

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran FM
condemns
Israel's
strikes
against Syria

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (L) and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad meet in Damascus on March 9, 2023.
● SANA

The Iranian foreign minister condemned the Israeli regime's repeated acts of aggression against Syria in the strongest terms, saying the strikes bespeak the regime's savage nature.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who was on a two-day visit to Syria, made the remarks on Thursday in a meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Press TV wrote. The Iranian official singled out the regime's most recent airstrike against an international airport in the northwestern city of Aleppo, saying the attack indicated the regime's aggressive and inhumane nature.

He added that the strike also reflected the regime's anxiety over the change that has affected the political equation in Syria – apparently referring to regional countries' racing to restore their relations with the Arab country – as well as Tel Aviv's endeavor to deflect attention from its own predicaments.

The foreign minister considered the regional rapprochement drive to be a practical development and a positive step down the path of Islamic unity. Amir-Abdollahian reiterated Iran's solidarity and sympathy with the Syrian government and nation over the devastating earthquake that hit the Arab country and neighboring Türkiye last month killing more than 52,000 people on both sides of the border.

He further conveyed Iran's assertion concerning the need for the elimination of the sanctions by the United States and its Western allies on Syria toward facilitation of aid operations that center on the quake-hit nation.

For his part, Assad expressed his gratitude toward the Islamic Republic over its provision of support for the Syrian nation in the wake of the temblor and thanked Amir-Abdollahian for his earlier visit to quake-hit areas in Syria.

The Syrian head of state also laid emphasis on the need for further development of his country's relations with Iran, defining the ties as strategic and in favor of regional stability and security.

Iran, Saudi Arabia agree to resume diplomatic ties in two months



● IRNA

Iran and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement in the Chinese capital of Beijing to restore their diplomatic relations and reopen embassies and missions, seven years after their ties were broken off over several issues. The agreement was struck on Friday after several days of intensive negotiations between Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani and his Saudi counterpart in Beijing. It was officially announced in a joint statement by Iran, Saudi Arabia and China, Press TV reported. The statement was inked by Shamkhani, Musaid Al Aiban, Saudi Arabia's national security adviser, and

Wang Yi, the director of the Office of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chinese Communist Party. Following talks between Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing in February, Shamkhani has held intensive talks with his Saudi counterpart in Beijing since Monday to find a final solution to the issues between Tehran and Riyadh.

"As a result of the talks, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia agreed to resume diplomatic relations and reopen embassies and [diplomatic] missions within two months," the joint statement said. It added that Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, will meet to "implement this decision and make the necessary arrangements for the exchange of ambassadors".

According to the statement, Iran and Saudi Arabia highlighted the need to respect each other's national sovereignty and refrain from interfering in one another's internal affairs.

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, it said. Iran, Saudi Arabia and China expressed their firm determination to make their utmost efforts to promote regional and international peace and

security, it emphasized.

The statement said delegations from Iran and Saudi Arabia, led by Shamkhani and Aiban, held several meetings over the past five days following the Chinese president's support for the expansion of ties between Tehran and Riyadh based on the principle of good neighborliness and his efforts to host meetings between top Iranian and Saudi officials.

The talks between Shamkhani and Aiban were also held as a result of the keenness of Tehran and Riyadh to resolve differences through dialogue and diplomacy based on fraternal ties and both sides' adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Charter and international rules and principles, it added.

Iran and Saudi Arabia also thanked efforts by Iraq and Oman to host the talks between the two sides in 2021 and 2022, the statement noted.

Speaking after signing the agreement, Shamkhani said the negotiations between the two countries were "frank, transparent, and comprehensive".

"Clearing up the misunderstandings and looking to the future in Tehran-Riyadh relations will definitely lead to the development of regional stability and security and the increase of cooperation between the countries of the Persian Gulf and the Islamic world to manage the existing challenges," he said.

Shamkhani on Friday held a phone call with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani and thanked Baghdad for hosting five rounds of fence-mending talks between Tehran and Riyadh since April 2021, ISNA reported. He made the phone call prior to announcing the Tehran-Riyadh agreement, and described Baghdad's efforts toward the rapprochement as very valuable.

FM tweet

In a post on his Twitter account on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said the reconciliation between Tehran and Riyadh is going to endow the regional and Muslim nations with enormous capacities, according to Tasnim News Agency. He added, "The return to normal of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia will provide great capacities for the two countries, the region, and the Islamic world."

Amir-Abdollahian also underlined that the administration of Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi focuses on good neighborliness as a key point in its foreign policy and sticks to the right path vigorously.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry is actively arranging to take further regional steps, he noted. Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with Iran in January 2016 after Iranian protesters, enraged by the execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr by the Saudi government, stormed its embassy in Tehran.

Envoy: Azerbaijan won't let airports be used against Iran



● IRNA

Political Desk

Azerbaijan's ambassador to the occupied Pal-

estinian territories said on Friday his country's airports will under no circumstances be used for refueling fighter jets aiming to attack Iran.

Mukhtar Mammadov made the remark in an interview with The Jerusalem Post, dismissing foreign media reports cited by Haaretz earlier this month that Azerbaijan had "prepared an airfield meant to assist Israel in case it decides to attack Iranian nuclear sites, or had allowed the Mossad to set up a branch in Azerbaijan to monitor what is happening in Iran," IRNA reported.

He stressed that Baku will not let the Israeli army to use Azerbaijan as a refueling base in case of attacking Iran.

The Azerbaijani envoy also rejected the claim that Baku had allowed the Israeli intelligence service to set up a branch in Azerbaijan to monitor what is happening in Iran.

He emphasized that Azerbaijan has, from the very beginning, announced that it will not interfere in other countries' internal affairs and will not allow its territory to be used for operations against other states.

New Horizon
for Tehran-Riyadh Relations

The successful experience of resolving disputes through dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia over the past two years is crucial not only for the political, security, and economic spheres of both countries, but also for the entire Middle East. It will open up new horizons for Tehran, Riyadh, and the region as a whole. The resumption of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia will undoubtedly have positive impacts on the economic, political, and security relations of the entire region. One of the most significant implications is that other extra-regional countries, especially Israel, can no longer exploit the differences between Tehran and Riyadh. At the same time, the region will be better equipped to address crises through internal cooperation.

Furthermore, some Persian Gulf states align their foreign policies with Saudi Arabia. With the normalization of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, it is expected that the relations of those countries with Tehran will also improve.

In conclusion, the reopening of embassies between Iran and Saudi Arabia marks the beginning of a new chapter in their relationship, with enormous potential for positive impacts throughout the region.

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Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran says will purchase Russian Su-35 fighter jets

Political Desk

Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva told Russian news agency Sputnik that Tehran has agreed to the purchase of Su-35 fighter jets from Russia.

The Iranian mission added the Su-35 fighter jets are technically acceptable to Iran and thus, after October 2020 and the end of Iran's restrictions on conventional weapons purchases (UN Resolution 2231), Iran finalized the deal to buy them.

According to the mission, following the end of the Iraqi-imposed war in 1988, Iran asked a bunch of countries to sell fighter jets, and Russia said it was open to selling. The mission added no details will be published about the issue as it is classified.

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● TASNIM

Earlier media reports cited military experts as saying that Iran will soon receive 24 of the fourth-generation twin-engine, super-maneuverable Su-35 fighter jets that are primarily used for air superiority missions.

Iran and Russia have signed major deals in recent months to boost their economic, trade, energy and military cooperation.