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The rule of law at the national and international levels

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 5 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you to bring to your kind attention yet another unlawful and undiplomatic move by the government of the United States against my country, namely, the imposition of illegal sanctions against Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in gross violation of the fundamental norms and principles of international law, including the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ironically, the officials of the current administration of the United States have claimed that the illegal sanctions have been imposed due to the role and position of our Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is the responsible authority for the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Infatuated with rogue, unreasonable conduct at the international level, this well signifies that the United States regime despises diplomacy, which is one of the greatest achievements of humanity to preserve and uphold peace and security among nations. It reveals the deeply-rooted hypocrisy of the United States authorities in their different but paradoxical claims.

Although the unlawful move is claimed to target Iran's Minister for Foreign Affairs, considering the official and shameless claims of the United States administration, this illegal restriction is part of its overall policy in waging economic terrorism against the Iranian people and bringing pressure to bear on their representatives.

The Islamic Republic of Iran deems such illegal action a flagrant infringement of the fundamental principles of diplomatic law, in particular the principle of inviolability and immunity of high-ranking foreign officials, including the immunity of incumbent ministers for foreign affairs, as a universally accepted norm and rule of customary international law. Taking into account the restrictions imposed on the travel and activities of Minister Zarif during his recent visit to New York to participate in United Nations events, the United States' illegal action is also in brazen violation of Article 105 (2) of the Charter regarding the privileges and immunities of representatives of Member States in exercising their functions in connection with the



United Nations. In this context, any restriction on the discharge of the duties of ministers for foreign affairs is also in contravention of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the well-established customary principles enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations. Likewise, it is in contradiction with many relevant consensus-based resolutions of the General Assembly, the latest of which is resolution [73/212](#), in which the Assembly underlines the obligation of the United States for the observance of the privileges and immunities of the missions accredited to the United Nations, “which cannot be subject to any restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country”, and “urges the host country to remove without delay any restrictions applied” and “to ensure respect for such privileges and immunities”.

Furthermore, the principle of diplomatic immunity lies at the core of international law and any derogation from this principle is a serious threat to the sound conduct of normal international relations and the promotion of cooperation among States. The illegal imposition of sanctions on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran also violates the principle of the sovereign equality of States and the principle of *par in parem non habet imperium*, which constitutes the basis for the immunity *ratione materiae* of States officials, including, in particular, ministers for foreign affairs.

At the same time, the ramifications of the United States’ unlawful action are not confined to the legal context only. The brazen violation of the fundamental principles of international law, which have thrived and been respected throughout history, and the coercion of nations into complying with the United States’ illegal demands threaten multilateralism, as the foundation of international relations, and set a dangerous precedent, paving the way for those who aspire to divide, not unite, nations. It will also undermine the call for dialogue and diplomacy and embolden those who seek to endanger international stability and the peaceful coexistence of nations.

Thus, it is imperative for the international community to condemn the United States’ unlawful behaviour in the interest of promoting multilateralism. The United Nations, its Member States and its bodies should stand firm in defending the established principles of international law. Respectfully, the Islamic Republic of Iran expects you to play your active role in preserving the integrity of the United Nations in line with your responsibility to counter the current dangerous trend.

It would be highly appreciated if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 86 and 167.

(Signed) Majid **Takht Ravanchi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative