IRANWATCH DAILY | October 14, 2025

Brief Notes

Iranian Starlink Users Risk Execution: The Islamic Republic is set to enforce a new law imposing the death penalty for users who employ Starlink satellite internet with "intent to confront the regime," marking the first time globally that the use of such technology has been criminalized with capital punishment. The legislation, titled "Intensifying Punishment for Espionage and Cooperation with the Zionist Regime and Hostile Countries Against National Security and Interests," has been approved by the Guardian Council and sent to President Masoud Pezeshkian to be signed. While baseline possession or use of Starlink equipment will carry a sentence of up to two years in prison, those deemed to have used it with "intent to confront the regime" will face execution. The law's vague wording, particularly the phrase "intent to confront the regime," has sparked alarm over potential targeted enforcement or broad overuse, as is the Islamic Republic's modus operandi with the enforcement of laws such as this one.

Two French Nationals Sentenced to Combined 63 Years: Tehran's Revolutionary Court has sentenced French nationals Cecile Kohler and Jacques Paris, held in Iran since 2022, to a combined 63 years in prison on alleged spying and national security charges. The outcome of this decision can be overturned by the Supreme Court, but only within a window of 20 days. This development comes as the Islamic Republic is attempting to pressure the French government to release Mahdieh Esfandiari, an Iranian national arrested in Lyon on terror-related charges. Tehran's use of dual or foreign nationals as bargaining chips in international negotiations is well-documented.

Tehran Snubs Gaza Peace Summit in Egypt

On October 12, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi refused to participate in the U.S.-led Gaza peace summit in Egypt despite receiving a formal invitation, writing on X: "Neither President Pezeshkian nor I can engage with counterparts who have attacked the Iranian People and continue to threaten and sanction us."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei today added, "Engagement is not defined by physical participation in an event," while also stressing that the invitation technically came from Egypt, not the U.S.

However, members of Pezeshkian's "reformist" political faction have criticized the decision not to attend the summit. In a post on X yesterday, former political director of the Foreign Ministry Hamid Aboutalebi rebuked officials for refusing to engage, saying, "If you had been in office during the Iran-Iraq War, perhaps we would still

be at war with Iraq." Former Khatami administration spokesman from 2001 to 2005, Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, likewise asked, "Is the Foreign Ministry just for dealing with friends? How do wars end?"

Similarly, former President Hassan Rouhani (in office 2013–2021) today urged the regime to pursue diplomacy over confrontation, saying, "We cannot both fight and not capitulate," and calling negotiations "difficult but possible." Speaking in a meeting with provincial governors, Rouhani warned that a "no war and no peace" situation is economically unsustainable and indirectly criticized the leadership for missing diplomatic openings after the 12-Day War. Rouhani stressed that deterrence requires the restoration of the Islamic Republic's military and intelligence strength following the 12-Day War and seeking "another way, the way of engagement" to achieve a "win-win" foreign policy.

Foreign Ministry Responds to Trump's Knesset Speech

Speaking to the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) yesterday, U.S. President Donald Trump said that the U.S. was prepared to make a deal with Tehran, while also praising Israeli and U.S. strikes on the regime's nuclear facilities and the elimination of "many of the top Iranian terrorists."

In response, the Islamic Republic Foreign Ministry today issued a statement condemning the "unfounded, irresponsible, and shameful claims of the U.S. president regarding Iran." The statement continued, "The Foreign Ministry sees the U.S. president's willingness to make peace…in direct conflict with the hostile and criminal behavior of the United States."

Later, Foreign Minister Araghchi posted on his X account: "POTUS came into office promising Americans and the world that he would put a stop to Israel's serial deception of U.S. Presidents; that the U.S. military would no longer be suckered into Forever Wars plotted by warmongers who have also derailed American nuclear diplomacy with Iran for many years. The real bully of the Middle East, Mr. President, is the same parasitic actor that has long been bullying and milking the United States."

On the Radar

- Security forces in Hamadan Province arrested several protesters, including university students, following October 11 demonstrations against the harassment of local women by Iraqi students affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces. Reports on social media suggest that security forces used excessive violence against protesters. The status of several detainees remains unknown.
- The Islamic Republic has lodged a formal complaint with Oman over media reports blaming Iranian bottled water for two deaths in the country. The Foreign Ministry "invited" Oman's charge d'affaires, rather than "summoning" him, to express objections, underscoring Tehran's friendly ties with Muscat. In their meeting, regime officials dismissed the claims as "baseless media hype," saying the incident stemmed

from a family dispute, not Iranian products. The Omani diplomat reaffirmed the countries' close relations and promised to convey the Islamic Republic's concerns to Muscat.

- Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei announced that Foreign Minister Araghchi will visit Uganda to attend the 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
- Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ali Madanizadeh met with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon in Dushanbe to discuss expanding bilateral economic cooperation. Madanizadeh emphasized the "brotherly relations and close cooperation" between the two nations and praised Tajikistan's "principled and courageous stance" in condemning Israeli and U.S. strikes on the Islamic Republic. He said the reimposition of UN sanctions created "a special opportunity" to strengthen ties between the two nations, adding that Iranian companies are ready to help build power plants, roads, and housing in Tajikistan.
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov dismissed claims by former Foreign Minister Javad Zarif that Moscow undermined the nuclear deal, saying, "Russia has never deviated from its consistent position in support of the JCPOA." He added that arms supplies to the Islamic Republic, including potential S-400 systems, are conducted "strictly within the framework of international law," and without consideration of UN snapback sanctions.

→ *For inquiries or more information, please contact* ***k.isfahani@nufdiran.org***