

## Iran expels two German diplomats over 'interventionist' actions



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Iran's Foreign Ministry ordered the expulsion of two German diplomats after declaring them "persona non grata" over Berlin's interference in the country's "internal and judicial affairs".

The move came a week after Germany expelled two Iranian diplomats in response to the Islamic Republic sentencing to death the ringleader of a U.S.-based terrorist group accused of carrying out terrorist activities against the people of Iran, Press TV reported.

Nasser Kanaani, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman on Wednesday announced that the two German diplomats had been declared "persona non grata" and ordered to leave over the Berlin government's "irresponsible measures and interference in the internal and judicial affairs" of Iran. "The Islamic Republic of Iran will act decisively against excessive demands," Kanaani said as he pointed to the summoning of the German ambassador to Tehran by the Foreign Ministry's director general of the Western Europe Department to inform him about the decision.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's priority has always been maintaining interaction based on respect, but if some parties intend to ignore the basic standards and national sovereignty of our country, alternative options are inevitable," he added.

Germany's Federal Foreign Office announced in a statement last Wednesday that two employees of the Iranian Embassy in Berlin had been expelled from the European country.

The decision was made after the Iranian Judiciary sentenced Iranian citizen Jamshid Sharmahd, who also holds 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 Iran of the "massive violation of the rights of a German citizen."

Sharmahd, who is also a U.S. 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.

# U.S., EU admit JCPOA still best way to resolve Iran nuclear issue

### Political Desk

Despite many obstacles created by the Europeans and the United States on the way of the revival of the Iran nuclear deal, their officials have admitted that there is no better way to resolve Iran's nuclear issue than the revival of the agreement.

The agreement between Iran and the UK, France, Germany, China, Russia and the U.S. was signed in 2015. Three years later, Donald Trump, the former US president, unilaterally withdrew the US from the agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). One year after Europe failed to fulfill its JCPOA obligations, Tehran reduced its commitments in several stages. Over the past year, talks to revive the agreement have yet yield a result.

Now, a delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency headed by the agency's chief, Rafael Grossi, will visit Tehran. Many are optimistic that the trip could resolve disagreements between Tehran and the IAEA, which will pave the way for the resumption of nuclear ne-

gotiations. However, Western parties to the nuclear talks are creating new obstacles on the way of the revival of the deal by making up new excuses, including the claim of Iran's military aid for Russia's military operation in the Ukraine war and the human rights situation in Iran following the recent riots in the country.

However, increase in Iran's nuclear activities following the Europeans' non-compliance with the JCPOA has caused concerns among the European countries as well as the U.S., and now, while the U.S. officials claim that the JCPOA revival is not on the agenda, they emphasize that there is no other way but to revive the deal. According to Reuters, the U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Colin Kahl has said that Iran has made remarkable progress in its nuclear program.

"Back in 2018, when the previous administration decided to leave the JCPOA it would have taken Iran about 12 months to produce one bomb's worth of fissile material. Now it would take about



12 days," Kahl said. While acknowledging the improvement of Iran's enrichment capacity, the U.S. official sees the revival of the JCPOA as the best option to limit Iran's nuclear program. On the other hand, Enrique Mora, the European Union's coordinator for nuclear talks with Iran, in an interview with the German outlet, Internationale Politik Quarterly, said, "We still think that the JCPOA is the only way to deal with the Iranian nuclear problem, it is the

only way for us. We want to keep the JCPOA on the table, but at the same time we are talking to the Iranians, we are helping the Ukrainians talk to Iranians and others and put an end to drone deliveries. But it is difficult because in Iran there are various power centers, and one is highly interested in the military relationship with Russia. The situation is really bad. We are keeping all channels open, but it is difficult." Tehran has repeatedly rejected claims over Iran's

drone shipment to Russia. In a meeting with the President of the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian emphasized that there is no evidence for that claim. In any case, the West's admission can be a positive sign for the resumption of nuclear talks. The expected trip by the IAEA director general to Tehran can also help the revival of the agreement. Unless the U.S. and E3 intend to not commit to what they say.

Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) Enrique Mora and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani wait for the start of a meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission in Vienna, Austria, on December 3, 2021. ● REUTERS

## Solutions for ending JCPOA impasse



Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh  
International affairs expert

### EXCLUSIVE

But these diplomatic exchanges are not enough

alone to revive the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. I believe that a three-part approach should be adopted in Iran's domestic and foreign policies.

The first part of this approach should, which is an internal solution, is to resolve differences and

strengthen unity inside the country. Internal differences will have negative impact on the country's foreign policy. One of the good measures taken to strengthen internal unity was the amnesty recently approved by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khomeini for a large number of prisoners. The more such decisions will definitely be effective in the country's foreign policy.

The second part, which is also related to the internal affairs, is to preserve economic stability inside the country. Economic in-

stability, like internal disputes, is the Achilles heel of the foreign policy. The officials should use the capabilities of the independent experts to calm the country's economic situation.

Stabilizing the economic situation and strengthening national unity can definitely pave the way for strong presence of Iranian diplomats at the negotiating table.

However, the third part of the approach is related to the country's foreign policy. An enmity against Iran has been formed abroad, which is the result of the

public opinion's pressure on Western governments, the weakness of Iranian representations abroad, and of course, the creation of anti-Islamic Republic atmosphere by its opponents.

It seems that Iran has paid a lot for the claims levelled by the Europeans over a military cooperation with Russia against Ukraine. Diplomatic trips and face-to-face talks with foreign representatives and delegations could soften this hostile atmosphere.

For example, following clear stances adopted by

the Iranian officials regarding the issue of military aid for Russia, signs of adjustment are seen in positions taken by the foreign countries towards Tehran. Iran's announcement of neutrality in the Ukraine war, the meeting of Iranian and Ukrainian delegations in Oman as well as Iran's stance announced by the Iranian foreign minister in Geneva are positive and constructive.

Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have unresolved differences, which is an obstacle to the revival of the nu-

clear agreement. Although I believe that IAEA chief Rafael Grossi adopts more political approaches than the former IAEA chiefs, Tehran should maintain its relations with the UN agency to the extent that be able to remove the ambiguities and accusations. For instance, a recent decision by Iran to allow the agency's inspectors to carry out their investigations immediately after claims of uranium up to 84% purity was a good one.

Therefore, in my opinion, Iran can overcome the current situation by adopting these three approaches.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran president orders probe into poisoning of schoolgirls

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi instructed the interior minister to investigate reports of student poisonings in some schools, citing concerns at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

"Following up and quickly investigating this matter is of utmost importance," Raeisi said, adding that regular updates on the situation should be provided to ease the families' worries, Tas-

nim News Agency reported.

Raeisi emphasized that the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Intelligence, and other relevant agencies must work with the interior minister to address the issue. He also stressed that any dissemination of information must go through the Interior Ministry.

The cause and number of cases in the poisoning of schoolgirls in several Iranian cities remain unknown.



● TABNAK