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Official: Western States 'Safe Haven' for Terrorist Groups

TEHRAN - Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi has held a meeting with the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Awa III, and dismissed Western-led charges of supporting terrorism, saying that it is the same Western states that have turned into a safe haven for terrorist groups.

During the meeting, he said the Iranian people are victims of terrorism as 17,000 innocent people have lost their lives in terrorist attacks across the country.

Gharibabadi said the West accuses Iran's of supporting terrorist groups, while the United States overtly assassinated the greatest anti-terror Iranian commander General Qassem Soleimani three years ago.

He noted that the concept of human rights is rooted in monotheistic religions, adding that, "Western countries are trying to impose their own lifestyle on other countries, but we believe that it is necessary to respect various cultures."

The senior Iranian rights official said Islam and other divine religions attach great significance to human dignity.

There are less than 200,000 religious minorities in Iran who enjoy "special rights" and are well-represented in the parliament, he added.

General Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and their companions were assassinated in a U.S. drone strike authorized by former U.S. president Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

Both commanders were highly revered across the Middle East because of their key role in fighting the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

"According to the latest statistics, there are some 400 churches for Christians in Iran, most of them are active, while it is almost impossible to build a mosque in countries that claim to defend human rights," Gharibabadi said.

He emphasized that the majority of Iranian society consists of followers of religious minorities along with Muslims.

Pointing to the West's oppressive sanctions against the Iranian nation, he said, "Iran is an independent country which has never attacked any country or violated the rights of any state, but Western countries have committed gross human rights violation by imposing

(Continued on Page 7)

Iran, Russia Stand United Against Threats, Arrogant Domination

Army Commander.



Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah (R) meets with Commander-in-Chief of Russia's Navy, Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov, in Tehran, on May 15, 2023.

TEHRAN - Deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari in a meeting with Commander-in-Chief of Russia's Navy Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov has said that his country will enhance cooperation with its allies, including Russia, to counter threats posed to regional security by "global arrogance."

In the meeting, Rear Admiral Sayyari urged vigilance to prevent any domination of the global arrogance.

"We do not want to dominate and attack any country, but we stand against any threats and arrogant domination. In this regard, we will strengthen our cooperation and synergy with friendly and allied countries, including Russia," Sayyari said.

"We must certainly be strong to ensure security and peace in the region... Also, we must have unity and synergy, and use each other's experiences in such a way that ... leads to effective deterrence."

The commander also expressed the Iranian Army's readiness to implement joint cooperation projects with Russia in the fields of making mutual visits, improving the quality of military competitions, as well as maritime patrols and exercises, ensuring economic security, taking counter-terrorism measures, conducting maritime search and rescue

operations and trainings, and helping damaged vessels.

He further hailed the capability of Iran's Navy, saying the force has faithful and knowledgeable employees and state-of-the-art surface and subsurface equipment.

Nikolai Yevmenov also met with Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani and called for the promotion of naval cooperation with Iran, expressing readiness to reach bilateral agreements with the Iranian Navy in various fields.

The Russian admiral stressed the significance of increasing ties between the Iranian and Russian naval forces and expressed hope that his trip to Iran would lead to further improvement of cooperation between the two countries' navies.

Yevmenov added that the Russian Navy is ready to reach an agreement with Iran on further promotion of bilateral interaction.

For his part, Irani said the presence of Russian naval forces in three joint drills with Iran and China conveyed a "very important" message to their common enemy.

Back in March, the naval forces of Iran, China and Russia held maritime drills, dubbed "naval security belt combined war game 202," in the Sea of Oman, as the three countries have doubled their efforts to deepen cooperation among their

navies.

Iranian naval forces, together with their Chinese and Russian counterparts, have held several joint war games in recent years with the purpose of improving the security of international maritime trade, exchange of information in naval rescue and relief operations, exchange of operational and tactical experiences, as well as countering piracy and maritime terrorism.

Irani hailed efforts of Russian naval forces to stage joint drills with Iran and China and stressed the importance of forming a joint committee to boost interaction in different sectors, particularly in educational and technical fields.

Iranian naval vessels, he added, have today made voyages to important ports, including Port of St. Petersburg, and circumnavigated the globe.

"Following the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran ... put the appropriate use of the sea on its agenda. After pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden, the Navy developed its powerful presence in international waters ... and even helped many countries."

The Russian admiral also stressed enhanced cooperation between the naval forces of the two countries.

The Iranian and Russian navies enjoy close relations and have staged several joint exercises.

The Holy Qur'an

Had it been a near advantage and a short journey, they would certainly have followed you, but the tedious journey was too long for them; and they swear by Allah:

The Holy Qur'an (9.42)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	12:01
Evening (Maghreb)	19:24
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	04:58
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	03:19

IRGC Busts Daesh-K Network in Iran

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) intelligence forces have disbanded a terror network affiliated with Daesh Khorasan (Daesh-K) in Iran's southern province of Fars.

The IRGC Intelligence Department, in cooperation with Fajr Intelligence Organization of Fars Province, spotted and busted the operational and media network of Daesh-K, an offshoot of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in Afghanistan, and captured its main element in the province.

The ringleader, who was being monitored by IRGC forces for four years, was in charge of recruiting extremist elements in a number of Iranian provinces, including Tehran.

The network has been smashed following a deadly terrorist attack last October on the Shah Cheragh shrine in the southern city of Shiraz, the capital of Fars province. The Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Additional information about the operation to arrest the members of the network will be released soon.

On October 26, 2022, an armed terrorist barged inside the revered holy shrine, killing 15 pilgrims, including women and children, and injuring dozens before being arrested by security forces.

The terrorist was later pronounced dead at a hospital, succumbing to injuries sustained during the attack that sent shockwaves across the country.

A few suspects were immediately nabbed and some two weeks later the Intelligence Ministry announced the arrest of 26 Takfiri terrorists for involvement in the attack.

An Iranian court on March 18 handed out death sentences to two men over their involvement in the terrorist attack.

Judiciary Chief of Fars Province Kazem Moussavi said at the time that the two main culprits of the deadly assault were convicted of assisting in corruption on earth, armed rebellion and acting against national security.

Pakistani President Hails Iran-Saudi Reconciliation

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) -- Pakistani President Arif Alvi has hailed the wisdom of Iran and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic relations, saying the reconciliation and peace agreement reached between the two countries will be recorded in history.

In a Tuesday note, Alvi pointed to the intensification of political tensions in Pakistan and said all Pakistani factions must make a revision in their thoughts in an effort to restore peace and calm to the country.

This is what Iran and Saudi Arabia have carried out and reached great peace and their ideal goals, he noted.

He hailed China's positive role in promoting reconciliation talks between Tehran and Riyadh, saying the two sides' top officials have succeeded in establishing long-lasting peace by reviewing their ideas and making fundamental changes.

The Pakistani president emphasized that the wise and constructive

thoughts of the authorities of Iran and Saudi Arabia have prepared the ground for putting an end to decades of hostility.

On March 10, after several days of intensive negotiations hosted by China, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to resume their diplomatic ties and reopen their embassies.

In a joint statement after signing the agreement, Tehran and Riyadh highlighted the need to respect each others' national sovereignty and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of one another.

They agreed to implement a security cooperation agreement signed in April 2001 and another accord reached in May 1998 to boost economic, commercial, investment, technical, scientific, cultural, sports, and youth affairs cooperation.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Senator Mushahid Hussain said the Muslim world's politics was defined for the past four decades by an ideological foreign policy of Saudi Arabia

(Continued on Page 7)

Spokesman Refutes U.S.' Anti-Iran Comments on Maritime Security

TEHRAN - The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Nasser Kan'ani has dismissed baseless remarks by American officials against Iran about the safety of maritime navigation in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Nasser Kan'ani issued a statement in response to recent allegations by John Kirby, who currently serves as the Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council in the White House.

On May 13, Kirby said the U.S. "will work to bolster" its "defensive posture" in the Persian Gulf after Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy seized two invading foreign oil tankers in the country's territorial waters in the Strait of Hormuz in recent weeks.

Kirby used the oft-repeated refrain that Washington will not allow foreign or regional powers to jeopardize freedom of

navigation through regional waterways.

Responding to Kirby's remarks, Kan'ani said Iran has played the most effective role in ensuring safe naval traffic in the Persian Gulf as well as other regional and international waters, and "has always guaranteed secure passage of ships and other vessels through the Strait of Hormuz."

"The recent measures taken with regard to the two seized ships were due to their violations and taken through the court verdict. The goal was to prevent behaviors and moves that are against international navigation regulations," he added.

The spokesman added that the United States "continues to accuse Iran while its interfering and destructive policies throughout long decades have fomented and exacerbated instability and insecurity in the Persian Gulf region."

"The new accusations leveled against Iran are mere excuses, which are aimed at justifying the continuation and further bolstering of the U.S.' meddling presence in the region," Kan'ani said.

The spokesman noted, "The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the continued presence of foreign military forces in the Persian Gulf waters as a threat against security of marine traffic in this body of water and believes that regional countries are capable of safeguarding peace and security of navigation without any need to the presence of foreigners."

"Contrary to what American officials allege, the U.S. government endangers security of navigation and international trade by resorting to measures that violate the law of the sea and seizing some Iranian oil shipments in the high seas.

(Continued on Page 7)