

Iran, IAEA resolve 'ambiguities'

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said the International Atomic Energy Agency's officials have visited Tehran to hold negotiations, conduct inspections and resolve uncertainties caused by a recent report by Western media. He made the remarks on the sidelines of a weekly cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, according to Tasnim News Agency.

The UN nuclear agency officials have been holding negotiations, making visits and conducting inspections since Tuesday, he said, adding that the ambiguities caused by the incorrect interpretation of an IAEA inspector in his recent report have been or are being resolved.

Eslami underlined that Iran maintains its relations with the IAEA within the framework of the Safeguards Agreement. Last week, Iran categorically rejected a report by Bloomberg which claimed Tehran has enriched uranium to levels above 60 percent purity, saying the country's nuclear facilities have never enriched uranium above that level, Press TV reported.

The Bloomberg report said "the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is trying to clarify how Iran accumulated uranium enriched to 84% purity."

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the AEOI, said Bloomberg's report was aimed at distorting the realities. He added that during the enrichment process, the mere existence of individual uranium particles enriched to above 60 percent purity does not mean that uranium is being enriched at levels above 60 percent, Press TV reported.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Wednesday that IAEA officials will visit Tehran in the coming days, according to Reuters. He was apparently referring to an expected visit by IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi to Tehran. "In the framework of concluding negotiations, IAEA officials will travel to Tehran in the coming days," the minister said during a press briefing with his Iraqi counterpart in Baghdad.

The top Iranian diplomat also touched on the talks underway in Vienna since April 2021 aimed at salvaging the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and having US sanctions lifted. Amir-Abdollahian said Tehran has for long been trying to reach a strong and sustainable agreement and has expressed its readiness to conclude the stalled negotiations, Press TV reported. "We are ready to take steps towards concluding the Vienna talks, based on previous negotiations and Iran's red lines," he said.

However, Amir-Abdollahian warned that Tehran is also ready to consider plan B in case the US continues to create obstacles in the course of talks.

Iran FM, Iraqi officials discuss ties, international issues



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and top Iraqi officials discussed bilateral relations and regional and international issues in Baghdad on Wednesday.

In a meeting with Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani, Amir-Abdollahian stressed the need for Iraq to protect the security of its border with Iran and prevent those in Iraq from making threatening moves against Iran, Press TV reported.

The Iraqi premier, for his part, said Iraq will continue to contribute to efforts to maintain calm in the region and promote dialogue among regional countries. He said Baghdad is ready to implement agreements made during his visit to Iran late November.

Speaking at a joint press conference with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein in Baghdad, Amir-Abdollahian

thanked Hussein and the Iraqi government for their attempts to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as Iran and Egypt.

"Within the framework of boosting cooperation with Muslim countries and the region, we welcome the restoration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia and Egypt," he said.

"We express gratitude to Fuad Hussein's efforts in closing the gaps between the two sides."

The top Iranian diplomat also said that he had discussed with his Iraqi counterpart the continuation of cooperation within the framework of mutual agreements and based on the 1975 Agreement.

Iraq has hosted several rounds of negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia over the past two years. The two countries' ties were severed in 2016 after the kingdom executed top Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, sparking an attack on its Tehran Embassy by angry protesters.

The Iranian foreign minister's trip comes weeks after his Saudi counterpart paid a visit to Iraq, where he discussed the resumption of Tehran-Riyadh talks aimed at restoring their bilateral ties under the auspices of the Iraqi government.

Earlier on Wednesday, Amir-Abdollahian expressed satisfaction with the fact that Iraq has restored its "natural" role in the region.

Later in the day, Amir-Abdollahian also sat down for talks with Iraq's President Abdul Latif Rashid in the presidential palace.

In the meeting, Amir-Abdollahian stressed the need for further development of Iran-Iraq ties. He said ties between Iran and Iraq are not limited to relations between the two governments, as the Iranian and Iraqi nations are also close to each other.

Iran MP urges IAEA to be independent from US influence



A senior Iranian lawmaker on Wednesday urged the UN nuclear watchdog to act independently and not to serve the interests of the United States. "We ask the agency to act according to its assigned duty and position and ignore political pressure of other countries," Mohammad Saleh Jokar, the chairman of Iran's parliamentary Internal Affairs Committee, told Iran Daily, referring to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Jokar added that the IAEA, however, was "exactly" following US policies. He rejected reports about uranium enrichment up to

the purity of 84% in Iran. "The report on 84% enrichment was categorically denied by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and such levels of enrichment in Iran's nuclear facilities is not a reality at all," the legislator said. He noted that Iran had been transparent about the level of its uranium enrichment and informed the IAEA about it.

"But the agency is often influenced by what the White House dictates," Jokar said. The MP accused the US of using the IAEA as leverage to pressure Iran and launch a psychological war against it. He noted that uranium enrichment could reach 90% in Iran's atomic sites but the country would never do so as its nuclear program is peaceful.

"We are capable of it (90% uranium enrichment), but as we have stated repeatedly, we intend for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Accordingly, the level of enrichment in Iran's nuclear facilities is limited only to peaceful purposes," Jokar pointed out.

He said Iran needs uranium enrichment for energy generation, fuel for ships and submarines, agriculture, industry, medical treatment and other peaceful purposes. "We never seek to make nuclear weapons. Nukes have no place at all in our program because the grand policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the fatwa of the Leader prohibit us from producing such weapons," the deputy said, referring to a religious decree by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khomeini that bans building,

possessing and maintaining weapons of mass destruction including atomic bombs.

He made it clear that Iran would not seek nukes based on its own beliefs and values.

"However, it is not acceptable at all that some countries and even international organizations accuse our country of opting for nukes," Jokar stressed. The lawmaker said such accusations about "illegal" uranium enrichment in Iran is part of an "Iranophobia" campaign.

Iran has been under US sanctions since 2018, when the administration of former US president Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA aimed to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for lifting

sanctions. Following the US withdrawal from the multilateral deal, Iran began enriching uranium beyond the limits set by the JCPOA in retaliation. The country also began installing advanced centrifuges to speed up its enrichment activities.

Iran has also removed IAEA cameras operating beyond the JCPOA after the agency's Board of Governors adopted a resolution criticizing Tehran's "lack of cooperation".

US President Joe Biden has expressed his willingness to rejoin the JCPOA and lift sanctions. However, the two sides have yet to reach an agreement on how to move forward with Iran demanding the removal of all sanctions and assurances that the US would not pull out of the deal again.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran imposes sanctions ...

Iran's intelligence bodies have found footprints of American and other Western spy agencies in the violent riots. The rioters went on a rampage, brutally attacking security officers and causing massive damage to public property. Dozens of people and security personnel were killed as a result of the violence.

The ministry further denounced the bloc and Britain for their "interference in the Islamic Republic's internal affairs," and their "propagation of falsehoods and misinformation about Iran".

It also condemned them for their cooperation with U.S. sanctions against the country, which amounted to "economic terrorism".

UK envoy summoned

Iran's Foreign Ministry also summoned the British interim chargé d'affaires in Tehran to protest the UK government's policy of leveling unfounded accusations against the Islamic Republic and promoting Iranophobia. In a meeting with the British diplomat, Isabelle Marsh, on Wednesday, the head of the Western Europe department of the Iranian For-

eign Ministry, said making "baseless claims" amounts to continuing the policy of Iranophobia, calling on the British government to stop its "unfriendly approach".

The development came a day after the British government summoned Iran's top diplomat to condemn what it called "serious threats" to the lives of UK-based journalists, after the so-called Iran International TV channel moved its broadcasting from London to Washington. British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said a senior official in his ministry met Iran's charge d'affaires Mehdi Hosseini Matin "to make clear the UK will not tolerate threats to life and media freedom."