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US 'disappointed' by UN court decision on Iran case: State Department

BY LAURA KELLY



The U.S. is "disappointed" by the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling on Wednesday rejecting the American argument that a case brought forth by Iran is outside the jurisdiction of the court, said State Department spokesperson Ned Price.

The ruling by the ICJ, the top court for the United Nations, will allow a case brought by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the U.S. to proceed. **The case alleges the U.S. sanctions policy against Iran violates a 1955 treaty between the two countries.**

"We have great respect for the International Court of Justice. At the same time, we are disappointed that the court did not accept our well-founded legal arguments, that the case Iran brought is outside the court's jurisdiction, and the court should not hear it," Price said during a briefing with reporters at the State Department.

The ICJ in a statement Wednesday said the majority of the court panel rejected the arguments made by the U.S. to dismiss Iran's claims as outside the court's jurisdiction.

The court further rejected the U.S. request to dismiss Iran's claims made on the basis of the 1955 Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights.

Washington severed relations with Tehran following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, but the U.S. remained a party to the treaty.

Iran used it as a basis to file a case with the International Court of Justice in 2018 in response to former President Trump's decision to withdraw from the international nuclear deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and **reimpose sanctions on Iran.**

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo withdrew from the treaty months after Iran filed its case with the ICJ.

Iran argues the U.S. sanction regime on the country violates the terms of the 1955 treaty.

The court on Wednesday said the terms of the treaty provided a basis for the case to proceed in the international body.

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif celebrated the decision as “another legal victory for Iran.”

Price warned against characterizing the court's decision as in favor of Iran, and that the U.S. is preparing to prove that Iran’s claims “have no merits.”

“While Iran may seek to frame this decision as somehow supporting its view on the merits, the ICJ's rules and case law make plain that **a decision on preliminary objections does not prejudice the merits.** In the next phase of this case we'll explain why Iran's claim has no merits,” he said.