

Iranian warships dock in Rio despite US pressure



Iranian military vessel Makran navigates on the coast of Rio de Janeiro as a Brazilian flag flutters in Copacabana Beach, Brazil, on February 27, 2023.
● REUTERS

Two Iranian warships docked in Rio de Janeiro after Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's government granted permission despite pressure from the United States to bar them. The IRIS Makran and IRIS Dena warships both arrived on Sunday morning, Rio's port authority said in a statement, according to Reuters.

Vice Admiral Carlos Eduardo Horta Arentz, the deputy chief of Brazil's Naval Staff, gave his approval for the ships to dock in Rio between Feb. 26 and March 4, according to a Feb. 23 notice in the official gazette.

The Brazilian Navy authorizes a foreign vessel to dock in Brazil, but only after authorization from the Foreign Ministry, which takes into account the requesting embassy's petition and logistics. On January 28, Rear Admiral Hamzeh Ali Kaviani, the Iranian Navy's second-in-command, had said that the vessels were sailing along Latin America's western shores and were to drop anchor in Rio within a few days.

The presence of the Iranian warships on Brazilian shores continues to irk the United States as it seeks to build closer ties with Lula's administration, which came into office on Jan. 1.

In a Feb. 15 press conference, U.S. Ambassador Elizabeth Bagley urged Brazil not to allow the ships to dock. Brazil had initially delayed docking of the ships as the country's president was flying to Washington to meet with US President Joe Biden.

Iran: US to blame for JCPOA status quo

'Nuclear states believe NPT binding solely for others'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian blamed the US policies and miscalculations for the status quo of the Iran nuclear deal.

Addressing the High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on Tuesday, the top Iranian diplomat said it is possible to take the final steps on the revival of the nuclear agreement through the determination of all parties and within the framework of the negotiations held until now. Iran proved the peaceful nature of its nuclear program to the world by signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany. However, Washington's unilateral withdrawal in May 2018 and its subsequent re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran left the future of the deal in limbo.

Negotiations between the

parties to the deal kicked off in Vienna in April 2021, with the intention of bringing the US back into the deal and putting an end to its "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

The discussions, however, have been at a standstill since August 2022 due to Washington's insistence on not lifting all of the anti-Iranian sanctions and offering the necessary guarantees that it will not exit the agreement again. "Our past experience taught us to become engaged in the new round of negotiations with more care and sensitivity. The few remaining issues could be addressed easily," Amir-Abdollahian said. Iran's nuclear program is fully peaceful and Tehran is determined, as confirmed till now, to remain fully committed to its obligations under the comprehensive safeguards agreement.

Global disarmament
He also pointed to the



Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian speaks during the High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Swiss, on February 28, 2023.
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global disarmament, saying that taking concrete measures for global disarmament is a fundamental necessity.

The Iranian official said that without taking concrete steps toward the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear arms, strengthening international and regional peace and security would not be realistic.

He also expressed regret over the nuclear states' non-compliance with their disarmament obligations. "Despite their unequivocal legal obligations, the nuclear weapon states, have continued the expansion of their nuclear weapons. Regrettably, nuclear weapon states, instead of honoring their disarmament obligations, they have developed and produced new generations and

modernize their nuclear arsenals, that have undermined NPT and threatening international peace and security," Amir-Abdollahian said.

He stressed that the main problem is that some nuclear countries believe that Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is binding solely for non-nuclear weapon states and not for themselves.

EXCLUSIVE

Disarmament regime and new global arms race

Developments affect disarmament debate

The process of disarmament and arms control have always been discussed by actors as a main topic or on the sidelines of their meetings in accordance with international developments. However, whether disarmament is put on the agenda or taken off has been tightly controlled by world powers, especially in the West. The 9/11 attacks were the last incident that turned the issue of arms control into a global discourse. But the US unilateral and warmongering policies, adopted under this pretext, made the world suspicious about the discourse.

Discrimination
Although there are several

treaties on arms control, testing and non-proliferation, disarmament is still more of a pressure tool in the hands of powers, who possess more and more modern weapons, against other actors than a justice-oriented legal regime. Iran's peaceful nuclear program, on the one hand, has become an excuse for mounting political and economic pressure on the country and even launching terrorist attacks against it, and on the other hand, while Israel is not a member of the most important arms control treaties, it is rather increasingly developing technologies for weapons of mass destruction.

Arms technologies

development

Weapons-related technologies, like other fields, are growing even faster and more technically and imperceptibly, and they pose new threats that prompt actors inevitably to take unilateral and immediate measures. In fact, the growth rate of threats is faster than the rate of providing collective and controlling mechanisms. As a matter of fact, there are weapons used by powers that are not known to the world. In the same way, actors constantly ask themselves, how critical and irreparable are the security and technical consequences of committing to pacts and treaties that others do not adhere to? Don't they endanger the lives of their nations with more commit-

ments?

Contradiction in theory and practice

Legal regimes are the products of abstract and idealistic theories, so they are not easily able to overcome systemic realities. It is these systemic realities, friendships and enmities and their complex security calculations that regulate the behavior of parties involved. During the Cold War, one of the most important reasons for the ineffectiveness of the disarmament regime was the arms race between major powers. This is a very important question. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, did the wars end in the past decades when the US presented itself as

the sole global superpower and norm-maker? Wasn't America the initiator of most wars?

Imbalance between commitments and guarantees

Another fact about the disarmament legal regime is that actors in related treaties give commitments that weaken their security against actors that back down on their promises. Meanwhile, there is no guarantee that the above-mentioned legal regimes will be able to compensate for security expenses when committed actors face insecurity. In addition, past experiences have also made actors skeptical about guarantees for fair implementation.

All these reasons have created conflicting views about the desirability of the disarmament system and the relevant legal regime. The fact is that the proliferation of weapons is carried out by the big bearers. They are getting richer and more armed by the day, while the other actors become poorer. However, in this vicious cycle, disarmament debate still comes very handy for the main proliferators including the US and Israel. Pumping billions of dollars of weapons to crisis and conflict areas, including to the war in Ukraine and the Middle East, along with their inconsistent political stances in international conferences, is a clear example of this vicious cycle.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran hails Arabs-Syria rapprochement as positive step

Iran hailed a recent visit by some officials from the Arab states Arab to Syria as a positive step toward Islamic solidarity, emphasizing that dialogue and regional approaches can solve the woes in the region.

"The recent progress in relations between Arab countries and Syria, including the visit by Arab parliamentary delegations to Damascus to express solidarity with Syria following the recent devastating earthquake, in addition to being a realistic approach, is a positive step toward Islamic solidarity," Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani tweeted on Tuesday, Press TV reported. He added that regional

countries will be able to resolve their problems through "dialogue and regional mechanisms" if they act realistically, adopt an independent national stance, and pay no heed to the demands of the hegemonic powers.

The high-profile Arab lawmakers arrived in Damascus on Sunday amid attempts by certain countries, above all Iraq, to restore Syria's membership in the Arab League, more than a decade after it was suspended from the 22-member bloc.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry also arrived in Damascus on Monday in the first such visit by a top Egyptian diplomat since the

foreign-sponsored militancy erupted in Syria more than a decade ago.

In a meeting with President Bashar al-Assad, the top Egyptian diplomat reaffirmed his country's solidarity with Syria and its preparedness to continue supporting Syrians in the aftermath of the devastating February earthquake.

In a meeting with the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union later on Sunday, Assad said, "The delegation's visit to Syria today means a lot to the Syrian people as it indicates the support to the Syrians ... who are exposed as a result of the terrorist war and the repercussions of the earthquake."



Egyptian Foreign Ministry shows Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry (L) talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (R) in Damascus, Syria, on February 27, 2023.
● EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY