

Iran calls on int'l community to fight Islamophobia



● IRNA

Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations strongly condemned any violence against persons based on their religions or beliefs, stating that the time has come for the international community to combat Islamophobia and take actions against hatred toward Muslims, who constitute a large portion of the world's population.

Amir Saeed Iravani made the plea at a UN General Assembly event on Friday in commemoration of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, which takes place on March 15 every year, Press TV reported.

"Today's meeting represents the strong determination of the participants to address the issue of Islamophobia, including hatred, discrimination, terrorist attacks and violence against Muslims and their religious principles, beliefs and rituals," the senior Iranian diplomat stated.

"Currently, the world continues to witness the relentless aggression of the occupying Zionist regime against Al-Quds and Muslims across the occupied Palestinian territories. Moreover, the Holy Qur'an is desecrated in some European countries under the pretext of freedom of expression," he said. "Over the past few decades, we have seen a wide network of media outlets, which, under the guise of news dissemination, have established a hostile and offensive atmosphere against Muslims in violation of their human rights," Iravani added.

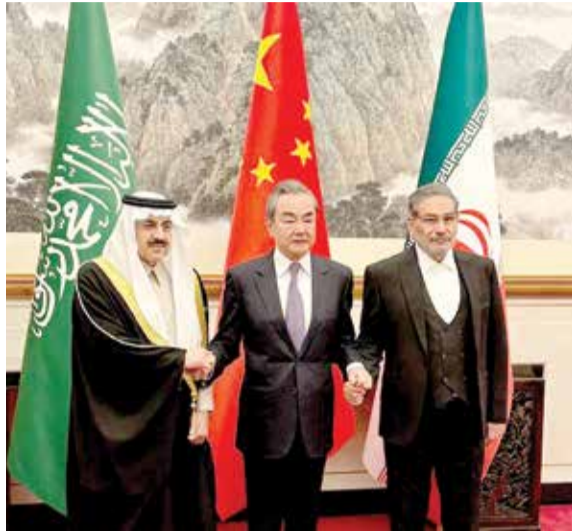
The Iranian diplomat said the time has come for the international community, especially world bodies and the countries calling themselves advocates of human rights, to fight against hatred against Muslims, who constitute a large portion of the world's population.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns any violence against persons based on their belief and religion, and expresses sympathy with the victims of Islamophobic attacks anywhere in the world.

"It also underscores the importance of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia in drawing attention to the culture of tolerance and peace on the basis of respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs at all levels," Iravani noted.

On March 15, 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 76/254, designating March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

World welcomes Iran-Saudi detente as Israel feels 'fatal blow'



Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani (R), Saudi Arabia's National Security Adviser Musaid Al Aiban (L), and Director of the Office of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chinese Communist Party Wang Yi (C) pose for a photo while holding each other's hands in a ceremony in Beijing on March 10, 2023 to sign a joint statement on restoration of ties between Tehran and Riyadh.

● TWITTER/SPA REGION

Various countries welcomed the restoration of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, while the Zionist regime seems to view the development as a "fatal blow" to its regional coalition building against the Islamic Republic.

After several days of intensive negotiations hosted by China, Iran and Saudi Arabia finally clinched a deal on Friday to restore diplomatic relations and reopen embassies, seven years after ties were severed over several issues, Press TV wrote.

The important development soon became a hot topic in Iranian, regional as well as international media, drawing reactions from inside the country as well as other states. "The return to normal relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia provides both countries, the region and the Muslim world with great capacities," Iranian Foreign

Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who is set to soon meet his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud to make the necessary arrangements, wrote in a post on his Twitter account.

"The good neighborliness policy, as the key axis of the Iranian government's foreign policy, is strongly moving in the right direction and the diplomatic apparatus is actively behind the preparation of more regional steps," he said. The Iranian foreign minister also held separate phone conversations with his Omani, Iraqi, and Qatari counterparts who embraced the resumption of ties.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also hailed the agreement in a tweet, describing it as an important step toward stability in the region and the Persian Gulf as well as political and economic development through regional cooperation. The Iranian government's spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi also wrote in a tweet that West Asia's security and economy are "ensured and constructed" by its governments, without foreign interference. He said the "historic agreement" between Iran and Saudi Arabia in China following rounds of all-Asian negotiations will change regional relations.

'Dialogue eyed'

Saudi National Security Adviser Musaid Al Aiban, who negotiated the agreement with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Sham-

khani, said that Riyadh "welcomes the initiative of His Excellency President Xi Jinping, based on the Kingdom's consistent and continuous approach since its establishment in adhering to the principles of good neighborliness."

He said Saudi Arabia takes "everything that would enhance security and stability in the region and the world," while "adopting the principle of dialogue and diplomacy to resolve differences."

"While we value what we have reached, we hope that we would continue the constructive dialogue in accordance with the pillars and foundations included in the agreement, expressing our appreciation for China's continued positive role in this regard."

'Victory for dialogue'

China's top diplomat Wang Yi praised the agreement as "a victory for dialogue, a victory for peace, offering major good news at a time of much turbulence in the world."

China will continue to play a constructive role in handling hotspot issues in the world and demonstrate its responsibility as a major nation, Wang said.

"The world is not just limited to the Ukraine issue."

Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed welcomed on Saturday the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran as an "important step toward stability and prosperity" in the region.

EU statement

The European Union also

welcomed the normalization of Tehran-Riyadh ties in a statement, stressing that it can contribute to the stability in the entire region, ISNA reported. The statement added the bloc is awaiting the implementation of the agreement, saying the EU appreciates diplomatic efforts that led to the important step.

Hezbollah reaction

Addressing a local event on Friday, Secretary General of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the agreement will be "to the benefit" of the region.

"The rapprochement of Iran and Saudi Arabia proceeds in its normal path and can open new horizons for the region and Lebanon," he said.

Türkiye also welcomed the new development in a statement.

De-escalation hailed

In its first reaction, the United States claimed that it embraces "de-escalation" in West Asia.

"Generally speaking, we welcome any efforts to help end the war in Yemen and de-escalate tensions in the Middle East region. De-escalation and diplomacy together with deterrence are key pillars of the policy President [Joe] Biden outlined during his visit to the region last year," a White House National Security Council spokesperson told Reuters.

Ansarullah comment

Mohammed Abdulsalam, the Yemeni Ansarullah resistance movement's chief negotiator, said the region is in need of resumption of "normal ties" between its countries.

"The region needs the resumption of normal ties between its countries for the Islamic nation to reclaim its lost security as a result of foreign, especially American-Zionist, interferences," he tweeted. Foreign interference, he said, has taken advantage of differences in the region and used Iranophobia to wage aggression on Yemen. The rapprochement deal was also hailed by Syria, Tunisia, Pakistan, Afghanistan caretaker government Taliban and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement.

'Dangerous development'

Meanwhile, the Israeli regime did not seem to take the development so well. Former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett called the agreement a "political victory" for Iran and a "serious and dangerous development for Israel".

"This delivers a fatal blow to efforts to build a regional coalition against Iran," he said. Another former Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid also described the reconciliation deal as a dangerous development that strips Israel of its regional defensive wall.

The agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran reflects the complete and dangerous failure of Israel's foreign policy, Lapid said.

Iran delegation in Bahrain to attend parliamentary conference

A group of Iranian legislators visited Bahrain to participate in an international parliamentary conference in Manama, amid speculations that the Persian Gulf nation might consider following Saudi Arabia's lead in restoring diplomatic relations with Tehran.

Abbas Golru, a member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee in the Iranian Parliament, wrote in a post published on his Twitter page that he and two other Iranian parliamentarians arrived in the Bahrain capital on Friday to take part in the

146th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, which is taking place from March 11 to 15, Press TV reported.

He noted that the Iranian parliamentary delegation was warmly received by Mamdouh Abbas Ahmed al-Saleh, a member of the

Council of Representatives of Bahrain, upon arrival at Bahrain International Airport.

"There exists bright prospects for [bilateral] relations between the two countries in the future," Golru noted. Following days of intensive talks in Beijing, Iran and



An Iranian parliamentary delegation is received by Mamdouh Abbas Ahmed al-Saleh, a member of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, (2nd R), upon arrival at Bahrain International Airport, Manama, on March 10, 2023.

● TWITTER

Saudi Arabia agreed on Friday to resume their diplomatic relations and reopen

their embassies and diplomatic missions within the next two months.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Positive changes ...

Furthermore, the United States is also grappling with a stalemate in the region, having failed to settle the ongoing crises in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. Despite its considerable influence and power in the region, America has been unable to overcome these challenges, indicating a need for a shift in its approach to the region.

Saudi Arabia, too, has realized that it needs to change its regional policies and reach out to Iran, a move that the US has also endorsed. Contrary to some analyses suggesting a shift away from the West toward the East, however, the United States is still the main factor when it comes to the shape and direction of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy. The recent agreement between Tehran and Riyadh was reached with Washington's blessing. That said, China and Russia have also had an impact, though they fail to be in the driver's seat

in regards to the kingdom's foreign policies. The normalization of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia will undoubtedly usher in positive changes in the region, with the end of the war in Yemen being a possible first step. We can also expect changes in terms of the policies of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council toward Iran and the region, as well as developments in Lebanon and Syria. Owing to these auspicious developments, it's not a surprise that the majority of nations in the region have embraced the accord between Tehran and Riyadh. The regional nations recognize that the abatement of animosity between these two influential powers will result in a mitigation of tensions throughout the entire region. These countries have borne the brunt of the deterioration of ties between Tehran and Riyadh, and, thus, it is only natural to greet this significant milestone with open arms. While Iran and Saudi Arabia have different strategies, they can make changes in tactics to secure their common interests.

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