

U.S. Official: Biden Administration Cracking Down on Speech Critical of Zionist Regime

WASHINGTON (Middle East Eye) – After having his nomination to an independent international human rights post rescinded by the Biden administration, U.S. academic James Cavallaro has warned that the Biden administration is contributing to a pattern of cracking down on speech critical of the Zionist regime.

“I’m used to being attacked for doing human rights work. I would say it’s at a minimum disconcerting to feel that I’m being attacked by my own government for defending human rights, but unfortunately, I’ve hit a raw nerve,” Cavallaro said in an interview with Middle East Eye.

“Now you have a litmus test - think about this - you have a litmus test on Israel-Palestine for independent experts in human rights bodies in the western hemisphere.”

Cavallaro is a human rights lawyer who has taught at top American law schools, including Harvard and Stanford, and he currently teaches at Yale and UCLA. He was originally nominated by the State Department on 10 February for a position on the Inter-American Commission on Hu-



Demonstrators place a Palestinian flag during a protest against Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s visit to Al-Khalil, in the occupied West Bank, September 4, 2019.

man Rights (IACHR), referring to both north and south America.

It was not a guarantee that he would be selected, since a seat on the commission requires a vote from all members of the Organization of American States (OAS), but the State Department told Cavallaro they wanted him to be the U.S. nominee.

The position appeared to be a natural fit for Cavallaro, given his extensive experience and work on human rights in Latin America over the past several decades. He opened a Human Rights Watch office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and previously worked in groups opposing rights abuses by the government of former Chilean leader Augusto Pinochet.

He had also already served on IACHR, serving as president from 2016 to 2017, under the Barack Obama administration.

“When they nominated me in 2013, what the folks inside State told me is one of the reasons we’re nominating you is because you’re very distant from U.S. government,” he told MEE.

But just several days after his nomination was announced this month, Cavallaro said he received a message from Algemeiner, a New York-based news website, asking him to comment on past social media posts.

The news site had found a number of tweets Cavallaro wrote, in which he called the Zionist regime an apartheid regime and also said that Hakeem Jeffries, the House minority leader, was “bought” and “controlled” by the Zionist lobby.

The latter tweet was a reply to an article by The Guardian outlining that Jeffries had received \$416,000 in campaign donations from pro-Zionist groups, and had also opposed placing conditions on aid to the occupying regime.

resident, was the ringleader of the Tondar (Thunder) terrorist outfit. He was accused of planning a series of attacks, including a 2008 attack against a religious congregation center in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz, Fars Province, which killed 14 people and wounded hundreds.

Sharmahd and his Tondar group, were also behind a 2010 terrorist bombing at Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s mausoleum in the Iranian capital, which left several people injured.

The 67-year-old is also accused of working with U.S. intelligence and spying on Iran’s ballistic missile program.

According to Judiciary’s Mizan news agency, Sharmahd had planned to commit 23 terrorist acts and succeeded in executing five, adding, “His verdict can still be appealed in the Supreme Court.”

Security...

(Continued From Page 2)

to begin walking back on its commitments under the accord.

Negotiations to return to the deal started in 2021 but stalled last year.

Iran is ready “to take steps to conclude the negotiations... on the basis of previous discussions and respecting the red lines” defined by Tehran, Amir-Abdollahian said.

“But if the American side chooses another path... all options are on the table”, he added, without elaborating.

His Iraqi counterpart pleaded for a resumption of talks.

“It is important for Iraq that the Iranian and American parties reach an agreement”, Hussein said.

Amir-Abdollahian also welcomed Iraq’s return to its regional role.

“The regional role of Iraq is now more outstanding than ever”, he told reporters upon his arrival.

“My presence in Iraq coincides with the Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in this country, which shows that Iraq has returned to its natural status”, he said.

“We feel satisfied and content with the fact that the friendly and brotherly country is now in its natural status in the region, given our special relationship with Iraq and the various issues that are on the agenda regarding bilateral relations.”

The top Iranian diplomat said his two-day visit to Iraq came at the invitation of Foreign Minister Hussein and was aimed at following up bilateral relations and finalizing the close Tehran-Baghdad consultations on important regional and international topics.

Amir-Abdollahian paid a visit to the site where Iran’s legendary anti-terror commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were assassinated by the U.S. three years ago.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Iraqi foreign ministry said the two sides would hold “a discussion of bilateral relations at all levels and ways to introduce dialogue to enhance aspects of joint cooperation in a way that enhances the security and stability of the region and reflects positively on the two neighboring peoples.”

The Iranian foreign minister’s trip comes weeks after his Saudi counterpart paid a visit to Iraq, where he discussed the resumption of Tehran-Riyadh talks aimed at restoring their bilateral ties under the auspices of the Iraqi government.

Quds...

(Continued From Page 2)

Both commanders were admired by Muslim nations for eliminating the U.S.-sponsored the Daesh terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

The U.S. assassination drew a wave of condemnation from officials and movements throughout the world and triggered huge public protests across the region, with Iraqi lawmakers approving a bill two days after the attack demanding the withdrawal of all foreign military forces led by the United States from the country.

Five days later, in a military operation codenamed Operation Martyr Soleima-

ni, the IRGC launched a volley of ballistic missiles at the Ain al-Asad airbase in Iraq’s western province of Anbar and at another airbase in Erbil in the Kurdistan Region.

Iran said the missile strike was only a “first slap” in its process of taking “hard revenge” and that it would not rest until the U.S. military leaves the Middle East in disgrace.

Iranian...

(Continued From Page 2)

to our cooperation with the agency,” Eslami was quoted as saying on Wednesday.

Since the U.S. withdrawal from a 2015 nuclear deal in 2018, Iran has gradually started going beyond the pact’s nuclear curbs and enriching uranium to up to 60% purity in April 2021.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has never sought to acquire an atomic bomb,” Amir-Abdollahian added.

Europe...

(Continued From Page 2)

station in Tehran and was pronounced dead three days later at the hospital. An official report by Iran’s Legal Medicine Organization concluded that Amini’s death had been caused by illness rather than alleged blows to the head or other vital body organs.

Following her death, rioters went on a rampage, brutally attacking security officers and causing massive damage to public property. Dozens of people and security personnel were killed in the riots.

UK...

(Continued From Page 2)

in wages from the NHS after having sent the forged certificate to the General Medical Council (GMC) to register to practice in 1995.

Christopher Stables said Alemi was believed to be 60, but had given three different dates of birth on documents.

According to BBC news, university records showed Alemi, who was born in Iran, was stopped from re-enrolling at the university in New Zealand after failing exams.

Also, the court was told Alemi, who previously lived in High Harrington, Cumbria, had been jailed for five years after being convicted of three fraud offenses in 2018 in relation to the forging of the will of an 84-year-old, which would have seen her inherit the woman’s Keswick bungalow and £300,000.

Alemi had falsely claimed that she fled from her home country Iran to New Zealand after she and her family were “tortured” following the Islamic Revolution.

Exploiting the misinformation campaign against Iran to serve their personal goals, which has intensified since the end of 2022, fake stories on torture and rape allegedly carried out by the Iranian government keep surfacing.

Earlier in January, Hassan Firouzi, 34, was arrested near the Persian Gulf island of Qeshm in southern Iran while attempting to exit the country – in a completely sound and healthy state.

As per his own admission, Firouzi was a financial defaulter and owed money to many people, which made him produce a theatrical scenario of arrest, torture, execution, coma, and the escape act.

Western-backed media stand behind feeding the media with such stories, mainly led by Iran International and BBC Farsi.

A media report back then said Firouzi suffered from “internal bleeding” due to “severe torture” and his left kidney had been damaged due to “harsh blows using the chair leg.”

It further noted that he had been “left unattended by prison officials” and placed in solitary confinement “without any care.”

And, when he was finally shifted to a hospital, the intelligence officials of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) “attacked the hospital and kidnapped” Firouzi, the report added.

Zionist Parliament Advances Controversial Bill

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime’s parliament advanced a controversial bill Wednesday that would enable lawmakers to overturn a supreme court decision with a simple majority, a law that critics say would severely erode the regime’s already tarnished image.

The “supreme court override” bill’s approval in a preliminary vote in the Knesset was the latest step by Benjamin Netanyahu’s ruling coalition toward realizing the so-called judicial overhaul that is steaming ahead despite calls for dialogue and consensus

from American Jews and the Zionist president, and weekly protest by tens of thousands.

Netanyahu and his extremist and ultra-Orthodox allies seek to enact a series of laws that would severely restrict the authority of the supreme court, which they believe has had unchecked power for years. Critics say they will erode democratic norms, concentrate power with the ruling coalition in parliament, and make the regime further illiberal.

The Netanyahu administration’s proposed judicial overhaul have drawn fierce opposition and vocal

protest in the occupied territories and abroad.

Earlier this week parliament approved a first reading of bills to give the governing coalition control over judicial appointments and strip the court of judicial review over Basic Laws — the regime’s quasi-constitutional legislation.

A draft bill brought before parliament Wednesday would require a unanimous supreme court decision to amend or strike down a law for violating a basic law, and that parliament would be able to pass laws impervious to su-

preme court review even if it violates a basic law. The preliminary vote passed 61-52.

Each of these bills now faces committee approval before final votes in parliament to pass them into law.

Netanyahu returned to power as prime minister in December at the head of the regime’s most hardline cabinet in its almost 75-year history following the regime’s fifth election in less than four years. The longtime leader’s trial for charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes has dragged on for nearly three years.

Carnage ...

(Continued From Page One)

movement that fights alongside Islamic Jihad, said there were four fighters, one from its own ranks, and hinted at possible reprisals from the Gaza Strip, a territory that it administers.

“The resistance in Gaza is monitoring the escalating crimes conducted by the enemy against our people in the occupied West Bank and is running out of patience,” Abu Ubaida, spokesman for the Hamas armed wing, said on Telegram.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad are sworn to the occupying regime of Israel’s destruction but have in the past observed Egyptian-mediated truces with it. U.S.-sponsored Palestinian statehood talks have been stalled for almost a decade.

Iran...

(Continued From Page One)

to talk about human rights,” he said. “Over the past four decades, the Islamic Republic has proven that it will not give in to foreign blame games and pressure, and accordingly, it will soon announce a reciprocal response to the British regime’s sanctions.”

British officials have made meddling remarks about Iran’s domestic affairs since the outbreak of recent riots across the country sparked by separatist and terrorist groups. London has voiced support for the rioters and hit dozens of Iranian individuals and entities with sanctions over purported rights violations.

On Tuesday, Iran’s Foreign Ministry announced retaliatory sanctions against a number of European Union and Brit-

ish individuals and entities.

The decision came after the Council of the European Union and the UK announced sanctions against scores of Iranian individuals and entities over the Islamic Republic’s response to the foreign-backed riots that erupted in September.

The ministry referred to the reciprocal measures as “counteraction” approved by the Islamic Republic’s “relevant authorities” and authorized by the country’s “counter-sanction mechanisms.”

It specified some of the reasons for the enactment of the reciprocal measures as the EU and UK’s “support for terrorism and terrorist groups” and their “incitement to acts of terror and violence against the Iranian people.”

Iran’s intelligence bodies have found footprints of American and other Western spy agencies in the violent riots. The rioters went on a rampage, brutally attacking security officers and causing massive damage to public property. Dozens of people and security personnel were killed as a result of the violence.

The ministry further denounced the bloc and Britain for their “interference in the Islamic Republic’s internal affairs,” their “propagation of falsehood and misinformation about Iran.” It also condemned them for their cooperation with the American sanctions against the country, which amounted to “economic terrorism.”

According to the ministry, Iran’s reciprocal measures mandate the prohibition of the issuance of visas for those sanctioned and the prohibition of their entry into the Islamic Republic. The measures also order bank accounts and asset freeze against the designated indi-

viduals and entities.

The counter-sanctions list features 15 current and former European officials, including France’s Minister for Gender Equality, Diversity, and Equal Opportunities, Isabelle Lonvis-Rome; French Minister Delegate for Industry, Roland Lescure; President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Josef Schuster; Director at Europe Israel Public Affairs, Alex Benjamin; President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Jamie M. Fly, and head of Germany’s National Command and General Space Operations Division, Major General Michael Traut as well as three German parliamentarians and two European Parliament lawmakers.

It also names 13 European entities, including the European Coalition for Israel, the Center for Information and Documentation Israel, Christians for Israel, the Eurospike arms company, and six German military industry companies.

The list further features eight British individuals, including Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations within the Metropolitan Police Service, Matthew Jonathan Jukes; member of the Board of Directors at The Jewish Chronicle, Alan Jacob, and six military officials.

Ex-Palestinian...

(Continued From Page One)

“I have been in Iran for 42 years and observed the great work of Imam Khomeini and the Iranian people. This great man exploded a major bomb in the world that was more powerful than all nuclear bombs of the world combined. He united

the nation,” he said.

The seasoned envoy deeply valued Iran’s unwavering and constant support of the Palestinian resistance, bringing it up in his speeches often, both in and outside Iran.

In a speech delivered in March 2018 at an event in Tehran, he said the formation of the Axis of Islamic Resistance by Imam Khomeini had proved pivotal in foiling attempts by Westerners to establish a “fake regime” in the occupied territories.

He also lauded the “wise leadership” of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and his unflinching support for the resistance factions in Palestine.

In his message of condolence on Monday, FM Amir-Abdollahian said Zawawi “always fought to safeguard the rights of the Palestinian people, keep alive the Palestinian cause and defend the holy Al-Quds”.

Germany ...

(Continued From Page One)

German citizenship, to death on charges of “corruption on earth” by planning and orchestrating terrorist acts against the Islamic Republic.

Germany also summoned Iran’s charge d’affaires over the verdict, with Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock accusing the Islamic Republic of the “massive violation of the rights of a German citizen.”

In support of the terrorist ringleader, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also condemned Sharmahd’s death sentence and said the verdict was “unacceptable.”

Sharmahd, who holds is also a U.S.