earliest days of the war.

## Iran Warns U.S. Against New Seizure Attempt

# 'Adrian Darya' Continues Voyage



Renamed Adrian Arya 1 supertanker, hosting an Iranian flag, sails in the waters in Gibraltar, Aug. 18, 2019.

GIBRALTAR (Dispatches) -- An Iranian-operated tanker at the center of an angry confrontation between Iran and Washington left Gibraltar on Monday after it was freed from detention, as Washington called the release unfortunate and warned Greece and Mediterranean ports against helping the vessel.

Tehran said any U.S. move to seize the vessel again would have "heavy consequences". While Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif appeared to play down the possibility of military conflict with Washington in an interview on U.S. television, he also indicated on a visit to Finland that Washing-

ton was seeking "more escalation". The Grace 1, renamed the Adrian Darya 1, left anchorage off Gibraltar about 11 p.m. (2100 GMT) on Sunday.

The seizure of the tanker by British Royal Marines near Gibraltar in July 4 led to a weeks-long confrontation between Tehran and the West. It also heightened tensions on international oil shipping routes through the Persian Gulf.

Gibraltar lifted the detention order on Thursday. But the next day, a federal court in Washington issued a warrant for the seizure of the tanker, the oil it carries and nearly \$1 million.

Gibraltar said on Sunday it could not comply with that request because it was bound by EU law. Washington wanted to detain the tanker on the grounds that it allegedly had links to Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), which it has designated a terrorist organization.

"It's unfortunate that that happened," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Fox News Channel about the ship's release.

A U.S. State Department official said Washington had conveyed its "strong position" to the Greek government, as well as to all ports in the Mediterranean about facilitat-

ing the tanker. Athens has received no request from the Iranian tanker Adrian Darya to dock in Greece, Merchant Marine Minister Ioannis Plakiotakis said Tuesday after a maritime tracker gave the ship's "reported destination" as the Greek port of Kalamata.

"There is officially no request concerning the arrival of the Iranian tanker in a Greek port," Plakiotakis told Greek media.

Zarif said in Finland: "We are happy this ordeal has ended and I hope this will lead to less escalation."

He also said the U.S. warrant had no legal basis and was politically motivated to "make more escalation."

But in an interview with "NBC Nightly News," Zarif said Iran would not take military action to end its standoff with its longtime adversary.

"We will not. We have never done that, in the past 250 years. We have defended ourselves. And we have taught good lessons to those who invaded us," Zarif said.

He also dismissed the possibility of U.S. military action against the Islamic Republic in the interview, saying the U.S. habit of saying: "No option is off the table" in its approach to Iran was a violation of the UN Charter.

Asked whether the United States could renew its seizure request after the tanker sailed from Gibraltar, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said: "Such an

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## Top Security Official Shamkhani: Iran Should Never Have Signed JCPOA

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- A top Iranian official says Tehran should never have signed the nuclear deal that has now been renounced by President Donald Trump.

In an interview with Lester Holt of NBC News, Ali Shamkhani said that there were people in Iran who felt that signing the 2015 nuclear pact, known as the JCPOA, was a mistake.

Asked by Holt if he was one of those people, Shamkhani said, "Yes. ... I'm just following the viewpoints of my nation, the people of Iran."

Shamkhani is the military adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and since 2013, has also been the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, making him Iran's top national security official. A former member of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, who once

commanded Iran's naval forces, he previously served as minister of defense and mounted an unsuccessful campaign for Iran's presidency in 2001.

In his interview with Holt, who is anchoring "NBC Nightly News" from Tehran on Monday, Shamkhani denounced the U.S. as the aggressor and prime source of tension in the region and warned the U.S. to "act with wisdom." He said the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran would not bring Iran to heel or bring it back to the nuclear negotiating table.

"The sanctions campaign is not for negotiation, it's for making us surrender," said Shamkhani. "As long as this approach is taken by the United States, Iran will never ever seek negotiations."

In 2015, after nearly two years of (Continued on Page 7)

## Italy in New Crisis as PM Conte Resigns

ROME (Reuters) -- Italy's prime minister announced his resignation on Tuesday as he made a blistering attack on his own interior minister, Matteo Salvini, accusing him of sinking the ruling coalition and endangering the economy for personal and political gain.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, addressing parliament after it was recalled from its summer recess to decide the future of the 14-month-old government, accused League party chief Salvini of seeking to cash in on his rising popularity.

"(Salvini) has shown that he is following his own interests and those of his party," Conte told a packed Senate, a stony-faced Salvini sitting by his side. "His decisions pose serious risks for this country."

He described the actions of Salvini, who declared the coalition unworkable 12 days ago and called for snap elections, as recklessness "liable to tip the country into a spi-

ral of political uncertainty and financial instability".

Conte, who belongs to neither of the coalition's two parties, said he would hand in his resignation later in the day, allowing the head of state to start formal consultations with parties to see if a new coalition can be formed.

Failing that, President Sergio Mattarella would have to dissolve parliament, 3-1/2 years ahead of schedule, a move that could trigger elections as early as the autumn.

Salvini at times shook his head, rolled his eyes or nodded to League senators as the prime minister accused him of being "irresponsible", "reckless", "alarming" and "disrespectful".

Conte said he was worried by Salvini's threat to call people into the country's squares if his drive for elections were thwarted, as well as his demand for "full powers".

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