

Iran: US sanctions move 'good but not enough'

Author:

Sun, 2022-02-06 00:56

TEHRAN: US steps on lifting sanctions are "good but not enough," Iran's foreign minister said on Saturday, hours after Washington announced it was waiving sanctions on Iran's civilian nuclear program.

The US action came as talks to restore a 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers over its nuclear program reached an advanced stage, with the issue of sanctions relief a major issue.

"The lifting of some sanctions can, in the true sense of the word, translate into their good will. Americans talk about it, but it should be known that what happens on paper is good but not enough," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was quoted as saying by ISNA news agency.

The US State Department on Friday said it was waiving sanctions on Iran's civilian nuclear program in a technical step necessary to return to the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

Former President Donald Trump withdrew from the pact in 2018 and reimposed crippling sanctions on Iran, prompting the country to begin pulling back from its commitments under the deal.

The waiver allows other countries and companies to participate in Iran's civilian nuclear program without triggering US sanctions on them, in the name of promoting safety and nonproliferation.

Iran's civilian program includes increasing stockpiles of enriched uranium.

Amir-Abdollahian reiterated that one of the "main issues" in the JCPOA talks is obtaining guarantees that the US will not withdraw from the 2015 deal again. "We seek and demand guarantees in the political, legal and economic sectors," he said, adding that "agreements have been reached in some areas."

The Vienna negotiations, which include Iran, the United States, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia, are at a stage where the sides have to make important "political decisions," different parties to the negotiations said last week.

"Our negotiating team in the Vienna talks is seriously pursuing obtaining tangible guarantees from the West to fulfil their commitments," Amir-Abdollahian said.

Earlier on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said: "Naturally, Tehran is carefully considering any action that is in the right direction of fulfilling the obligations of the JCPOA," local media reported.

Mikhail Ulyanov, Moscow's ambassador to the UN in Vienna, on Saturday called the US waiver decision "a move in the right direction."

"It will help expedite restoration of #JCPOA and mutual return of #US and #Iran to compliance with 2015 deal. It also can be seen as an indication that the #ViennaTalks have entered the final stage," he said on Twitter.

Talks on reviving the nuclear deal were halted last week and the negotiators returned to their capitals for consultations. Experts say the JCPOA talks could resume next week.



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US grants sanctions relief to Iran as nuclear talks remain in balance
Opposition says Iran created mercenary naval unit for attacks

[Egyptian FM, Palestinian PM hold talks](#)

Author:

Sun, 2022-02-06 02:29

CAIRO: Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry held talks with Palestinian

Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh on the sidelines of the African Union Summit, which began on Saturday.

The spokesman for Egypt's Foreign Ministry tweeted that Shoukry affirmed Cairo's support for the Palestinian cause, and the importance of reviving negotiations in pursuit of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

At the AU Summit in Ethiopia, Shoukry spoke about the state of peace and security in Africa. The summit's theme is: "Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent."



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Abu Dhabi crown prince, Egyptian president meet China's Xi Jinping in Beijing
Palestinian PM urges African Union to withdraw Israel's observer status

[Coalition strikes targets in Yemeni capital](#)

Author:

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Sat, 2022-02-05 01:44

RIYADH: The Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen has struck targets in Yemen's capital, Al Ekhbariya reported on Saturday. The coalition said it had hit Sanaa and a number of other provinces. The operation had been taken to safeguard against threats to civilian lives, the coalition said. The Iran-backed Houthi militia often use drones to attack the southern regions of the Kingdom. The Houthis have also been condemned for attacking the UAE in recent weeks. Three expatriate workers, two from India and one from Pakistan, were killed in a Houthi drone and missile attack on Abu Dhabi's oil storage facilities and airport on Jan. 17, triggering a salvo of deadly air- strikes in retaliation.



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[Coalition Forces Supporting Legitimacy in Yemen](#)

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[**Palestine's Expo 2020 Dubai pavilion**](#)

takes visitors on a multi-sensory tour of Jerusalem

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Sat, 2022-02-05 00:48

DUBAI: Palestine's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai is as eye-catching as it is groundbreaking.

The pavilion, situated in a prime location along the main concourse of the Opportunity District, may not have an ornate exterior, but its simple, yet dignified, design stands out easily, especially when one considers Palestine's geographical size and diplomatic status.

With some of the expo's biggest pavilions nearby, including those of Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Egypt, the Palestinian pavilion gives off an air of understated grandeur and is close to the Al-Wasl dome, giving it enviable visibility in the Arab world's first world expo.



The sand-colored stones are the same that pave the streets of Jerusalem's Old

City and were brought from Palestine to adorn the pavilion. (Twitter)

On entering the pavilion, visitors are transported to an authentic Jerusalem street scene. Most guests experience the pavilion in small, guided groups of about 20 people, who are offered an informative, albeit occasionally crowded, tour of the pavilion's displays.

Its stone-tiled floors are an immediate focal point. The sand-colored stones are the same that pave the streets of Jerusalem's Old City and were brought from Palestine to adorn the pavilion.

According to pavilion staff, some visitors remove their shoes and kneel on the stones to be as close as possible to a land considered sacred by many.

Also paying homage to the city's ancient architecture are modern replicas of its famous archways, floor-to-ceiling photos of the picturesque alleyways that snake through the Old City, and atmospheric audio of the city's soundscape.

The overall sensation is immersive and hints at the pavilion's theme – See, Hear, Touch, Smell and Taste – creating an experience of Palestine that employs all five senses.

From the entrance, visitors follow a path lined with the same latticework and mashrabiya designs that call to mind the balconies and doors of houses in Jerusalem.

The back wall features an elevator and a remarkable panoramic image of the city, looking out over the buildings and surrounding landscape.



Some visitors remove their shoes and kneel on the stones to be as close as possible to a land considered sacred by many. (Supplied)

From here, visitors enter the first exhibit: "See." A brief video plays, highlighting the natural beauty of rural Palestine, its industry, economy and welcoming culture. The video ends with an exhortation to create a "new perception of Palestine."

From "See," visitors move on to "Hear." To amplify sensory perception, the "Hear" corridor is cast into darkness, with nothing on the walls but a few minimalist light drawings that help identify the sounds emanating from the speakers.

Along the corridor are different sound bubbles. In one, there is a call to prayer, followed by ringing church bells, evoking the proximity of the major religions in Jerusalem. In another, a poem about Palestine is recited in English and Arabic.

In a third, street sounds predominate, with cars and people speaking, bringing to life a typical Jerusalem street. In the last area, the sounds are of traditional Palestinian musical instruments, including the oud.



Hopes for statehood recognition. (AFP)

Walking through the next corridor, visitors arrive at "Touch." Again, as with "Hear," perceptions beyond the focal sense are limited. In this case, mysterious objects are placed in hidden compartments within white columns, stretching from floor to ceiling. Screens guide visitors through the process of feeling inside the column and guessing what the items are inside.

In some cases, the objects are emotionally charged. One is a large metal key, easily recognizable by touch. A screen informs the visitor that the key is a symbol of the dream to return to homes left behind in 1948, when nearly half the Arab Palestinian population was exiled in an event known as the Nakba, or catastrophe. Many displaced families have preserved the keys to their homes in Palestine.

Another easily discernible shape is a many-pointed star, symbolizing the star of nativity. This star was found in 1717 in Bethlehem, and is said to mark the place of Jesus Christ's birth. A screen informs visitors that the Church of the Nativity was the first UNESCO World Heritage site to be listed under the name of "Palestine."

Moving on through another corridor filled with mashrabiya shadows, visitors arrive at "Smell." The smell of Palestine is represented through roses, sage,

guava, oranges and olive oil soap. Each has a clay pot, which emits the scent, followed by a description of its significance.

Roses, for instance, represent the rose of Jericho, which wilts in the desert heat, but springs back to life with the first sign of moisture – a resilience believed to be synonymous with the people of Palestine.

Next is sage, or maramiya, a popular tea ingredient in Palestine, consumed after meals as a digestive aid. In the pavilion's words, it is "a quintessentially Palestinian pleasure."



Images of luscious olives, lemons, rice, meat and spices are projected from above on to empty white plates. (Supplied)

Olive oil soap, which has been used in the region for millennia, is also featured, its strong and refreshing fragrance lingering on the nostrils as visitors move on to the next exhibit: "Taste."

Somewhat surprisingly, there is nothing to eat in the Taste exhibit, although the pavilion's cafe, Mamaesh, is nearby. Instead, images of luscious olives, lemons, rice, meat and spices are projected from above on to empty white plates set on a table in the center of the room, while a short film about Palestinian cuisine is projected on an adjacent wall.

The film features tantalizing close-up shots of zaatar, falafel and kunafa, while also lingering on the people preparing these dishes. Rather than simply focusing on the cuisine, the exhibit leaves visitors with a taste of Palestine's warmth and hospitality.

Once visitors have experienced all five senses, they are brought to a room and handed virtual reality headsets. In this immersive experience, the full sensory experience is brought together on a journey through Jerusalem's top

historical sites, from the Dome of the Rock to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.



Palestinian pavilion does not focus solely on the future, nor does it dwell excessively on the past. (Supplied)

Unlike many other Arab offerings at Expo 2020 Dubai, the Palestinian pavilion does not focus solely on the future, nor does it dwell excessively on the past. Rather, everything about the pavilion, not least the channeling of perception through the five senses, creates a feeling of immediacy and connection.

Indeed, in the video from the pavilion's "See" exhibit, a line references the "pulsation of the present." A visit to the Palestinian pavilion creates a shared moment in the here and now, which is both unique and irreplaceable, much like Palestine itself.



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Saudi pavilion launches Coffee Week at Dubai's Expo 2020
Saudi pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai receives 2 million visitors

[Stress laid on interfaith cooperation at Expo 2020 Dubai event to mark Human Fraternity Day](#)

Sat, 2022-02-05 00:37

DUBAI: The Document for Human Fraternity was “a milestone on the path of interreligious dialogue,” Cardinal Miguel Angel Ayuso told Arab News on the sidelines of an event at Expo 2020 Dubai marking the International Day of Human Fraternity.

He was one of several faith leaders who gathered at the Expo's Sustainability Pavilion on Friday to mark the third anniversary of the signing – by Pope Francis of the Catholic Church and Sheikh Ahmed El-Tayeb, grand imam of Al-Azhar – of the document in Abu Dhabi on Feb. 4, 2019.

The joint declaration called for peace among all peoples, while setting out a

blueprint for a culture of dialogue and collaboration between all faiths.



Cardinal Miguel Angel Ayuso, the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue Human Fraternity for the joint Initiatives and peaceful Coexistence. (Supplied)

“We are citizens of the world,” said Ayuso, from Spain, who is the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and a renowned historian of Islam.

“All believers of God must work together to counter the problems we are facing today. It is important to cultivate values and to maintain a relationship with religion, whether it’s in church, a mosque or a synagogue.”

To mark the anniversary, Pope Francis and Sheikh El-Tayeb sent video messages in which they called for continued interfaith understanding.

“Now is not a time for indifference,” Pope Francis said. “Either we are brothers and sisters or everything falls apart.”

Sheikh El-Tayeb said: “This celebration means a quest for a better world where the spirit of tolerance, fraternity, solidarity and collaboration prevails. It also indicates a hope for providing effective tools to face the crises and challenges of contemporary humanity.



It is three years since Pope Francis of the Catholic Church and Sheikh Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, co-signed the document in Abu Dhabi on Feb. 4, 2019. (Supplied)

“We have embarked on this path in the hope for a new world that is free of wars and conflicts, where the fearful are reassured, the poor sustained, the vulnerable protected and justice administered.”

Opening the celebrations, Judge Mohammed Abdelsalam, secretary-general of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, emphasized the ways in which the Document for Human Fraternity has empowered people to fight prejudice and increase accountability, offering protection for “the haves and have-nots, the rich and the poor, and both genders.”

The Higher Committee of Human Fraternity was founded by authorities in the UAE to determine the recipients of the Zayed Award, which is awarded each year to people or organizations “who embody through their work this lifelong commitment to human fraternity.”

Last year’s recipients were UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Latifa Ibn Ziaten, a Moroccan-French activist who has campaigned tirelessly against radicalization since losing her son in a terrorist attack 10 years ago.

Speaking during Friday’s event in Dubai, Mohammed Al-Diwaini, Al-Azhar deputy director of the grand imam, said it is imperative to “drop any sicknesses” of hatred and discrimination in favor of religious tolerance.

“If we follow our religion in its right form and without misinterpretation, we would be living in the best condition possible,” he told attendees.



Cardinal Miguel Angel Ayuso, the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue Human Fraternity for the joint Initiatives and peaceful Coexistence (L), Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al-Nahyan (C), the UAE's Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence and Dr Muhammad Al-Duwaini Al-Azhar, the Deputy of the Grand Imam in Dubai, on February 4, 2022. (AFP)

The opening ceremony included a short video highlighting leaders who had served the cause of coexistence, including Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr. and Sheikh Zayed, who was the driving force behind the formation of the UAE and championed plurality throughout his life.

To mark the International Day of Human Fraternity, US President Joe Biden sent a letter to the Higher Committee calling for global solidarity to meet the challenges of the day.

"From the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and the existential climate crisis to the rise of violence around the world, these challenges require global cooperation from people of all backgrounds, cultures, faiths and beliefs," Biden wrote.

He added that these challenges "require us to speak with one another in open dialogue, to promote tolerance, inclusion and understanding. Above all, they require us to be open minded, cooperative and empathetic and to ensure that all people are treated with dignity and as full participants in society."

Echoing these sentiments, Cardinal Ayuso said the pandemic has been a challenge for people of all religious backgrounds, but added that faith has helped to guide communities through the crisis and would help them recover.

“In light of today’s pandemic that pushed people to lockdown, numbers of believers at houses of worship went down but I believe their faith grew stronger in their hearts,” he told Arab News.

“Some complain religion should not be active in society but religion is not a problem; rather it is a part of a solution.”



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Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Vatican meeting to discuss Document on Human Fraternity Pope Francis and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed Al-Tayeb receive trophies for Zayed Award for Human Fraternity