



SALAAM



The latest news and information from the Embassy of Malaysia in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Highlights

COVID-19:
REPATRIATION
TO MALAYSIA

MERDEKA DAY
CELEBRATION

ASEAN TEHRAN
COMMITTEE (ATC)

PERWAKILAN TEHRAN
ACTIVITIES

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Ambassador's message

2020 has been a very challenging year to be in Iran and dealing with Iran. The imposition of maximum pressure on Iran by the United States has caused considerable hardship not just to Iranians but also to those living in Iran. It also makes it a challenge to maintain our trade relations to Iran, let alone to increase it.

But the explosion of COVID-19 cases in Iran in February gave hardship in Iran a new meaning especially Iran's inability to import medical products due to sanctions leading to our total evacuation back to Malaysia. The evacuation, being locked-up in a room for a two week quarantine, the Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia and being in limbo for five months. It was an experience of a lifetime.

We are now back in Iran, albeit without our dependent, in a Covid-19 red zone and continued maximum pressure from the US. Without the vaccines and cure for COVID-19, Iran will remain a red zone and no matter who wins in the US presidential elections, Iran will remain under US sanctions. But life goes on...

Dato' Rustom Yahaya

COVID-19: Repatriation to Malaysia

On 21 Mac 2020, Mission had assisted the repatriation process by the Government of Malaysia to bring home 55 people in Iran including 46 Malaysians, 8 Singaporean and one Indonesian via Air Asia chartered plane to Kuala Lumpur. Although there were some obstacles and challenges during the repatriation process, Mission had successfully carried out the task with the cooperation from various agencies including Wisma Putra, NADMA, KKM and MKN. Our heartiest appreciation to all parties involved in making the repatriation a success.



Emergency Response Team (ERT)

During the severe outbreak of COVID-19 in March, Mission had established an Emergency Response Team (ERT) to provide consular assistance for Malaysians residing in Iran. The ERT is headed by H.E. Dato' Rustam Yahaya and supported by six Home-Based Staff. The ERT was also tasked to coordinate the logistical arrangements for the repatriation flight to Malaysia.





Media Diplomacy: Sharing of experience in handling COVID-19 in Iran

During his stay in Malaysia, H.E. Ambassador had the privilege to share the situation of COVID-19 in Iran and Mission's handling of the repatriation process in bringing home fellow Malaysians safely. H.E. Ambassador was interviewed by several Malaysian mainstream media outlets, namely, Astro Awani, TV3, New Straits Times, Berita Harian and the Malaysia Gazette.



Malaysian ambassador to Iran, Datuk Rustam Yahya is keen to return to Iran and continue his duties in Teheran.

Envoy keeps in touch with Malaysians in Iran

PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Rustam Yahya, the Malaysian ambassador to Iran, has been back in Malaysia for the past three months. However, not a day goes by without him checking on the welfare of four Malaysians stranded in the republic.

He said although all Malaysian embassy personnel had returned home since March 30, he was still in contact with those still there.

He said two of the Malaysians could not be repatriated in March as they were behind bars for drug offences. Two more, he said, had married locals and had opted to remain in the republic.

"During the evacuation, we brought home 88 Malaysians, eight Singaporean students and one Indonesian," he said.

"I also spoke to the two who married locals, and they are safe."

"At the same time, the Covid-19 outbreak in Iran was concentrated

in areas that were far from where they were. Nevertheless, we are monitoring the situation."

He said the alarming infection rate in Iran, particularly in the city of Qom, led to the evacuation of Malaysian students and other Malaysian travellers from the city, 140km south of Teheran.

Financial constraints caused by the pandemic also led to Wisma Putra having to terminate the services of its embassy personnel there.

"As Iran was placed under lockdown, the embassy had to obtain allocations for operations from a bank in Dubai.

"However, when the United Arab Emirates closed its borders with Iran, we could not get our money, which made it difficult to pay for operating costs, including salaries, on top of receiving medical aid."

"During this time, the embassy

in Teheran was still open, with local staff still working."

On the process of bringing Malaysians home, Rustam said he needed to get the green light from Wisma Putra first before making arrangements to evacuate students from Qom, Mahabar and Teheran, a mere two days before their flights home.

"All were brought home safe and underwent the mandatory quarantine upon arrival in Malaysia."

And now, three months on, Rustam is keen to return to Iran and continue his duties in Teheran.

The pandemic, he added, impacted trade between Malaysia and Iran.

Rustam, who has served in Iran since 2017, said the possibility of their return would depend on when UAE decides to reopen its international borders to enable financial resources to return.

Merdeka Day Celebration

On 31 August 2020, Mission had organised Merdeka Day Celebration at the Official Residence. The event commenced with flag-raising ceremony and was followed by a speech by H.E. Dato' Rustam Yahaya. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Iran, the small scale event was held by observing strict health and safety protocols.



ASEAN TEHRAN COMMITTEE (ATC)

Malaysia took over the Chairmanship of ASEAN Tehran Committee (ATC) from Indonesia in January 2020. Several meetings were held between ATC members prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to the serious outbreak of COVID-19 in Iran, all ATC programmes and activities were later postponed. Currently, all ATC meetings and activities are held virtually via online platform.



PERWAKILAN TEHRAN ACTIVITIES

PERWAKILAN Tehran continues to play an integral role assisting Mission in conducting various outreach programmes and promotional activities in Iran. Several programmes were organised by PERWAKILAN Tehran including *Kelas Bimbingan Malaysia*, special course on etiquette and fine dining as well as cooking demonstration to promote palm oil. PERWAKILAN Tehran members have also been actively involved in the ASEAN Ladies Circle (ALC) and the Diplomatic Spouses Group (DSG).



Annual General Meeting of PERWAKILAN Tehran



Special course on etiquette and fine dining for PERWAKILAN members



Kelas Bimbingan Malaysia



Food Diplomacy: Cooking demonstration to promote the use of palm oil in Iranian food and delicacies