

EUROPE DISPUTE

Iran may quit nuclear deal if case goes to UN

AFP, Tehran

Iran said yesterday it will consider withdrawing from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) if a dispute over its atomic programme goes before the UN Security Council.

Britain, France and Germany launched a process last week charging Iran with failing to observe the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal, a move that could eventually see the Security Council reimpose international sanctions on the country.

Iran has accused the three EU member states of inaction over sanctions the United States reimposed on it after unilaterally withdrawing from the landmark accord in 2018.

The European move "has no legal basis" and if they take further measures "Iran's withdrawal from the NPT will be considered," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was quoted as saying by the Iranian parliament's website.

The landmark 2015 deal reached with Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

Since the US pullout, Iran has progressively rolled back its commitments to the accord -- the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action -- in retaliation.

It has hit out at the three European nations that remain party to the JCPOA for failing to live up to their promises to ease the impact of US sanctions on its oil-based economy.

"If the Europeans return to the commitments, Iran will also stop reducing its commitments, but if the Europeans continue as they have been... we have different options," said Zarif.



Members of the Christian community along with social activists hold placards and Indian flags as they take part in a rally to protests against the Indian government's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Thousands of war missing are dead

Acknowledges Lanka president

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has acknowledged for the first time that more than 23,500 people missing for a decade since the end of the country's protracted Tamil war are dead.

Rajapaksa, who played a key role in the military campaign that crushed the Tamil separatist rebels, told a UN envoy that steps would be taken to finally provide death certificates for those reported missing, his office said.

"President Rajapaksa outlined his plans to address the issue of missing persons," said a statement on the president's meeting with UN resident coordinator Hanan Singer.

"He explained that these missing persons are actually dead."

Some 5,000 security forces are among the 23,500 people never accounted for.

The statement said most of the missing civilians had been conscripted by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which was crushed in a major offensive that ended in May 2009.

"The families of the missing attest to it. However, they do not know what has become of them and so claim them to be missing," the president said.

Under current law, families cannot access property deeds, bank accounts or inheritances left by missing relatives unless they can conclusively prove they are dead -- an often impossible task.

Refugees can't be sent back

Says landmark UN human rights ruling as 143m people are at risk of becoming climate migrants

CNN ONLINE

Refugees fleeing the effects of the climate crisis cannot be forced to return home by their adoptive countries, a United Nations panel has ruled, in a landmark decision that could open the door to a flood of legal claims by displaced people around the world.

The UN's Human Rights Committee was making a judgment on the case of Ioane Teitiota, who applied for protection from New Zealand after claiming his life was at risk in his home country of Kiribati. The Pacific island is at risk of becoming the first country to disappear under rising sea levels.

The committee ruled against Teitiota on the basis that his life was not at imminent risk -- but it also outlined that countries could violate people's international rights if they force them back to countries where climate change poses an immediate threat.

"Without robust national and international efforts, the effects of climate change in receiving states may

expose individuals to a violation of their rights," its ruling said.

The decision could have a significant impact on future claims,

CLIMATE CRISIS



as the number of people forced from their homes from the intensifying climate emergency grows.

Droughts, crop failure and rising seas are expected to force tens of millions to move to other areas in the coming years. A 2018 study by the World Bank found that 143 million people across South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America are at risk of

becoming climate migrants.

In its ruling, the committee cited articles 6 and 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which ensure an individual's inherent right to life.

"Given that the risk of an entire country becoming submerged under water is such an extreme risk, the conditions of life in such a country may become incompatible with the right to life with dignity before the risk is realized," its decision added.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has identified Teitiota's home nation of Kiribati as one of the six Pacific Island countries most threatened by rising sea levels. The report claims that, due to coastal erosion and freshwater contamination, Kiribati could become uninhabitable as early as 2050.

It has been among a group of Pacific nations sounding the alarm over climate change in recent years but has run up against resistance from nearby Australia.

Pak PM reiterates need for UN to intervene in Kashmir

Warns India over civilian killings on LoC

DAWN ONLINE

Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Sunday that Pakistan will not continue to watch as India carries out military attacks along the Line of Control (LoC) targeting civilians.

Taking to Twitter, the prime minister said: "I want to make clear to India and the international community that if India continues its military attacks killing civilians across LoC, Pakistan will find it increasingly difficult to remain an inactive observer along the LoC."

He reiterated that the United Nations needs to intervene in the situation in occupied Kashmir.

"As Indian occupation forces continue to target and kill civilians across the LoC with increasing intensity and frequency, there is an urgent need for UNSC [United Nations Security Council] to insist India allow UNMOGIP [United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan] to return [to the LoC along occupied Kashmir],"

"We fear an Indian false flag operation,"

Imran added.

On Friday, China called on India to "give serious consideration and positive response to the request of UNSC members" on occupied Kashmir after a recently-held UNSC meeting to review the situation in the valley.

During a press conference, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang rubbished claims that the issue did not get much support from members of the UNSC.

"Members of the Security Council are concerned about the current situation in occupied Kashmir, and call for observance of the UN Charter and international law, and peaceful resolution of disputes through political dialogue. They believe relevant parties should remain restrained and de-escalate the tension," said Shuang.

"I shall stress that the India and Pakistan issue has all along been on the agenda of the UNSC, and the Security Council should continue to pay attention to occupied Kashmir in light of new developments," he added.



No more arms

World powers pledge to halt Libya weapon transfers, urge permanent ceasefire

AFP, Berlin

World leaders committed to ending all foreign meddling in Libya's civil war at a Berlin summit on Sunday night, and to uphold a weapons embargo as part of a broader plan to end the long-running conflict.

The presidents of Russia, Turkey and France were among global chiefs signing up to the agreement to stop interfering in the war -- be it through weapons, troops or financing.

But the talks failed to deliver "serious dialogue" between the warring parties -- strongman Khalifa Haftar and the head of Tripoli's UN-recognised government Fayez al-Sarraj -- or to get both sides to sign up to a permanent truce.

"Ensuring that a ceasefire is immediately respected is simply not easy to guarantee," said summit host Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"But I hope that through today's conference, we have a chance the truce will hold further."

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo acknowledged that there are "still some questions on how well and effectively" the commitments can be monitored.

But he said he is "optimistic that there will be less violence and... an opportunity to begin the conversation that (UN special envoy) Ghassan Salame has been trying to get going between the Libyan parties".

Libya has been torn by fighting between rival armed factions since a 2011 Nato-backed uprising killed dictator Moamer Gaddafi.

Most recently, Sarraj's troops in Tripoli have been under attack since April from Haftar's forces.

Berlin summit failed to deliver serious dialogue between warring parties in Libya



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson (C), reacts as he visits the Pavegen's stand, a company that converts footsteps into energy, in the Innovation Zone at the UK-Africa Investment Summit in London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Philippine volcano recharging

More than 110,000 take refuge as evacuation crackdown ordered

AFP, Tanauan

Philippine authorities yesterday ordered a crackdown on evacuees' daily visits to their homes in the danger zone around Taal volcano as scientists warned it could be "recharging" for a more powerful explosion.

More than 110,000 people have taken refuge in evacuation centres since Taal burst to life a week ago, but many hard-hit towns have let residents back for hours each day to fetch items, feed livestock and clean up their houses.

"We are directing DRRMCs (civil defence officers)... not to allow anyone to enter the danger zone," said Epimaco Densing, undersecretary for the Department of Interior.

"It's dangerous, that's why we have imposed a lockdown," he told reporters.

The volcano shot ash 15 kilometres (nine miles) high in the January 12 eruption, which crushed scores of homes and killed livestock as well as crops.

However, seismologists have warned the volcano could imminently unleash a much bigger eruption, posing a deadly risk to anyone in the 14-kilometre radius "danger zone" that surrounds it.



Continued earthquakes and an increase in the volcano's emission of sulfur dioxide gas were possible indications of a "recharge" of magna, which would drive a major blast, a top scientist said.

"We consider these are signs that there's a re-supply of magma which could possibly... cause an eruption that could be strong," Renato Solidum, head of the Philippines' seismological

agency, told a local radio station.

Until experts deem the threat has passed, evacuees will need the shelters spread across some 400 sites that range from school campuses to covered basketball courts.

Conditions vary between sites, but several evacuees told AFP they were getting food and a place to sleep, but that bathrooms were in high demand.

"It's really difficult to take a bath or use the toilet because of the sheer numbers (of evacuees), but we can take it," said Sonia Awitan, 55.

"What is important is we have a place to shelter and sleep in," she added.

Authorities say they have so far been able to provide fundamental services to the evacuees, but are concerned about the longer term.

"We can handle the (current evacuee numbers). The issue is how are we going to sustain resources over the longer term," Alex Masiglat, spokesman for disaster relief in the ground zero Calabarzon region.