Ayatollah Khamene meeting with South African president Jacob Zuma - 24 /Apr/ 2016

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in a meeting with South African President Jacob Zuma on Sunday, underscored the necessity of increasing various forms of political and economic cooperation between Iran and South Africa, saying: “Independent countries must get closer together and increase their cooperation in spite of disruptive measures taken by some arrogant powers.”

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the Islamic Republic of Iran’s severance of ties with the racist regime of South Africa after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, saying: “The Islamic Republic cut off its relations with the Zionist regime [of Israel] and the Apartheid regime of South Africa almost at the same time.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution highlighted the role of former South African leader, Nelson Mandela, in overthrowing the racist South African regime and the background of his longstanding and friendly relations with the Islamic Republic, adding: “Due to the continued struggles by Mandela and South African people, that oppressive and inhuman regime was eliminated, and by doing this, Mandela breathed fresh life into struggles all across Africa.”

Ayatollah Khamenei then described Iran’s viewpoint on South Africa as positive and constructive, adding: “Relations between Iran and South Africa are very cordial and the two countries’ cooperation with each other at global bodies is very helpful and effective, but economic and trade ties must be also enhanced in proportion to the two countries’ potentialities.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution mentioned interaction between the two countries within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as another ground for cooperation, adding: “Such cooperation will benefit all non-aligned countries.”

“The interests of independent countries lie in increasing cooperation and collaboration in different fields, and the obstacles created by certain powers to bar such cooperation must be countered,” said Ayatollah Khamenei.

During the meeting, which was also attended by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Mr. Jacob Zuma, the president of South Africa, offered his gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Iran for the support it offered his country’s people in their struggle against the Apartheid regime, saying: “The people of South Africa will never forget this support and Mandela’s trip to Iran was a show of practical appreciation for this support.”

Noting that South Africa has always been opposed to Western sanctions against Iran, Zuma said: “There are abundant and untapped grounds for enhancing cooperation between the two countries and we try to have a fresh start in economic and trade ties.”

Referring to Ayatollah Khamenei’s remarks about the necessity of cooperation among independent nations, Zuma said: “Certain powers try to prevent development of relations among independent nations under unjustified pretexts, but we can resolve many problems through unity and harmony in [dealing with] global issues.”

Mr. Zuma said one ground for cooperation would be making efforts to change structure of the United Nations and the Security Council, adding: “Member states of the [UN] Security Council use the inefficient mechanism of this Council to harm other countries without any attention to the world’s public opinion and the General Assembly’s decisions.”

The South African president also heaped praise on the clear thought and resistance of the Leader and the Iranian nation, saying: “The Islamic Republic of Iran has shown that it can resolve its problems and serve as a role model for all [countries] by relying on itself in the hostile environment of the world.”