
ZARIF EMPHASIZES IRAN'S STRONG PROTECTION OF RIGHTS IN CASPIAN SEA

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Zarif said on Wednesday as long as he lived, he would never allow anybody to take even a single drop of Caspian Sea from the Iranians.

He made the remarks, addressing a gathering of Iranian expatriates in Norway.

Zarif added that Iran is currently standing on the feet of the Iranians and nothing, but the Iranians have kept Iran, noting that this is hard but sweet.

He stated that Iran is a country with a population of 82 million which has experienced war and sanctions, saying that while no foreign power has supported the country, it has been standing strongly for 40 years.

"We were under sanctions for 40 years, but the people tolerated difficulties, as we saw 73 percent turnout of people in presidential elections," he said.

"We take our salaries from the people, but more importantly, we take our strength from the people," Zarif said, reiterating public support to him and colleagues when they were in talks with the world powers.

"Whatever the population of 82 million gave us cannot be taken away by anybody," he said, noting that "elections are our strong point".

"Our people do not want guardian, as they are educated and dignified and can take decisions by themselves," Zarif said.

Zarif had also in July reassured the nation that the administration would never compromise over the countrys territorial integrity, adding that Tehrans rights are enshrined in the recent legal regime of the Caspian Sea signed in Aktau.

When it comes to Iran's territorial integrity and waters, we will stand on ceremony with nobody and will not negotiate with any party about honors Iran has gained during the past 40 years ✱
The administration is committed to this issue and the parliament has the final say on it, Zarif said, addressing an open session of the Iranian parliament with regard to the Caspian Sea legal regime and Iran's share of the seabed and its resources.

Iran's foreign minister added that following the collapse of the former Soviet Union (USSR), Iran's diplomatic apparatus did its best to safeguard Iran's interests in the Caspian Sea, adding, Although these negotiations have been very difficult, all our efforts were focused on protecting Iran's

interests.

A glance at the history [of Iran] will show that parts of Iran were separated [from the country] under previous [monarchical] dynasties and it was only under the Islamic Republic that despite the imposed war [with Iraq] and tremendous pressures, not a handspan of the countrys soil has been lost and this is a great honor for Iran's leadership and people, Zarif noted.

Iran's foreign minister also told lawmakers that necessary guarantees have been taken from other littoral states of the Caspian Sea not to make any decision on the seas legal regime in the absence of Iran, because the issue of the Caspian Sea, unlike the issue of the Arvand River between Iran and Iraq, is not a bilateral issue ... and is covered by the agreement signed in 1975.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif noted that the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea was signed with open eyes by leaders of the five littoral states on August 12, 2018, adding that Iran will never compromise on its interests on the basis of mere trust in other countries.

The Caspian Sea convention was signed by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his counterparts from Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, Vladimir Putin, Ilham Aliyev, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, respectively, after the 5th Caspian Summit in the Kazakh port city of Aktau.

The Caspian Sea convention is drawn up in 24 articles with the most important highlights being a ban on military presence of all foreign countries in the sea and transit of military consignments belonging to foreign countries.

The convention emphasizes that the Caspian Sea belongs to all littoral states, prohibiting establishment and handing over of any kind of military bases to foreign countries.

The Caspian Sea Legal Regime Convention also puts emphasis on sovereignty and sovereign rights of the littoral states while recognizing their right to decide on the sea.

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