

# Iran vows 'revenge' for terror attack

## Thousands gather to mourn as funeral is held for parade victims

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Iran has accused the United States and its allies of involvement in the deadly attack on a military parade on Saturday and warned of "revenge" for the tragedy.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the attack "is the extension of the plots by the US allies in the region, seeking to create insecurity in Iran," following the terror attack in the southwestern city of Ahvaz that killed at least 25 and injured 60 others.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also blamed the US and Israel for provoking the attack, which was carried out by four armed men clad in the uniform of Iranian Islamic Revolution Guard Corps during an event to mark the anniversary of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980-88.

Speaking at the funeral ceremony held on Monday for the victims, Iran's Defense Minister Amir Hatami warned the "terrorists" to expect retaliation.

He was backed by the deputy head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Hossein Salami, who said on state television: "You have seen our revenge before ... You will see that our response will be crushing and devastating and you will regret what you have done."

Thousands of people packed the streets of Ahvaz to mourn the victims of Saturday's attack, which killed 12 members of the elite Revolutionary Guards as well children and women.

Al-Ahvazieh, an Iranian Arab-affiliated group, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Niu Song, professor of Middle East Studies Institute at Shanghai International Studies University, said the problems behind the attack are not new to Iran, especially in terms of religious and political conflict.



Iranian soldiers flee the deadly attack on a military parade in Ahvaz on Saturday. SHEN JIZHONG / XINHUA

"This is not the first time for the group to launch such an attack, which can be viewed as a manifestation of the conflict between the two major sects in the Middle East," he said.

Niu also said that Iran accusing the US is an impact from the deadlock over the nuclear deal, which the US withdrew from in May before reimposing sanctions on Iran.

Zuo Xiyang, professor from Renmin University of China, said the attack was a result of the international and domestic linkages under the context of the US and some Arab countries jointly containing Iran.

### Joint pressure

"From the domestic factors, Ahvaz has a crucial geographical location and there exist anti-government organizations," Zuo said. "And from the international view, the US and some Arab countries have a tense relationship with Iran, and they have long supported these organizations in different ways. These forces have jointly exerted pressure on Iran."

However, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Sunday rejected Teheran's accusations that Washington and its allies should be held accountable for the attack.

Responding to Zarif's tweet vowing to act "swiftly and decisively" "in defense of Iranian lives", Pompeo said he wished "Zarif would focus on keeping his own people secure rather than causing insecurity all around the world."

Niu said Iran could now take the chance to improve public opinion and the relationship with its neighbors.

"Facing the domestic pressure, Iran may want to improve the relationship with countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia," he said. "It may also strengthen its anti-terrorism efforts."

Reuters and Xinhua contributed to this story.



Anti-Brexit supporters demonstrate in the center of the English city of Liverpool as it hosts the annual Labour Party Conference on Sunday. HANNAH MCKAY / REUTERS

## EU 'pulling handbrake' on Brexit talks as minister slams summit rejection

By JULIAN SHEA  
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The minister in charge of Britain's exit from the European Union, Dominic Raab, said European leaders have "pulled the handbrake" on negotiations and are offering exit terms that no other country would ever consider agreeing to.

Raab was speaking on the BBC's *Politics Live* program in the aftermath of last week's summit of European leaders in Salzburg, where Prime Minister Theresa May's proposals, known as the Chequers Plan, were roundly rejected by the other 27 member states.

Raab said the UK had been

"rebuffed on our plans without any coherent explanation as to why, but insisted the country would 'hold our nerve' in the face of such a public rejection.

"We've revved up the motor of these negotiations, I've been out there a lot more frequently to get motoring, to make progress and the EU have just yanked up the handbrake. And for the negotiations to go forward they're going to have to take their hand off the handbrake."

Major sticking points for Britain's future relations with the continent-wide group include access to the single market — the EU says access to this is linked inextricably to freedom of movement — and

the question of the frontier between Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland, which remains an EU member.

Following her return from the Salzburg summit, May made a public statement on Friday where she reiterated her determination to stick to her negotiating position and said Britain needed more "respect" from the EU, adding that to reject her plan at this late stage was "not acceptable".

She said talks had reached an "impasse" and "serious engagement" from the EU side was necessary if any progress was going to be made.

European Council President Donald Tusk made a conciliatory gesture, saying

there was still potential for "compromise" but that UK proposals would have to be "reworked".

May moved to assure EU citizens living in the UK that should talks over an agreement end in failure, "your rights will be protected", adding that "no one wants a good deal more than me", but she was insistent that the result of the June 2016 referendum which set in motion Britain's departure from the EU would be respected and not challenged by a second public vote.

"The EU should be clear", she said. "I will not overturn the result of the referendum. Nor will I break up my country."

## UN meeting could pave way for 2nd summit

By PAN MENGQI  
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Sanctions against the DPRK and denuclearization will be the main topics for discussion during the high-level UN General Assembly, as US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is to host a special session at the Security Council on Thursday to urge the international community to keep up the pressure on Pyongyang despite the country's recent commitment to abandon its nuclear sites.

Pompeo said on Sunday that economic sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will not be reduced until it completes denuclearization.

Top leader of the DPRK Kim Jong-un said last week at a summit with the Republic of Korea President Moon Jae-in that he was willing to dismantle DPRK's nuclear launch sites

if the US takes "corresponding measures". He also promised that international inspectors can enter the country to witness the dismantlement.

Observer said the latest Kim-Moon summit has helped revive US-DPRK diplomacy that had failed to make headway since President Donald Trump met Kim in Singapore in June and signed a commitment on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

However, differences remain in current DPRK-US talks, including the scale of denuclearization, US sanctions, and whether to issue a war-ending declaration.

Pompeo refuse to say whether Washington would consider a declaration on ending the Korean War that Pyongyang has sought as a sign of reduced US hostility.

"Everybody's got their own idea what a concession might be. Some thought it was a

concession for President Trump to go to Singapore. I certainly didn't think so; President Trump doesn't," Pompeo told the US TV program *Fox News Sunday*.

"But what we've made clear is the economic sanctions — the driving force to achieve the outcome we're looking for — will not be released. And the UN Security Council will not reduce those sanctions, until such time as we've achieved that final denuclearization."

Zhang Yun, an associate professor of Japan's National Niigata University, said the DPRK has made several positive gestures since the landmark Kim-Trump meeting, including the demolition of one nuclear test site and dismantling of a missile launch facility, the return of the remains of US soldiers from the Korean War (1950-53) and the release of US citizens.

The latest Kim-Moon talks

could be a prelude for a second DPRK-US summit that may lead to more specific agreements, Zhang said.

In the past decades, the central question on the Korean Peninsula issue has been whether Pyongyang is inclined to reform. But now the focus will be more on how the US and President Trump can grasp this historic opportunity to make change happen earlier and smoother by skillfully navigating US policies, Zhang added.

The Associated Press said while Pompeo has invited his DPRK counterpart for a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly this week, Trump is also considering a second summit with Kim.

"President Trump very much is prepared to meet with Chairman Kim at the right time, and we hope that will happen in the not-too-distant future," Pompeo said.

### Briefly

#### Vietnam Late president to get State funeral

A two-day State funeral will be held for President Tran Dai Quang, who on Friday following a serious illness, the Vietnam News Agency reported on Sunday. During the funeral on Wednesday and Thursday, all national flags at governmental agencies will be tied to the pole by a black piece of cloth, and flags will be flown at half staff. All entertainment activities will be officially suspended. Tran, who had been president since 2016, will be buried at a cemetery in his home town on Friday.

#### NEW ZEALAND Food store halts strawberry sales

Supermarket chain Countdown pulled a brand of Australian strawberries off its shelves after needles were found in punnets purchased from a store in Auckland. A scare has gripped neighboring Australia, where police are investigating more than 100 reports of needles found in fruit during recent weeks. It was unclear when the contaminated berries entered New Zealand but last week Australia had said it was using metal detectors to screen all strawberry exports.

#### CUBA President makes first trip to US

Cuba's new president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, arrived in New York on Sunday for his first trip to the United States, where he will denounce the decades-old US trade embargo on his country at the UN General Assembly, state-run media reported. Tensions have heightened between the countries after US President Donald Trump tightened the embargo last year following the resumption of diplomatic relations under his predecessor, Barack Obama. Washington also alleged a series of health attacks on US diplomats in Havana, something Cuba denies.

#### LIBYA Tripoli clashes 'leave 115 dead'

At least 115 people have been killed and 383 injured in month-long clashes between rival factions in Tripoli, Libya's health ministry said on Sunday. The fighting involved two of the capital's largest armed groups. Tripoli and western Libya are run by a UN-backed government mainly supported by armed groups, while Eastern Libya is controlled by a rival administration. The country has been riven since Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in 2011.

XINHUA—REUTERS

## Trump's Supreme Court pick faces new misconduct claim

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's embattled Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh was hit by a second accusation of sexual misconduct on Sunday, leaving Republicans scrambling to save a confirmation that until recently had seemed all but certain.

The latest claims of impropriety during Kavanaugh's youth came as he was already facing a dramatic hearing where his testimony was to be weighed against that of a university professor who has separately accused him of assault.

Senate Democrats are now investigating a bombshell claim by Deborah Ramirez, 53, who says Kavanaugh exposed himself to her during a 1980s college party at Yale University, thrust his genitals in her face and caused her to touch them without her consent, according to *The New Yorker*.

Ramirez told the magazine she had become inebriated during a drinking game and was on the floor when the alleged incident took place.

Kavanaugh denied the story, calling it "a smear."

"The people who knew me then know that this did not happen, and have said so," the judge said in a statement.

Like Christine Blasey Ford, the professor accusing him of assaulting her when they were teenagers, Ramirez wants the FBI to investigate the incident, and Democratic lawmakers are backing her demands.

Ramirez's call for an investigation came despite her admission to the *New Yorker* that there are gaps in her memory of the incident, and that she expects her memo-

ries to be questioned as she had been drinking.

Ford, meanwhile, agreed to testify on Thursday after an increasingly ugly weeklong standoff that saw her forced to leave her California home as she faced death threats and Trump attacked her credibility.

Kavanaugh, who also denies that allegation, said he wishes to testify as soon as possible to clear his name following Ford's claims that he attacked her at a high school party.

According to *The New York Times*, the federal judge has

calendars from the summer of 1982 he plans to share with senators showing he was out of town most of that time with no indication of the party of concern.

Democratic Senator and committee member Richard Blumenthal echoed demands for an investigation.

"The Senate simply cannot in good conscience vote on this nomination without a full fair FBI investigation of all these allegations," he said.

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## Typhoon volunteers



About 8,000 volunteers participate in collecting garbage from Manila bay during the 33rd International Coastal Cleanup in Manila, the Philippines on Saturday, a week after Typhoon Mangkhut ravaged the country. JAM STA ROSA / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE