

BRUSSELS (Reuters) -- The world has not done enough to ensure justice is done over the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a special UN investigator said on Tuesday.

Agnes Callamard, the United Nations rapporteur for extrajudicial executions, called for more action from the European Union and the United States over Khashoggi's murder by Saudi operatives at Riyadh's consulate in Istanbul in 2018.

"I think it is important to recognize that the international community so far has failed in its duty to ensure that there cannot be immunity or impunity for the killing of Jamal Khashoggi," (Continued on Page 7)

TOKYO (Dispatches) -- Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs said here Tuesday the Islamic Republic has no intention to abandon a nuclear deal it clinched with major world powers in 2015, saying Tehran will resume fulfilling its commitments under the accord if sanctions are lifted. "Our goal is not to exit the JCPOA (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), but we have decided to reduce our commitments after an entire year of excising patience and witnessing non-compliance on the part of the European countries," Abbas Araqchi said in a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi.

Viewpoint

Fear of Death Behind Trump's Cowardly Stealth Visit to Afghanistan

Foreign Films Line Up to Screen at Cinéma Vérité



Alireza Beiranvand Asia's Best Goalkeeper: Gabriel Calderon



U.S. WMDs Caused Humanitarian Disasters: Syria



Big Lying Trump Claims 'Thousands' Killed Quick Fizzling of Iran Protests Frustrates U.S.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- International energy news providers confirm that Iran is still selling its oil despite U.S. sanctions as a desperate American president calls on the world to watch the Islamic Republic.

Since September, the United States has been working to bring Iran's oil exports down to zero as part of Washington's "maximum pressure" on Tehran.

But Iran's Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri asserted on Monday that the policy has failed because the Islamic Republic continues to send its oil to the market.

"Despite America's pressure and its imposed sanctions on our oil exports, we still continue to sell our oil by using other means when even friendly countries have stopped purchasing our crude fearing America's penalties," Jahangiri was quoted as saying.

Iran's oil industry, including its oil, gas and petrochemical sectors, is on the frontline of the fight against the U.S. which believes choking off the main source of income of the Iranians would force the country to negotiate a new nuclear deal.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed on Monday that the sanctions on Tehran had been effective, resulting in a decrease in Iran's wealth and diminished ability to trade with the rest of the world.

"The good news is, in spite of what the world told President Trump - that American sanctions would not work - the world was wrong. The sanctions have been incredibly effective," Pompeo said.

There is little ground, however, to believe in the top U.S. diplomat's celebratory words.

Tehran has rejected talks with the United States unless it returns to the nuclear deal and lifts all sanctions. There is not the slightest sign of a change in this position, especially after Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei renewed last month a ban on negotiation with the United States.

Pompeo is apparently encouraged by the recent protests in Iran against the government's decision to hike gasoline prices. If so, U.S. leaders must have been reading too much into the unrest which provided a catalyst to the overall thinking of the Iranians - they loathe and renounce chaos and internal conflict.

fizzling of the agitation after peaceful protesters separated their ranks from the rioters who were targeting public and private property without discretion.

And that is why the recent protests in Iran must be bad news for American leaders who have thought increased pressure on Iranian would drive them into revolt and mutiny against the government.

Obviously frustrated, President Donald Trump said Tuesday the world has to be watching Iran's alleged effort to quash protests that he claimed have killed "thousands of people."

Speaking in London, where he is attending the NATO leaders summit, Trump said, "Iran is killing thousands and thousands of people right now as we speak."

He added they were killed "for the mere fact that they're protesting," and he called it a "terrible thing".

Trump was mum on what, if anything, the U.S. could do in response, but he said, "I think the world has to be watching."

Trump encouraged rioters "to get in there and see what's going on," echoing his Secretary of State Pompeo who earlier called on protesters to send videos of their attacks on public and private property.

On Monday, Vice President Jahangiri said the Americans were on the wrong footing. "They have failed to bring our oil exports to zero as planned," he said.

Digital marine vessel tracking agency Tankertrackers.com agreed, saying Iran's claims that it is managing to sell significant levels of crude are not without foundation.

According to Berlin-based business publication bne IntelliNews, Iran has very much moved its oil sales into the grey market to avoid US sanctions, meaning analysts partly rely on satellite-technology tracking firms to observe the ebb and flow of tankers leaving Iran's ports and watch their movements.

"Lately, Iran's two main destinations for its crude oil have been China and Syria. In addition to that, refined products 'bounce' via certain trading hubs as they cannot be chemically traced," Samir Madani, CEO of Tankertrackers.com, told the publication.

"All in all, crude plus products are being shipped at a rate of around 700,000 barrels per day," he said.

President Rouhani: Iran's Resistance Thwarted Sanctions



Iranians gather in the capital Tehran's central Enqelab Square on Nov. 25, 2019 to condemn riots after the government's decision to hike gasoline prices.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday the Iranian nation has thwarted "unprecedented" U.S. economic pressures on the country to its knees. "These unprecedented sanctions — which they themselves call maximum economic pressure — were meant to realize their dream of bringing us to our knees by the end of the current Persian calendar year (on March 21)," Rouhani told a group of disabled people here.

"Not only the U.S., which is a criminal and terrorist state, but also other states were assuming that" Iran would buckle under the sanc-

tion, but the Iranian nation thwarted the U.S. conspiracy by putting up resistance, he added.

"Despite all the heavy economic pressure and the unfair sanctions, the Iranian people preserved their dignity, overcame difficult situations and emerged victorious by exercising resistance and enduring hardships. They also showed that, through resistance, they would not allow the enemy to obtain its objectives."

Faced with the Iranian nation's firm resistance, Rouhani said, the enemies are now even seeking dialog and "sending us private offers

talks." "Messages and requests for negotiations that they send us privately are contrary to their rhetoric in public," he said, noting that even "the European states that are mediators, are aware of that."

On Tuesday, Kyodo news agency reported said Iran had sounded out Japan about President Rouhani visiting the country.

Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, serving as a special envoy of the president, relayed the message to Japan during his two-day visit to Tokyo from Monday, according to

a source close to bilateral relations. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Iran in June, becoming the first Japanese leader to do so since 1978.

Rouhani has welcomed Japan's efforts to ease tensions in the Middle East amid an ongoing standoff with the United States over the 2015 nuclear deal, the deputy foreign minister said Tuesday during a meeting with Abe, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Following the U.S.'s withdrawal from the deal, Iran has gradually stepped away from commitments under the landmark agreement with major world powers.

In a separate meeting with Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Araqchi said the current situation in the Middle East and around the Persian Gulf is "more serious than ever before."

"Tensions continue to run high. That is why discussions and cooperation between Japan and Iran is becoming more and more important," he said.

Japan, which is a key U.S. security ally but also maintains friendly relations with Iran, has sought to play a mediating role, with Abe traveling to Tehran in a bid to broker dialogue.

Araqchi hailed the trip as a "turning point" in bilateral relations.

Japan has opted not to participate in a U.S.-led mission to patrol waters near the Strait of Hormuz off the Iranian coast. Instead, it plans to send a Maritime Self-Defense Force ship and a patrol plane to the region for "research" purposes.

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UAE Hails President Assad for 'Wise Leadership'

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) -- The United Arab Emirates' top diplomat in Syria has praised President Bashar al-Assad for his "wise leadership", in one of the strongest expressions of support yet from a country that once backed Damascus' enemies in the foreign-backed war.

The two restored diplomatic ties last year and the UAE's vocal support will be welcome by Assad, who has wrested control of most of his country from foreign-backed militants and Takfiri terrorists.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark UAE national day on Dec. 2, UAE charge d'affaires Abdul-Hakim Naimi said he hoped "security and stability prevails throughout the Syrian Arab Republic under the wise leadership of President Bashar Al-Assad."

"Syria-UAE relations are solid, distinct and strong," he added, according to a video posted by Russian broadcaster RT.

The UAE has begun to forge closer ties with Damascus. Last December it reopened its embassy there, angering Washington, which has sought to keep Syria isolated.

Washington has lobbied Persian Gulf states including the UAE to hold off restoring ties, sources told Reuters earlier this year.

At the ceremony, Syria's deputy foreign minister Faisal Maqdad thanked the UAE for its support. "We cannot forget that the United Arab Emirates stood by Syria in its war against terrorism," he said.

Earlier in the war UAE supported armed groups opposed to Assad. But its role was less prominent than that of Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

The United Arab Emirates has already reviewed its policies with regard to Iran which is a close ally of Syria and the Saudi war on Yemen.

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'Nasty' Infighting Rages as NATO Meets for Summit

LONDON (Reuters) -- U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out at European allies before a NATO anniversary summit in London on Tuesday, singling out France's Emmanuel Macron for "very nasty" comments on the alliance and Germany for spending too little on defense.

Underlining the breadth of strife in a transatlantic bloc hailed by its backers as the most successful military alliance in history, Trump demanded that Europe pay more for defense and also make concessions to U.S. interests on trade.

The attack echoed a similar tirade by Trump ahead of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's last summit in July 2018.

It will add to the growing doubts over the future of the 29-member alliance, described last month by Macron as "brain dead" in the run-up to a London meeting intended to be a 70th anniversary celebra-

tion. "It's a tough statement, though, when you make a statement like that, that is a very, very nasty statement to essentially 28, including them, 28 countries," Trump told reporters as he met the head of NATO in London.

"Nobody needs NATO more than France," he said, adding that France, where Macron is seeking to push through delicate reforms of a large state sector, was "not doing well economically".

In an interview with the Economist last month, Macron made headlines by faulting NATO for failing to update its strategy to respond to newer threats.

The prime ministers of Canada and the Netherlands added their support to a Franco-German proposal to reform NATO.

"I don't think you survive 70 years as an alliance without regularly

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