

LONDON (MEE) -- The United Arab Emirates' security chief is ill-suited to run Interpol, according to a report by the former director of public prosecutions of England and Wales, who said that the Emirati official had overseen torture and abuses.

In the report, which was written with assistance from the UK-based International Human Rights Advisors, David Calvert-Smith said that Ahmed Naser al-Raisi's nomination could be interpreted as a "reward" for donations to the agency. According to the Guardian, Calvert-Smith said the process of electing a president of the international police agency was "shrouded in secrecy and opaque".

LONDON (Dispatches) -- According to Amnesty International's annual human rights report, the UK has long been "moving in the wrong direction on human rights" but matters are now "speeding towards a cliff edge".

In the organization's 408-page report, the UK government received strong criticism for its human rights violations in relation to "health, immigration policies, race discrimination, domestic abuse and housing". On the Covid-19 pandemic, the report spotlighted the country's "extremely high" death toll and stressed that the UK's response has raised grave human rights concerns.

Viewpoint

Who Attacked the Iranian Ship in the Red Sea?

Kazakhstan, Iran Sign Document for Cooperation



Iran's Kish Island to Host Asian Beach Volleyball Championship



Democrats to Biden: 'Publicly Pressure' Saudis to End Yemen Blockade



Top Iraqi Resistance Leader:

Talks Should Lead to Withdrawal of U.S. Troops

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- Hadi al-Amiri, head of the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance at Iraq's parliament, says the upcoming round of talks between Baghdad and Washington must lead to a complete withdrawal of foreign troops from the country.

Commenting on the third round of the so-called strategic dialogue scheduled for Wednesday, Amiri said, "We expect that the brave and zealous Iraqi negotiating team will achieve full national sovereignty and end the presence of foreign forces by setting a clear timetable with short intervals for the withdrawal of combat troops and the restoration of the security apparatus' control over Iraq's air bases in Ain al-Asad and Al-Harir as well as the Iraqi airspace."

"We will closely follow the outcome of this round of talks," Amiri said in a statement carried by Al-Sumaria TV network.

Over the weekend, a prominent Iraqi anti-terror group emphasized that armed resistance and operations against American occupation forces would continue until their full withdrawal.

The 'strategic dialogue' is not welcomed by some resistance

groups in Iraq.

Jaafar al-Husseini, a spokesman for the Hezbollah Brigades, one of those groups, said on Wednesday, "It has no value because the Iraqi people have already decided that they want an end to the American occupation."

He said the resistance group would not stop pressuring the United States to exit.

The talks began in June 2020 under the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump.

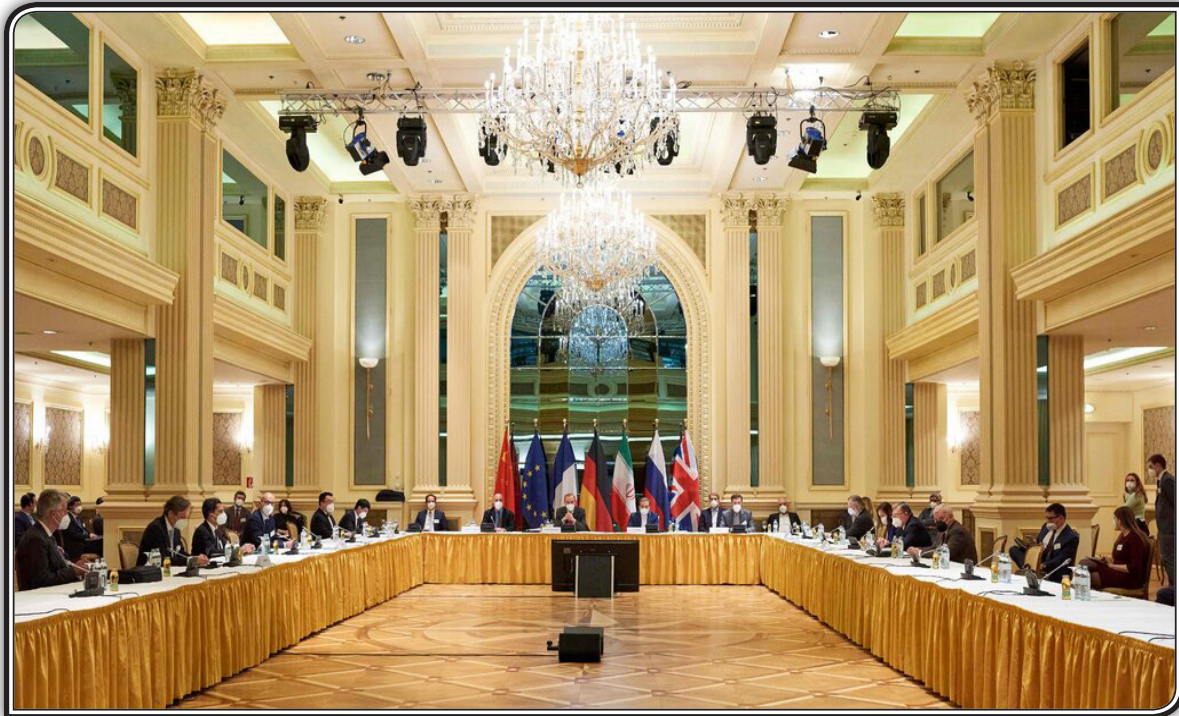
On January 5 that year, Iraqi lawmakers approved a bill which requires the Baghdad government to end the presence of all foreign military forces in the country.

The parliament's move was prompted by the January 3 assassination in Baghdad of Iran's top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of the Popular Mobilization Units, in a cowardly drone strike authorized by Trump.

It is estimated that there are currently 2,500 U.S. troops deployed in Iraq.

Senior Negotiator Araqchi Warns:

Iran to Leave Talks If Other Side Wastes Time



Diplomats from the European Union, China, Russia and Iran hold talks in Vienna on April 6, 2021.

VIENNA (Dispatches) -- Iran said on Wednesday the only path for the United States to rejoin the 2015 Iran nuclear deal is full compliance and removal of all sanctions.

"The only U.S. 'path back' to the Deal is: full compliance & effective removal of ALL imposed, re-imposed & re-labeled sanctions,"

Foreign Ministry Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a post on his official Twitter page.

"Only after that, we'll stop our remedial measures," he added, pointing to the countermeasures taken by Iran one year after the U.S. in May 2018 unilaterally left the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and reimposed the sanctions that had been removed as part of the agreement.

Khatibzadeh pointed out that unlike the U.S., Iran still remains a party to the JCPOA, stressing that certain "media spinning can't change" this fact.

The tweet came after U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price in a press briefing rejected what he called Tehran's position of "maximalist demands."

"I think what we can essentially rule out are the maximalist demands that the United States do everything first and only in turn would Iran then act, I don't think anyone is under the impression that that would be a viable proposal," he said.

In addition to reimposition of sanctions, the administration of former U.S. president Donald Trump also imposed fresh sanctions against Tehran in its last days in office.

Joe Biden, who was vice president when the JCPOA was clinched, hit out at Trump for leaving the accord and expressed a willingness to return his country to the JCPOA both during his presidential campaign and after he took office on January 20.

However, his administration has sent mixed signals on how the U.S. would resume its obligations regarding the deal.

Iran says, as the party that has withdrawn from the JCPOA, the

U.S. should take the first step by removing all the sanctions before Tehran would reverse its remedial measures.

Iranian officials also emphasize that Tehran will need enough time to verify the termination of the sanctions, and that it cannot be done within "a short time."

Khatibzadeh told Press TV on Tuesday that the U.S. has to return to compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal by removing its anti-Iran sanctions all at once, asserting that the Islamic Republic will accept no "step-for-step" approach in this regard.

The spokesman said Iran's position was "crystal clear," adding, "We have just one step and that is the removal of all the sanctions imposed."

He also pointed to the talks between Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA -- the UK, France, Russia and China plus Germany -- over the future of the agreement and said the talks held so far have been focused on how the parties attending the Commission to the JCPOA "could make sure that the US will get back to full compliance and effectively remove all imposed, re-imposed or re-labeled sanctions after it ceased its participation in the JCPOA."

A US delegation headed by the administration's special envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, was also in the Austrian capital, Vienna, where the talks were held, but it was not attending the discussions.

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi had said Iran and the U.S. will have no direct or indirect talks in Vienna.

A senior Iranian official also told Press TV that the country will not accept any division of the sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran into those that had been

removed under the 2015 nuclear deal and the ones unrelated to the nuclear deal.

"Iran will not accept a division of the Trump-era sanctions into JCPOA-related ones and those unrelated to the JCPOA," the official said.

"From Iran's viewpoint, all American sanctions -- including the Obama-era sanctions, the sanctions restored by Trump and the additional sanctions in the Trump-era labeled as non-nuclear -- must be terminated," the official added.

"Iran does not accept and recognize negotiations based on a division of the sanctions," the official emphasized. "Iran's condition for returning to its JCPOA commitments is the lasting removal of all the entire sanctions."

The official said America and Europe must guarantee that the sanctions will not be restored on Iran again after their removal.

The official further emphasized that Iran will need enough time to verify the termination of the sanctions, and that it cannot be done within "a short time."

Araqchi, who heads the Iranian delegation to the Vienna talks, warned Wednesday that Tehran will abandon the discussions if the other negotiators waste time or seek goals other than reviving the nuclear deal.

He told Nour News that the Vienna talks focus on technical and legal issues regarding the implementation of the JCPOA, first by the United States and then Iran.

"These negotiations are not even about the JCPOA itself, let alone an agreement beyond the JCPOA," he added.

"To us, it does not matter what aspirations our opposite sides have about the future of the negotiations. The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is completely clear and we will not have any talks on other issues."

During the Vienna talks, Iran and the remaining signatories to the JCPOA agreed to form expert-level working groups to discuss the sanctions Washington might remove and the nuclear curbs Tehran might observe as they try to resurrect the nuclear accord.

Araqchi said that the working groups will work until Friday, after which they will report their conclusions to the JCPOA Joint Commission.

"If we see that the negotiating parties are seeking to waste time or pursuing other goals, we will stop the negotiations at the current level," he underlined.

"It is worth mentioning that we have no subject such as a step-by-step implementation of commitments on the agenda. All the required measures will be taken in one step."

Resistance Economy Begins to Pay Dividends

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran is poised to raise its science and technology exports to \$1 billion this year, Vice President for science and technology Sorena Sattari says, hailing it an eye-catching achievement.

The country leads the Middle East in a number of technological fields, including nanotechnology and aerospace, and Sattari is the architect of a push to transform the country's resource-centered economy to a tech-based economic jurisdiction.

On Wednesday, he touched on Iran's high scientific and technological capabilities in the wake of "spectacular progresses" which the sector has made in recent years, saying his main focus is to boost technological products.

"The success of Iranian innovators in various fields, including in the field of diagnostic kits for testing and other products related to the coronavirus, shows the progress of our country in the fields of science and technology," he said.

Sattari also touched on plans to set up Iranian innovation and technology centers abroad with the aim of facilitating the country's knowledge-based exports.

"We have planned to develop these centers in various countries,

including our neighbors and the countries to which we can export our goods."

The official made the remarks during a visit to the northeastern city of Shahroud where he signed a number of MoUs to expand science and technology parks in Semnan province.

Last year, knowledge-based Iranian companies reportedly exported \$800 million worth of products and services, mainly to Iraq, Russia, Afghanistan, and Syria. The exports included content production, application, software development, and IT research.

Persian Gulf littoral states, Europe, China and Central Asia are the new target of Iran's science and technology exports.

Knowledge-based projects have the special blessing of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei who is a regular visitor of science and technology exhibits, with his tours often stretching to a couple of hours.

In the past, the Leader has allowed the country's sovereign wealth fund to be tapped for scientific and knowledge-based projects with the aim of making Iran's economy resilient to sanctions.

Iran's National Development Fund, a rainy-day kitty, was established in 2011 to collect some of the proceeds from the country's oil and gas industries for the benefit of future generations.

In his Nowruz message on March 20, Ayatollah Khamenei said there is a suitable ground for a leap in production as he called the new Persian year as the "year of support for production and elimination of obstacles".

Last year, Sattari said some 5,000 knowledge-based companies were active in Iran and the number was rapidly growing.

They are involved in production of advanced medical and laboratory equipment, jet engine design, manufacturing of power control systems, oil and gas catalysts, deep water reconnaissance and drilling equipment, scanners and processors, to name just a few.

Sattari - an alumni of the prestigious Sharif University of Technology, an inventor and the son of Iran's former Air Force chief known for his innovative tactics during the Iraqi war of the 1980s -- has called knowledge-based companies as a key to the country's push to develop a resistive economy without relying on oil revenues.

(Continued on Page 7)