

Former Palestinian ambassador to Iran Zawawi dies at 85



International Desk

Palestine's former ambassador to Iran, Salah al-Zawawi, passed away at a hospital in Tehran on Monday at the age of 85.

The Palestinian Embassy in Tehran announced the former diplomat's passing in a statement, saying he died of an illness, according to ISNA. Zawawi brought to an end four decades of diplomatic mission, starting in 1980, in the Islamic Republic in early January 2022. He was one of the founding members of the Fatah political party, and the second Palestinian ambassador to Tehran since the victory of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Zawawi had also served as the Palestinian ambassador to Algeria, Brazil, and Kenya. His daughter Salam al-Zawawi is now Palestine's ambassador to Iran. In an address to his commemoration ceremony in Tehran in late February 2022, Zawawi said, "We have a clear slogan which is establishing a Palestinian government from the river to the sea and we accept nothing less than this."

"Israel is a cancerous tumor and needs to be removed from the sacred land of Palestine."

"I have been in Iran for 42 years and observed the great work of [the late founder of the Islamic Republic] 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," added Zawawi.

Minister message

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in a message on Monday expressed his condolences to Zawawi's family and the people of Palestine.

EU pursuing Trump's failed sanctions policy against Iran: **FM**

Iran's foreign minister censured the European Union's new round of sanctions on the Islamic Republic, saying the 27-member bloc is sticking to former US president Donald Trump's "ineffectual" policy of sanctions against Tehran.

In a telephone conversation with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian slammed Brussels' "overused and obsolete" policy regarding Iran, Press TV wrote.

Last month, the EU slapped new sanctions on a number of Iranian officials and organizations over an alleged crackdown on riots across the country. Some EU member states and the European Parliament have even pushed for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) to be listed as a "terrorist organization".

"The behavior of the Eu-

ropean Union in recent months is the continuation of Trump's ineffective Iran policy. It further proves the continuation of dual and unrealistic standards combined with the exploitation of human rights concepts," Amir-Abdollahian said.

He also lashed out at certain European countries for backing anti-Iran groups that sponsor terrorism.

Touching on the interactions between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concerning the issues related to safeguards agreements, the foreign minister noted that Tehran is planning for a visit by IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi and that joint initiatives are on the agenda.

"If the agency acts with a technical and non-political perspective, it is possible to reach a framework

to resolve the issue," he added.

Iran and the IAEA are currently in a dispute triggered by the agency's Israeli-influenced accusations, which were leveled against Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities just as the Islamic Republic and other parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal appeared close to an agreement on reviving the deal. Iran says an agreement on the revival of the nuclear deal hinges on the settlement of safeguards issues between Tehran and the IAEA, and that without settling those issues, resurrecting the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) makes no sense. The negotiations to salvage the JCPOA have been at a standstill since August 2022 due to Washington's insistence on its hard-nosed position of not removing all the sanctions that were imposed



Iranian FM Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (l) and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell

on the Islamic Republic by the Trump administration.

Ukraine conflict

Referring to the Ukraine war, Amir-Abdollahian said the Islamic Republic has always stressed the need for a cease-fire and diplomatic

strategies to resolve the conflict. Iran, he added, believes that respect for other countries' territorial integrity guarantees sustainable peace, including in Ukraine, and has spared no effort to push for truce and peace. Borrell, for his part, referred to Europe's support for Kyiv

and voiced pessimism about the prospects of reaching a cease-fire in the coming weeks or even months. He also expressed hope for the progress made in the cooperation between Iran and the IAEA, underlining the need for keeping up the talks.

Iran categorically rejects Western claim of enriching uranium above 60%



MFA/IR

Iran categorically rejected a report by Western media that it has enriched uranium to levels above 60 percent purity, saying the country's nuclear facilities have never enriched uranium above that level.

The spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi made the remarks in reaction to a report by Bloomberg that claimed "the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is trying to clarify how Iran accumulated uranium enriched to 84 percent purity," according to Press TV.

It added that the IAEA inspectors had found highly-enriched uranium particles "within the network of pipes connecting centrifuges used to separate uranium isotopes".

Speaking to Iran's official IRNA news agency, Kamalvandi said Bloomberg's report was aimed at distorting the realities.

He added that during the enrichment process, the mere existence of individual uranium particles enriched to above 60 percent purity does not mean that uranium is being enriched at levels above 60 percent.

The official was also quoted by Fars News Agency as saying that existence of such particles was a totally normal issue in the course of uranium enrichment and could happen even when the feedstock entering centrifuge cascades decreased momentarily.

"What matters is the final product and that the Islamic Republic of Iran has never embarked on [uranium] en-

richment at a level above 60 percent," Kamalvandi said. The AEOI spokesman added, "The IAEA is well aware that such issues happen during the [nuclear] work. In various cases in the past, different levels of enrichment have been observed and have been accounted for, and this latest issue will be definitely clarified as well." He noted that the IAEA does not usually inform its members of such issues, saying, "Publicizing these issues through [Western] media once again shows that, unfortunately, the IAEA has lost its professional and impartial standing since a long time ago. It intentionally provides Western media with technical information, and without a doubt, this conduct will further discredit this important inter-

national organization." "Committed to cooperation" In remarks at a press conference on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani also rejected the claim, reiterating Iran's commitment to technical cooperation with the IAEA. Kanaani expressed hope that the UN nuclear watchdog will in turn behave professionally toward the country's peaceful nuclear activities.

"The Islamic Republic's technical cooperation with the IAEA is an important principle for our country. In turn, we expect the agency to behave professionally toward Iran's peaceful nuclear activities and adhere to the principles and frameworks of professional and specialized cooperation with member states, including the Is-

lamic Republic," he said. The diplomat also highlighted Iran's adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the safeguards agreements.

"Raising such issues through the media, while they should normally be discussed in technical and specialized contacts and in bilateral meetings, shows that the agency is distancing from its professional behavior and specialized position," Kanaani said.

He added IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi should be held accountable for the leaks of the agency's activities and data to media.

Speaking in an interview with Russia's Sputnik news agency in early February, AEOI President Mohammad Eslami criticized the UN nuclear watchdog for the leakage of information about Iran's nuclear energy program to the opponents of diplomatic efforts aimed at reviving a 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Grossi's gamble on IAEA reputation

This irrational behavior from the agency comes as, concurrently, Grossi has requested, through numerous messages, to travel to Tehran, even though he has not yet received Iran's green-light. The important thing is that Grossi's travel to Iran, although possibly beneficial to him, is useless and in no way tempting for our country. In addition, by the time the trip's outcomes are not known, it remains to be merely a promotional show to achieve Grossi's personal objectives or those of his employers. The Tehran trip would lead

to a win-win situation for Grossi, as should he succeed to soften the Iranian authorities, he could take credit for the achievement, and if not, he would say that despite his trip and meetings with high-ranking Iranian officials, they refused to cooperate. But for Iran, the favorable outcome of Grossi's trip will solely be the closure of the alleged cases or at least an agreement on a solution satisfactory to all parties, enabling them to move toward the closure of the cases. Apparently no such a conclusion has been reached yet in Tehran. The recent behaviors of the IAEA and its Western-ori-

ented director general as well as the leakage of data to the Western media with the aim of pressuring Iran can only be assessed in the framework of the "carrot and stick" policy. The agency seeks to worry Iran about the media hype created by the Americans aimed at passing a stricter anti-Tehran resolution in the Board of Governors on the one hand, and make the country acquiesce to the director general's trip, thus preparing the ground for organizing a new show to lay the blame at Iran's door, on the other. Of course, Iran has no objection to Grossi's visit, as

the country lets the IAEA inspectors in within the framework of the safeguards agreements and the Non-Proliferation Treaty and "for the time being", accepts supervision by the agency within the framework of the agreements. However, if this trip is supposed to have something for the agency and Grossi, it must also produce an outcome of equal importance and value for Iran in return. At the very least, such a concession by the agency could be a suitable solution for the resolution of the agency's claims and removal of this big deadlock in the way of reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Unless these conditions are

prepared, there will be no trip, and Grossi will not be able to catch fish from this muddy water under any circumstances. The world of the politics and international relations is that of give and take, and in case of any failure to achieve the necessary balance between the two sides, no powerful and independent country will be willing to continue the game. Grossi must have learned this lesson by now that the Islamic Republic of Iran will never give in to the West's "carrot and stick" games and the result of continuing them, in addition to losses for all parties, will be Grossi's losing a gamble on the IAEA's reputation and professional status.

Munich conference ...



MASOUD SHAHRESTANI/TASNIM

"The Islamic Republic is one of the most important countries with an undisputed role in deepening and consolidating regional security, and it is among effective countries that helps reinforce international security," he added. "The conference did not invite important countries such as the Islamic Republic [of Iran] and Russia. It means that the conference has given the opportunity, which could be used to raise different multilateral views regarding international order and security, to parties and currents that sought to consolidate unilateralism in the international arena." Kanaani noted that Iran has contributed greatly to regional and European security by fighting terrorist groups such as Daesh.

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