

US Supreme Court Ruling: Seizure of Two Billion Dollars in Iranian Assets. “Highway Robbery”

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Iran says the deduction of around USD two billion in frozen Iranian assets recently authorized by a US court ruling is “highway robbery,” vowing that the Islamic Republic will retrieve the sum.

According to Press TV, last Wednesday, the US Supreme Court ruled that the money had to be turned over to the American families of the people killed in a 1983 bombing of a US Marine Corps barracks in the Lebanese capital of Beirut and other attacks blamed on Iran.

Iran has denied any role in the attack, and the money confiscated under the US court ruling belongs to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI). The assets have been blocked under US sanctions.



Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (photo by AFP)

“The judgment by the Supreme Court and the other, even more absurd judgment by a New York circuit court deciding that Iran should pay damages for 9/11 are the height of absurdity,” Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told The New Yorker in an interview published on Monday.

The top Iranian diplomat asked how Americans would feel should such a thing happen to their properties.

“The United States has committed a lot of crimes against Iranians, against the people of Vietnam, the people of Afghanistan, the people of Iraq. Can they legislate in their own countries that for every collateral damage suffered because of American bombing, for every person who was tortured by the SAVAK (the intelligence service of the deposed Shah’s regime), which was created by the United States, those people can claim money from the United States and go confiscate it? Would you be willing to accept it?” he questioned.

Zarif said the US Supreme Court only has jurisdiction over the US, not Iran, and its rulings are therefore not recognized by the Islamic Republic.

“The Supreme Court is the Supreme Court of the United States, not the Supreme Court of the world. We’re not under its jurisdiction, nor is our money,” he said.

Referring to the confiscation of the USD two billion in frozen Iranian assets, Zarif said, “It is a theft. Huge theft. It is highway robbery. And believe you me, we will get it back.”

He again referred to the other court ruling that held Iran responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US — which were carried out by a total of 19 individuals, 15 of whom were Saudi nationals — and said the “absurd” ruling speaks to how the US judicial system has lost its credibility.

“How would you explain Iran being held accountable for the damages to the victims of 9/11 — and others being absolved of any responsibility, those who were actually responsible for it? These cases cannot stand in any serious civilized court of law. When a US court condemns Iran for 9/11, it finishes the credibility of the US justice system when it comes to Iran,” he said.

“I have lost every respect for US justice,” Zarif said.

On Monday, Zarif had said that Iran would act to sue the United States at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague to retrieve the USD two billion.

“We hold the US administration responsible for preservation of Iranian funds, and if they are plundered, we will lodge a complaint with the I.C.J. for reparation,” he said.

During the interview, the Iranian foreign minister was asked about Iran’s missile activities, the United States objection to them, and whether the issue would be subjected to potential negotiation in the future.

“Our defense is not subject to bargaining,” the Iranian foreign minister said. “That’s the problem with the United States. It believes it can control everybody’s behavior. The missile tests are our right.”

On October 11, Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) successfully test-fired its first guided ballistic missile dubbed Emad. Washington slammed the test, claiming the projectile is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and vowed to respond with sanctions.

Zarif reiterated that Iranian missiles are for defensive purposes only, recalling the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, when, he said, “missiles [were] pouring on Iranian cities with chemical weapons,” and Iran “didn’t have any to defend ourselves.”

He also reiterated the assertion by the Iranian government and military officials that none of the country’s missiles are nuclear-capable.

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