

SUARAM CONDEMNS ASSASSINATION OF IRANIAN SCIENTIST AS COWARDLY TERRORISM AND CALLS FOR UN SANCTIONS AGAINST STATE RESPONSIBLE

Press statement by Kua Kia Soong, SUARAM Adviser, 30 Nov 2020

SUARAM condemns the brazen assassination of Iran's top scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and urges the UN to apply sanctions against the state responsible for carrying out this terrorist action. This act of international terrorism is a direct provocation for retaliatory action by Iran and a possible flashpoint for another war in the Middle east. The former head of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), John Brennan, said the killing of the scientist was a "criminal" and "highly reckless" act that risks inflaming conflict in the region. In a series of tweets, he said Fakhrizadeh's death "risks lethal retaliation and a new round of regional conflict".

Iran's president has blamed Israel for the killing of Fakhrizadeh and said it would not slow down the country's nuclear programme. Hassan Rouhani also said Iran would retaliate over Mohsen Fakhrizadeh's killing at a time of its choosing.

Iran has not responded in kind to the assassination of top Iranian commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani by the U.S. earlier this year and the global community should be thankful that Iran has resisted all-out war against what Noam Chomsky has called "a rogue state that has no regard for international law". "The threat or use of force" is explicitly banned in the UN Charter, the foundation of modern international law. Clearly, the US is the biggest threat to world peace.

The US government under Trump has been heightening tensions with Iran including the unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. This US action was a violation of international law as the agreement was authorized by the United Nations Security Council. The Non-Aligned Movement has strongly supported Iran's right to pursue a peaceful nuclear program as a member of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

It has been suggested that a possible motive for this latest assassination is to jeopardise potential improvements in relations between Iran and the new Biden administration in the United States. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia do not want to see the new Biden administration cosying up to Iran and rejoining the Iran nuclear deal, which was negotiated by Barack Obama in 2015.

President Trump appears to be looking for a showdown with Iran before his departure and assassinations are not altogether opposed by the president as we saw in the case of General Suleimani. Now that the Trump administration is on its way out, and Israel and Saudi Arabia are losing their main ally, Iran is looking forward to the possibility of sanctions relief from the Biden administration and the chance to rebuild its economy.

SUARAM calls on the Malaysian government and civil society to condemn this dastardly act of international terrorism and to call on the UN to punish the state and its agents responsible for such unlawful acts of brazen murder.