

Statement by Ali Nasimfar
The Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Before the Sixth Committee
75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
on Agenda Item 171:
Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country
New York, 23 October 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Having the privilege of hosting the UN in its territory, the U.S. was supposed to enable the UN to fully and efficiently discharge its responsibilities. It was supposed to act as a hospitable host for its guests. It was supposed to at least maintain the appropriate conditions for delegations and missions accredited to the UN in order to effectively carry out their normal activities. It was supposed to ensure the participation of all delegations in all UN meetings by issuing visas promptly and free from political consideration. Although these requirements, at a first glance, seem to be more ethical in nature, they have also been crystalized in the binding instruments that today form a robust body of law which delineate the obligations and commitments for the Host Country.

However, neither the moral nor binding nature of these obligations have prevented the U.S. from resisting the temptation of weaponizing its privileges of hosting the UN. The denial of a visa for H.E. Mr. Zarif, the Foreign Minister of Iran, to participate at the UN Security Council meeting this year was rooted in the weakness and undermined the principles and objectives of the UN.

Mr. Chairman,

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic Iran has faced and continues to face unprecedented restrictions and punitive measures unseen in the history of the United Nations. Such restrictions have been designed to impose harassment as well as immense psychological pressure on our diplomats with a goal to ultimately cease the existence of our Mission in contravention of the very foundation of the United Nations, i.e. the sovereign equality of its Member States.

It has been more than 500 days since the Host Country has imposed the additional movement restrictions on Iranian diplomats that have extensively hampered their normal functioning, infringed on their basic human rights and created conditions with serious humanitarian consequences. Iran's representatives who are on a temporary assignment are now restricted to only three buildings in entire area of New York. Moreover, the previous 25-mile movement restriction of our Mission's personnel and their families, it is now narrowed down to a less than a three-mile radius in parts of Manhattan and Queens.

The Host Country, while insisting on the relocation of Iranian diplomats who live outside of the designated area, has extended the deadline for their compulsory movement until 15 December 2020. However, the designated area in Queens is one of the hot spots for the coronavirus, and such a relocation would substantially intensify the risk of their exposure to the deadly virus.

The Host Country has not only ignored the request of the General Assembly to lift its punitive restrictions but also disregarded the plea of the United Nations Secretariat in that regard. The UN Legal Counsel in the Host Committee meetings has made it abundantly clear that there is no room for the application of measures based on reciprocity in the treatment accorded to permanent missions accredited to the UN.

He has also emphasized, and I quote, "First, the Headquarters Agreement could not be applied in a discriminatory manner; second, that considerations of a bilateral diplomatic nature should not and could not interfere with the application of the Headquarters Agreement; third, that the Headquarters Agreement should be applied in a way so as not to impede the effective exercise of diplomatic activity". The Host Country has denied and continue to deny all of these legal requirements.

The ever-increasing unresolved cases before the Host Committee represent a systematic policy of discriminatory application of the Headquarters Agreement against certain Member States. We are facing with an irresponsible Host Country which willingly disregards its commitments and violating its obligations. The question is, who should hold this Country accountable for its failures and for the humanitarian consequences of its wrongful acts?

We welcome the recommendation of the Host Committee to the Secretary-General this year to consider and take the appropriate steps under Section 21. Furthermore, we reiterate our call to the Secretary-General to trigger that mechanism. He has not only the discretion but also the responsibility to trigger the

Dispute Settlement Mechanism in the Headquarters Agreement with a view to remove all illegal restrictions once and for all.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.