

FATF yet to close door on Iran despite blacklist stay: *Official*



Economy Desk

The head of Iran's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) delegation said the global watchdog has not shut the door on Iran, after the country remained on the global watchdog's blacklist.

Hadi Khani, the deputy finance minister, emphasized on Saturday that recent engagements mark the start of a new phase of technical and legal dialogue aimed at resolving the country's long-standing compliance challenges, IRNA reported.

Iran's accession to key international anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing conventions marks the beginning of engagement with the FATF, not an exit from

the global watchdog's blacklist, Khani said.

Despite Iran's approval of the Palermo Convention in May and its official accession to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) on October 21, the country remains on the list, prompting commentary from experts.

"The country's case with FATF is now on a proper technical and legal track and will be pursued vigorously until the expected results are achieved," Khani said.

"Approval of the Palermo Convention and the CFT does not equate to leaving the blacklist. Rather, the country's interactions to address long-standing FATF challenges have only just

begun and are expanding day by day," he added.

Iran attended the FATF meetings in Paris (October 22-24) for the first time in six years as it tries to get off a global financial blacklist.

The FATF continues to list Iran, alongside North Korea and Myanmar, as a "high-risk jurisdiction subject to a Call for Action" due to what it claims to be "significant deficiencies" in its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT) frameworks.

While the FATF acknowledged the country's re-engagement with it to address deficiencies in its AML/CFT regime, it claimed that the country has failed to address the majority of the action plan it laid out to

counter such "illicit" activities since 2016.

FATF accepts strength of Iran's domestic laws

Khani emphasized that the Palermo Convention, one of the 41 items on Iran's FATF action plan, was the main topic at the recent FATF meeting, as the CFT had been ratified after the reporting deadline.

"Because Iran ratified the CFT after the reporting deadline, only the Palermo Convention was discussed at the recent FATF meeting."

"Regarding Iran's conditions on this convention, aside from one clause requiring further legal review, we presented documentation showing that our domestic laws are stronger

than those under Palermo — a position FATF accepted. Bilateral technical sessions will continue," he said.

The statement by the task force said, "Iran will remain on the FATF High Risk Jurisdictions Subject to a Call for Action statement until the full Action Plan has been completed. As the FATF previously stated, should Iran ratify and implement the Palermo and Terrorist Financing Conventions, in line with the FATF standards." Iran's efforts to exit the FATF blacklist began roughly a year ago, after 14 of the past 18 years during which the country's economy and trade — even with allied nations — were affected by FATF restrictions.

Tehran to help Dushanbe develop capital market, launch new exchanges



Economy Desk

Iran and Tajikistan agreed on Saturday to expand cooperation in developing the latter's capital market and establishing new exchanges, Mehr news agency reported.

Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) expressed readiness to assist Tajikistan in setting up commodity exchanges and developing commodity-backed securities, the SEO chief said during a meeting with Tajikistan's minister of finance in Dushanbe.

"With nearly 60 years of experience in the securities market and over 20 years in commodity exchanges, the organization is ready to help establish commodity exchanges and implement commodity-backed securities in Tajikistan, sharing its expertise with the country," Hojatollah Seyyedi said.

He expressed hope that the meeting would mark "the beginning of deeper cooperation between the two countries to develop capital markets."

Both sides called for stronger collaboration in capital market development.

Tajik Finance Minister Faiziddin Qahhorzoda said that expanding cooperation with countries around the world is a priority in Tajikistan's economic policy. "We already have broad economic ties with Iran, but we believe these relations should be further strengthened and taken to a higher level," he said.

Highlighting Tajikistan's steady economic growth over the past decade, Qahhorzoda added, "The country's economic growth has been stable in recent years, and we seek closer cooperation with Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization to develop the capital market and establish new exchanges in Tajikistan."

Tajikistan has experienced robust economic growth over the past decade, averaging above 7.1% annually according to the World Bank. In 2024 the economy expanded by 8.4% year-on-year, driven by strong remittance inflows and rising domestic demand.

Iran part of ...

What role have China and Russia played in countering the threats arising from the activation of the snapback mechanism against Iran? Have they increased their security and trade commitments toward Tehran?

The snapback mechanism is a curious development in that it has effectively broken the consensus. Both Russia and China, as permanent Security Council members, have openly declared the move illegal and their support is immensely significant.

Even if that backing were not at legal level, the moral and diplomatic support of Moscow and Beijing has already taken the sting out of the snapback process. Both countries are major trading partners of Iran. By refusing to recog-

nize the mechanism, they reduce its practical impact.

According to a statement by Iran's Foreign Ministry, more than 100 countries have expressed opposition or legal noncompliance with the mechanism, a stance that would have been impossible without the backing of two permanent Security Council members. Moreover, should any new resolution be proposed under the snapback framework, China and Russia can exercise their veto.

They have also clarified that the UN is not obliged to enforce the measure, which is a major development, particularly with China taking the lead on this stance.

However, it would be simplistic to assume that China, whose long-term

interests lie in avoiding major global tensions, would sacrifice its strategic priorities for Iran or even for Russia. Beijing's overarching goal is to sustain its current economic growth rate around five to six percent and to stay away from direct confrontation with the US. Still, helping Iran avoid another war in the Persian Gulf fits within China's strategic interests. After all, a large-scale conflict would endanger global energy stability, something Beijing can ill afford.

What steps have China and Russia taken to safeguard Iran's energy security and trade routes?

The mere fact that China continues to buy Iranian oil shows its unwillingness to bow to US and UN sanctions.

It also gives Beijing a bargaining chip in its trade talks with Washington. Just last week, Iranian oil tankers, for the first time in a long while, were sailing toward China with their transmitters switched on.

China's refusal to recognize the sanctions means that some of its second-tier refineries can continue purchasing Iranian crude, though with discounts. Still, that constitutes a vital form of support.

According to unofficial reports, there has also been military cooperation, though the extent of it remains unclear. Yet such reports have been consistently corroborated by multiple informal sources.

Could the 12-day war pave the way for

fundamental changes in the trilateral relationship among Iran, China, and Russia?

It would be overly simplistic to claim that the war could bring about structural changes, particularly in China's case. However, Beijing views Iran as part of the front resisting US unilateral domination. As the holder of the world's third-largest oil and gas reserves, Iran plays a critical role in China's economic contest with Washington.

Russia's situation is quite different. It is already bogged down in sanctions and, economically and technologically, lags far behind China. Thus, Tehran's primary economic focus is on Beijing, while its security partnership with Moscow remains strategically important.