

Iran has not shown enough urgency in nuclear talks: US State Department

Tue, 2021-12-28 22:26

WASHINGTON D.C.: The US State Department on Tuesday said Washington thinks it is too soon to say how substantive any progress in talks to salvage the 2015 Iran nuclear deal in Vienna might have been after the indirect talks resumed on Monday.

State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters the United States has not yet seen sufficient urgency demonstrated by Iran, adding that Washington needs to see the parties in the talks constructively and steadfastly seek to build on progress.



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Israel open to 'good' Iran nuclear deal, but wants tougher Vienna terms
Iran demands 'cash for oil' as nuclear talks resume

Rule of law must return to Tunisia, says Italian foreign minister

Tue, 2021-12-28 21:08

ROME: Italy's foreign minister said Tuesday that his country wanted a "full re-establishment of the rule of law in Tunisia."

Luigi Di Maio was speaking after a meeting with Tunisian President Kais Saied in Tunis. He also met Prime Minister Najla Bouden and Foreign Minister Othman Jerandi.

He said: "Tunisia is a privileged partner of Italy also thanks to the presence of about 800 Italian companies here. I hope that this partnership, which is important for both countries, can be further strengthened."

He said his meetings were very fruitful, strengthening a dialogue that had "never been interrupted" with Tunisia.

"I confirmed that Italy is looking with great interest at the beginning of a concrete path of political and constitutional reforms that will hopefully bring new legislative elections in Tunisia.

"This path has to continue toward the full re-establishment of the rule of law and democratic normality and must be carried out with an inclusive, transparent and substantial dialogue involving all the political and social components of the country, ensuring full respect for rights and promoting stability and economic growth."

Sources in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Arab News that the issue of migrants was covered, especially since the start of political turmoil in Tunisia in July.

There has been a considerable increase in migrants arriving on Italian soil, mainly landing on the tiny island of Lampedusa, where the reception facility is permanently overbooked.



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[Sudan officials say defunct mine collapses, kills 38 people](#)

Tue, 2021-12-28 20:04

CAIRO: Sudanese authorities said at least 38 people were killed Tuesday when a defunct gold mine collapsed in West Kordofan province.

The country's state-run mining company said in a statement the collapse of the closed, non-functioning mine took place in the village of Fuja 700 kilometers (435 miles) south of the capital of Khartoum. It said there were

also injuries without giving a specific tally.

Local media reported that several shafts collapsed at the Darsaya mine, and that besides the dead at least eight injured people were taken to a local hospital.

The mining company posted images on Facebook showing villagers gathering at the site as at least two dredgers worked to find possible survivors and bodies.

Other images showed people preparing traditional graves to bury the dead.

The company said the mine was not functional but local miners returned to work it after security forces guarding the site left the area. It did not say when the mine stopped working.

The Sudanese Mineral Resources Limited Company in its statement called for troops to guard the site to prevent unregulated mining. It also called on local communities to help it resume its mining activities in the area, which were suspended in 2019. It did not elaborate.

Sudan is a major gold producer with numerous mines scattered across the country. In 2020, the East African nation produced 36.6 tons, the second most in the continent, according to official numbers.

The transitional government has begun regulating the industry in the past two years amid allegations of gold smuggling.

Collapses are common in Sudan's gold mines, where safety standards are not widely in effect.



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Saudi Arabia keen on Sudan's stability and unity: Foreign minister
Sudan to see \$171m investment funds in 2022

[Algeria drops 'protest' case against teenage girl](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-12-27 23:50

ALGIERS: Algerian prosecutors have dropped a case against a 14-year-old girl

who was facing trial in connection with the country's pro-democracy Hirak protest movement, her lawyer told AFP Monday.

"The prosecution ... recognized that it had been an error (and) dropped the charges," Abdelhalim Khereddine said.

The teenager had been ordered to appear in court in the eastern city of Annaba on Wednesday, alongside 20 other suspects, charged with attending an "unarmed gathering."

According to Algerian law, the age of criminal responsibility is 18 and minors are tried in juvenile courts. Her case had sparked outrage online.

Rights groups condemned what they said would have been the first trial of a minor connected to the Hirak movement. But Khereddine said Monday that prosecutors had realized the girl was a "witness and not a suspect" in the case.

"What's important is that she has her rights restored, as guaranteed by the constitution," he added.

Khereddine told AFP that the girl's father has been in prison for eight months for allegedly belonging to the outlawed Islamist-inspired movement Rachad.

The National Committee for the Release of Detainees (CNLD) says nearly 300 people are currently in jail on charges linked to the Hirak movement, which forced veteran strongman Abdelaziz Bouteflika from office in 2019.

Many of the detainees are being held over publications on social media, it says.



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[100 Houthis killed in heavy fighting around Yemen's Marib city](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-12-27 22:32

AL-MUKALLA: At least 100 Houthis were killed in heavy fighting with government forces outside Yemen's central city of Marib in the past day as the Iran-backed rebels pressed ahead with assaults to recapture the strategic city, local officials and media reports said on Monday.

Backed by massive air support from Arab coalition warplanes, Yemeni government troops and tribal fighters on Sunday mounted counterattacks on Houthi positions south of Marib in a bid to push back the militia from strategic locations outside the city and seize control of new areas.

Fierce fighting raged between the two sides from Sunday to Monday near Al-Balaq Al-Sharqi mountain range and surrounding areas, claiming the lives of at least 100 Houthi fighters, including a field military leader.

"The national army seized control of three strategic hilly locations near Al-Balaq Al-Sharqi and cut off supply lines to pockets of Houthis," a military official told Arab News by telephone, shortly after he returned from the raging battlefields in Marib.

"What I can say is that we managed to count the bodies of at least 100 Houthis killed during the last 24 hours."

To pave the way for their forces to advance, the Houthis fired about 25 ballistic missiles at government-controlled areas and intensified drone and mortar attacks outside Marib.

"The Houthis hysterically shelled our forces with 25 ballistic missiles. The coalition's warplanes intercepted and destroyed two of the missiles in the air," the official said.

The shelling did not help the Houthis make new gains on the ground as government troops held strong in their positions and killed waves of Houthi

fighters.

West of Marib, eight Houthis, including a field leader, were arrested, and many other militia members were killed when government troops repelled attacks.

Local army officials said that warplanes from the Arab coalition on Monday conducted dozens of air sorties in support of government troops on the ground by targeting Houthi military reinforcements and locations outside Marib city.

In February, the Houthis renewed a military offensive to recapture the oil and gas-rich city of Marib, the government's last stronghold in the northern part of the country.

In the neighboring province of Shabwa, hundreds of troops from the Giants Brigades were deployed in the oil-rich province ahead of an expected offensive to dislodge the Houthis from the Bayhan, Al-Aid and Ouselan districts and to alleviate military pressure on government troops in Marib province.

A long convoy of military vehicles carrying fighters and military equipment were seen departing positions along the country's west coast and heading toward Attaq city, Shabwa's provincial capital.

In November, the Arab coalition announced the redeployment troops in Hodeidah province as part of a new strategy to reinforce government troops battling the Houthis.

In Riyadh, Yemen President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi ordered the new governor of Shabwa, Awadh Mohammed Al-Wazer Al-Awlaki, who took the constitutional oath before the president on Monday, to work on unifying political and tribal forces and mobilizing efforts to expel the Houthis from areas in the province.

Separately, Yemen's government on Monday demanded the Lebanese government contain the military activities of Iran-backed Hezbollah in the war-torn country amid an influx of fighters, military experts and weapons from Lebanon.

"We ask about the position of the presidency, the government, political forces, elites and the brotherly Lebanese people regarding the aggression led by the Hezbollah militia against Yemen," Muammar Al-Eryani, Yemen's minister of information, culture and tourism, said on Twitter.

"We renew the call to the brothers in Lebanon to declare a clear position on the aggression of the Hezbollah militia, to exert real pressure to withdraw its experts and fighters, stop the smuggling of weapons to Yemen, and to prevent the use of the lands and capabilities of the Lebanese state to support the Houthi militia."

The Yemeni government's criticism of Hezbollah activities in Yemen came a day after the Arab coalition revealed to reporters a video showing Hezbollah experts training Houthi fighters in the use of explosive-rigged drones.



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