

Iran's Supreme Court upholds death penalty for terrorist ringleader



IRNA - Iran's Supreme Court confirmed the death penalty on Wednesday for Jamshid Sharmahd, an Iranian-German national terrorist ringleader. After an initial court sentenced him on February 21 to be executed, Sharmahd appealed to the Supreme Court.

Iran's Supreme Court has confirmed the death sentence for Sharmahd due to his involvement in terrorism.

Sharmahd was the head of a terrorist group, known as Tondar, which is based in the United States.

Sharmahd, who guided armed sabotage acts against Iran from the U.S., was arrested in complicated operations by the Iranian security forces in August 2020.

Tondar, or the Kingdom Assembly of Iran, also known as Soldiers of the Kingdom Assembly of Iran, is an armed monarchist terrorist group seeking to overthrow the ruling establishment and restore the monarchy in Iran.

Tondar claimed responsibility for the 2008 Shiraz explosion at the Hosseiniyeh Seyed al-Shohada, in which 14 people, including children, were killed and 215 others were injured.

Iranian court finds U.S. guilty in 2017 attacks in Tehran

IRNA - A court in Iran has ruled that the U.S. government, as well as some American institutions and officials, must pay some \$312 million in damages to families of the victims of 2017 terrorist attacks in Tehran.

According to a Wednesday statement by the Iranian Judiciary's International Affairs and Human Rights Department, the 55th branch of the Tehran Court of Justice arrived at the verdict within the framework of taking reciprocal action against the U.S. government, based on the legal actions taken by the families of the victims.

Under the ruling, the U.S. government, as well as some American institutions and officials, must pay \$312.95 million as "material, spiritual and punitive damages" to families of the victims.

Iran FM: Ideas on JCPOA revival were proposed

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who has begun a Middle East tour, told the press on Wednesday in Muscat, Oman, that one of the issues Iran and Oman agreed on during his trip was that, considering the geopolitical position of Iran in the issue of transit, the Ashgabat transit agreement, which begins from Oman and extends through Iran to Central Asia, must be implemented as soon as possible. "We have made great progress in the field of energy and our cooperation is growing. Also, excellent things have happened in

the field of trade, economy and investment. We hope that we will be able to complete these projects during the visit of the Sultan of Oman to Tehran. Of course, our colleagues will prepare documents for signing during the impending trip," Iran's foreign minister added. He then reminded the press that using the opportunity regarding some regional issues, including the situation in Yemen, the need to speed up the lifting of the complete human blockade of Yemen, as well as the establishment of a permanent cease-fire... these are among the issues on which the Yemeni authorities always focus.

"Oman is a center for discussions on this issue, including discussions between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Ansarallah and the Yemeni authorities, which have been held in Muscat recently," he said. Concurrently, Amir-Abdollahian added, he had talks with his Omani counterpart regarding the situation in Ukraine and some international issues. "Oman is always interested in bringing the sanctions-removal talks (also known as talks to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal) to a favorable conclusion. There were ideas in this regard, and we received the proposed ideas."

In an interview with Bar-dasht-e-Aval magazine published on Wednesday, Amir-Abdollahian said that the United States has adopted hostile policies since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, but Iran's policy regarding the U.S. might change if a U.S. government rises to power that doesn't want to take advantage of Iran. "Our policy regarding the U.S. is clear. But suppose that one day officials who don't look at countries with a dominating attitude come to power in the U.S. and don't want to take advantage of Iran. Then we get into the phase of interaction and



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mutual benefits, and our policy will be different," the foreign minister elaborated.

Iranian MP: Tehran-Riyadh ties fast-thawing

It is also ready to cooperate with Islamic states. In fact, the Islamic Republic's insistence on creating harmony between the influential Muslim countries has been the basis for re-establishing Tehran-Riyadh ties.

"This direction that Tehran is taking marks the new chapter of Iran-Saudi relations, and we are trying to strengthen the unity of the Muslim world," Moqtadaei said.

The high-ranking member of Iran's parliament pointed out

that during the negotiations with the Saudis, Iran tried to make the highest level of bilateral cooperation possible.

"The Muslim world expects Iran to support them with its policies," he stated.

After holding several rounds of negotiations in Baghdad and China, Moqtadaei noted, reopening embassies in Tehran and Riyadh is now being pursued.

The MP said that such cooperation can provide suitable platforms in various national, regional, and international arenas

for both sides as well as other countries in the region.

"Meanwhile, we have invited high-ranking Saudi officials to visit Tehran, and they have made a similar invitation to our officials," he continued, concluding that the relationship between the two countries is considered to be growing and positive.

Moqtadaei sees the multilateral capabilities and capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a strong motivation for countries to expand their relations with Iran, adding that "now, all

countries including regional and Western states acknowledge that Iran is an important and influential country for regional and global relations".

Accordingly, he stated, countries that seek to influence international equations in order to advance their goals cannot ignore the key role of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"As such, the factors that helped the negotiations between the two countries take place include the necessity that the Saudis see in tackling the many challenges that

Saudi Arabia is facing in the international and regional arenas as well as the role that Iran can play in this regard," the official said.

Moqtadaei added that the policy of developing neighborly relations, which was adopted by the Iranian government and parliament, has also been effective in opening a new chapter in Iran-Saudi relations.

"At present, all of these factors have contributed to the increasing unity that we are seeing among the Muslim countries in the region," he concluded.

Cooperation between Tehran and Astana accelerating

The main part of trade relations between the two countries has been at the state level, but in the last couple of years, efforts have been made to make the private sector more active in trade relations.

The Central Asian countries have a mainly single-product economy, and the economy of Kazakhstan is based on energy. The agriculture and grain sector is also important in this country. In

addition to energy and agriculture, the issue of transit, both passenger and goods, is one of the other fields of cooperation between Tehran and Astana.

Kazakhstan is looking for various ways to export its energy and other goods, while Iran is one of the communication channels for Kazakhstan's exports. In the same framework, the Kazakhstan-Iran oil swap deal was signed between the two countries last year.

Joint cooperation to establish security in the region, cooperation in the form of joint regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union, and sharing interests in the Caspian Sea are among other indicators that necessitate boosting political, security and economic cooperation between Tehran and Astana.

A year ago, during President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's

visit to Iran, nine cooperation documents were signed in different sectors between the two presidents. A few months later, Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi traveled to Kazakhstan to participate in the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Both countries are determined to increase their trade level to three billion dollars.

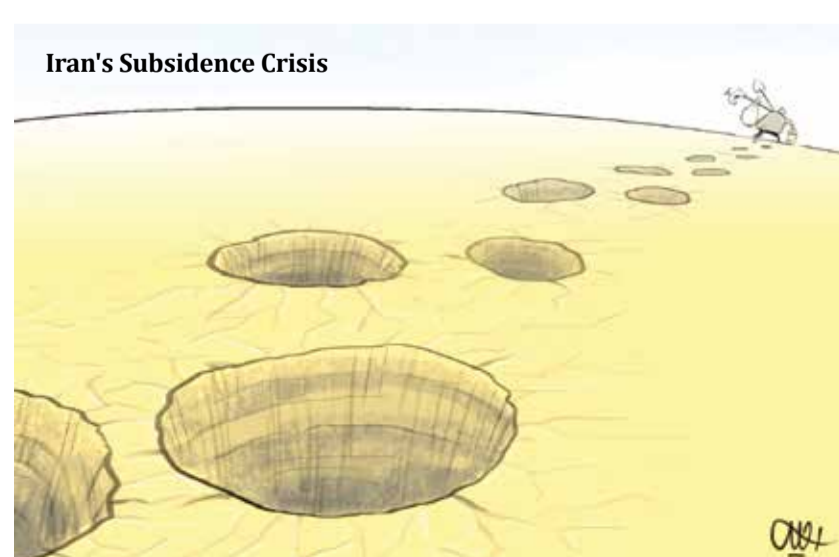
The Kazakh premier's visit to Tehran and his meetings

with Iranian authorities will definitely be the basis for speeding up the implementation of cooperation documents and developing the level of collaboration between the two countries. It seems that both the regional conditions and the determination between the two countries sets the mood to improve the level of relations between Iran and Kazakhstan and make better use of the existing capacities to meet each other's needs.



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber (L) shaking hands with Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov in Tehran on April 26, 2023. ● AKBAR TAVAKOLI/IRNA

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Cartoonist



Iran's new envoy to Syria submits credentials to Assad

International Desk

Hossein Akbari, Iran's new ambassador to Syria submitted his credentials to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad as extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Syrian Arab Republic. The credentials of the Iranian ambassador were accepted in the presence of Foreign and Expatriates Minister, Faisal Mekdad, and Minister of Presidential Affairs Mansour Azam.

Akbari had previously served as Iran's envoy to

Libya. He replaced Mehdi Sobhani as Tehran's envoy to Damascus while Sobhani was in his mission. Sobhani was Iran's ambassador to Syria for two years. Envoys usually serve at least three years in a country. Sobhani's mission in Syria was terminated, as he is scheduled to be assigned to Armenia soon. As Sobhani is a veteran diplomat, his assignment to Armenia has sparked various debates among Iranian political analysts, as they said it indicates a shift of strategy in Iran's



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approach towards the conflicts in South Caucasus. Sobhani will replace Abbas Badakhshan as Iran's new envoy to Armenia. He had received a medal of merit from Bashar Assad for his efforts to bring Iran and Syria's views closer.