

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- The brutal sanctions imposed by Western countries on the Islamic Republic have stymied Iran's capacity to fight drug trafficking by depriving it of the necessary equipment, says a senior Iranian police official.

In an exclusive interview with Press TV, Colonel Majid Karimi, who heads the Iran Drug Control Headquarters, said, "Brutal sanctions against Iran have made fighting drug trafficking difficult."

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran reported on Monday 162 more deaths from the novel coronavirus, the highest single-day toll since the country's outbreak began in February.

"This increase in numbers is in fact a reflection of our overall performance, both in terms of reopening and in compliance with health protocols," Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said at a news conference. Lari announced an additional 2,536 new cases on Monday, bringing the total to 225,205. The overall official death toll is now at 10,670.

Viewpoint

Would Interpol Take the Historic Step for Arrest of Trump the Terrorist?

Iranian Short Title Competes in France

Iran Remain Unchanged at FIVB World Ranking

UN Rights Chief: Zionist Regime's Annexation 'Illegal'

Oil Giant Goes Bankrupt: Has U.S. Meltdown Begun?

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Chesapeake Energy Corp filed for Chapter 11 on Sunday, becoming the largest U.S. oil and gas producer to seek bankruptcy protection in recent years as it bowed to heavy debts and the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on energy markets.

The filing marks an end of an era for the Oklahoma City-based shale pioneer, and comes after months of negotiations with creditors. Reuters first reported in March the company had retained debt advisers.

Chesapeake was co-founded by Aubrey McClendon, an early and high profile advocate of shale drilling who died in 2016 in a fiery one-car crash in Oklahoma while facing a federal probe into bid rigging. Over more than two decades, McClendon built Chesapeake from a small wildcatter to a top U.S. producer of natural gas. It remains the sixth-largest producer by volume.

Current CEO Doug Lawler, who inherited a company saddled with about \$13 billion in debt in 2013, managed to chip at the debt pile with spending cuts and asset sales, but this year's historic oil price rout left Chesapeake without the ability to refinance that debt.

"Despite having removed over \$20 billion of leverage and financial commitments, we believe this restructuring is necessary for the long-term success and value creation of the business," Lawler said in a statement announcing the filing.

Lawler last year spent \$4 billion on an ill-timed push to reduce Chesapeake's reliance on natural gas. The purchase sent its shares lower and this year the value of Chesapeake's oil and gas holdings fell by \$700 million this quarter. The company last month warned it may not be able to continue operations.

Chesapeake plans to eliminate approximately \$7 billion of its debt, the statement said. A separate court filing indicated that Chesapeake has more than \$10 billion in liabilities and assets, respectively.

Chesapeake's outlook plunged this year as the coronavirus outbreak and a Saudi-Russia price war sharply cut energy prices and drove its first-quarter losses to more than \$8 billion. On Friday, its stock traded at \$11.85, down 93% since the start of the year, leaving it with a market value of \$116 million.

The company has entered into a restructuring support agreement, which has the backing of lenders to its main revolving credit facility - some of which

are providing \$925 million of debtor-in-possession (DIP) financing to help fund operations during the bankruptcy proceedings.

The agreement also has backing from portions of other creditors, including those behind 87% of its term loan, and holders of 60% and 27%, respectively, of its senior secured second lien notes due 2025, and senior unsecured notes.

While the statement does not name Chesapeake's creditors, investment firm Franklin Resources is among the most significant. On June 15, Reuters reported that Chesapeake's impending restructuring would turn over control of the company to creditors including Franklin.

Chesapeake also has agreed the principal terms for a \$2.5 billion exit financing, while some of its lenders and secured note holders have agreed to backstop a \$600 million offering of new shares, to take place upon exiting the Chapter 11 process, the statement added.

Chesapeake's filing in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Texas makes it the largest bankruptcy of an U.S. oil and gas producer since at least 2015, when law firm Haynes & Boone began publishing data on restructurings.

Chesapeake's advisers are investment banks Rothschild & Co and Intrepid Partners, law firm Kirkland & Ellis LLP, and turnaround specialists Alvarez & Marsal.

Over Terrorist Assassination of Gen. Soleimani: Iran Issues Arrest Warrant for Trump, Others



U.S. President Donald Trump has said he ordered the assassination of Gen. Qasem Soleimani near Baghdad airport on Jan. 3, 2020.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) — Iran has issued an arrest warrant and asked Interpol for help in detaining President Donald Trump and dozens of others for assassinating top general Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad, a local prosecutor said Monday.

Tehran prosecutor Ali Alqasimehr said Trump and others involved in the Jan. 3 assassination face "murder and terrorism charges".

Alqasimehr did not identify anyone else sought other than Trump, but stressed that Iran would continue to pursue his prosecution even after his presidency ends.

"At the top of the list is U.S. President

Donald Trump, and his prosecution will be pursued even after the end of his term in office."

Iran, he said, requested a "red notice" be put out for Trump and the others, which represents the highest level arrest request issued by Interpol. Local authorities end up making the arrests on behalf of the country that request it. The notices cannot force countries to arrest or extradite suspects, but can put government leaders on the spot and limit suspects' travel.

After receiving a request, Interpol meets by committee and discusses whether or not to share the information

with its member states. Interpol has no requirement for making any of the notices public, though some do get published on its website.

The U.S. assassinated General Soleimani, who oversaw Iran's Quds Force, and others in a January drone strike near Baghdad International Airport. It saw Iran respond with a ballistic missile strike targeting American troops in Iraq.

General Soleimani was viewed as a key figure in defeating Daesh, the world's most notorious terrorist group, in the Middle East.

Several million people attended funeral processions held for him and

his companions in the Iraqi cities of Kadhimiya, Baghdad, Karbala and Najaf as well as the Iranian cities of Ahvaz, Mashhad, Tehran, Qom and Kerman.

NBC News has revealed that the details of the assassination, saying the terrorist operation used Israeli intelligence and was run from the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) headquarters in Qatar.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said Monday that about 40 people have been identified in connection with the assassination.

"Our intelligence and security agencies have so far identified about 40 Americans, who have been one way or another involved in this assassination through issuing order or facilitation of the process. A number of other people, including some American drone operators, have are not known yet, but will be identified in the near future," he said.

After the rest of Americans and non-Americans involved in the assassination are identified, "the judge will indict them on the basis of undeniable evidence and the Islamic establishment in its entirety will not stop until they are brought to justice," he said.

"Since this has been a crime against our national sovereignty and security, the government of the United States and those countries whose territories were used to commit this crime are internationally liable, and must be held to account for their move, which contravenes international law, and we will follow up on this issue in various international forums and organizations," Baharvand added.

World's Worst Fears Are Realized: Coronavirus Infections Soar in Poor Countries

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — For months, experts have warned of a potential nightmare scenario: After overwhelming health systems in some of the world's wealthiest regions, the coronavirus gains a foothold in poor or war-torn countries ill-equipped to contain it and sweeps through the population.

Now some of those fears are being realized.

In southern Yemen, health workers are leaving their posts en masse because of a lack of protective equipment, and some hospitals are turning away patients struggling to breathe. In Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region, where there is little testing capacity, a mysterious illness resembling COVID-19 is spreading through camps for the internally displaced.

Cases are soaring in India and Pakistan, together home to more than 1.5 billion people and where authorities say nationwide lock-

downs are no longer an option because of high poverty.

In Latin America, Brazil has a confirmed caseload and death count second only to the United States, and its leader is unwilling to take steps to stem the spread of the virus. Alarming escalations are unfolding in Peru, Chile, Ecuador and Panama, even after they imposed early lockdowns.

The first reports of disarray are also emerging from hospitals in South Africa, which has its continent's most developed economy. Sick patients are lying on beds in corridors as one hospital runs out of space. At another, an emergency morgue was needed to hold more than 700 bodies.

"We are reaping the whirlwind now," said Francois Venter, a South African health expert at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Worldwide, there are 10 million confirmed cases and over 500,000 reported deaths, according to a

tally by Johns Hopkins University of government reports. Experts say both those numbers are serious undercounts of the true toll of the pandemic, due to limited testing and missed mild cases.

South Africa has more than a third of Africa's confirmed cases of COVID-19. It's ahead of other African countries in the pandemic timeline and approaching its peak. If its facilities break under the strain, it will be a grim forewarning because South Africa's health system is reputed to be the continent's best.

Most poor countries took action early on. Some, like Uganda, which already had a sophisticated detection system built up during its yearslong battle with viral hemorrhagic fever, have thus far been arguably more successful than the U.S. and other wealthy countries in battling coronavirus.

But since the beginning of the pandemic, poor and conflict-ravaged

Prosecutor: Airliner Downed Due to Human Error

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The shooting down of a Ukrainian airliner in Iran in January was due to human error and not an order from senior military authorities, the military prosecutor for Tehran province, Gholam-Abbas Torki, said on Monday.

There was no indication that the downing of the airliner, which killed all 176 people aboard, was due to a cyber attack on Iran's missile or air defense systems, Torki said, adding that three people were under arrest related to the accident.

The airliner was shot down shortly after takeoff in Tehran, when Iran's air defenses were on high alert, hours after Iran had fired missiles at a U.S. base in Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of an Iranian commander. Iran has already described the shooting down of the plans as a tragic mistake.

The operator of the air defense system should have received or-

ders from his superiors before firing two missiles at the airliner, Torki said.

"Twenty six seconds passed between the first and second firing but unfortunately during this time the operator also did not get permission for the second firing from the network," Torki said.

The black boxes of the airliner have been physically damaged and reading them is technically complicated, Torki said.

France's BEA crash investigation agency said on Friday it would download the black boxes from the airliner at Iran's request, easing a standoff over where they should be read.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said Sunday Iran and France have finalized the date to read the black boxes.

"The Iranian Civil Aviation

(Continued on Page 7)