

# Iran's response to 'excessive demands'

## PERSPECTIVE

Iran has confirmed it withdrew accreditation from several inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency in a move it called a legal response to the "excessive demands" of Europe and the United States and their "abuse" of international organizations, including the IAEA.

During the quarterly meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, no binding resolution was issued against Iran. However, the political pressure exerted by Western nations on Tehran through the IAEA persisted. In a joint statement, the so-called European Troika (Britain, France, and Germany), along with the United States, reiterated earlier claims about Iran's lack of cooperation with the IAEA under the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal or the JCPOA. They urged Iran to "provide, without further delay, technically credible information on the current location(s) of nuclear material and contaminated equipment in relation to Turqzabad and Varamin."

Western nations are expecting Iran to uphold its JCPOA commitments and fully cooperate with the IAEA while the European parties either couldn't or didn't want to keep their side of the bargain after the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the deal in 2018. They even fail to recognize that Iran's scaling back of its JCPOA obligations is essentially a response to their own lack of commitment, and Iran's inability to reap the benefits of the nuclear agreement. Mohammad Eslami, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, pointed out that "Iran is retracting its commitments as per Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA because the Western parties haven't upheld their end of the deal." The joint statement from the European trio and the United States regarding safeguards and the request for detailed information about the locations of Tur-



quzabad and Varamin harks back to an older, long-standing issue which was initially raised based on claims by Israel. Iran, however, has cooperated with the IAEA, addressing questions about two out of the four alleged cases. Negotiations and cooperation concerning the remaining two facilities are ongoing.

"We've engaged in discussions, provided clarification, and submitted numerous documents to the agency. This case has been brought up as a result of hostility, framing, and accusations that have been levied against us," Eslami said. The recent meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors was still ongoing when Josep Borrell, the European Union's foreign policy chief, made an announcement regarding a joint decision by Britain, France, and Germany against Iran.

According to Borrell, the European Troika has communicated their intention to the US to retain ballistic missile sanctions against Iran. Borrell explained that the EU foreign ministers of the European Union believed that Iran hadn't complied with the JCPOA since 2019, and the issue hadn't been resolved through the JCPOA's problem-solving mechanism.

According to EU's top diplomat, foreign ministers won't take steps to further lift sanctions against Iran, on October 18, 2023.

But what does this date signify? As per the nuclear agreement, a set of UN, EU, and UK sanctions, which encompass restrictions on individuals and entities involved in Iran's missile, nuclear, and weapons programs, are expected to be lifted. If UN missile sanctions are lifted, Iran would be permitted to purchase and sell ballistic missiles and drones with a range of up to 300 kilometers.

At the same time, "Matthew Miller," the spokesperson of the US Department of State, expressed support for the European Troika's decision, stating, "We are coordinating closely with a range of allies and partners, including our E3 and EU partners on their transition day plans, and we'll consider additional counter-proliferation efforts going forward. We have imposed a number of sanctions, as you referred to in your question, on Iran, and of course will not hesitate to continue to do so in the future if appropriate." This non-binding decision by Europe and the United States clearly underscores which party has abandoned the 2015 nuclear agreement

and is unwilling to fulfill its obligations. Western parties, despite not upholding any JCPOA commitments, are pushing to maintain sanctions against Iran while simultaneously expecting Iran to adhere to its JCPOA commitments.

Nonetheless, Iran has repeatedly cautioned against the exploitation of international institutions, including the IAEA, by Western nations. The persistence of this situation has compelled Tehran to respond in kind. Just like in the meeting held last year in June, where Iran reacted to the IAEA director general's political report and the joint action of the European Troika and the United States in passing a resolution against its nuclear program by removing some of the agency's surveillance cameras at nuclear facilities. Now, Tehran has once again demonstrated a serious response to the unconstructive actions of the agency and Western countries by barring multiple IAEA inspectors assigned to the country. Iranian media and a Western diplomat said the decision concerned eight inspectors, all from France and Germany.

"Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran informed me of its decision to withdraw the designation of several expe-

rienced agency inspectors assigned to conduct verification activities in Iran" under an existing agreement, UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi said on Saturday. Grossi argued that this move had been executed in a manner that would seriously hamper the IAEA's ability to carry out its work.

In response to this development, Nasser Kanaani, the spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, criticized the "political" manipulation of the IAEA Board of Governors by Europe and the United States.

He confirmed the withdrawal of the designation of the IAEA inspectors and stated, "Iran's recent action is based on the sovereign rights outlined in Article 9 of the safeguards agreement between Iran and the IAEA (INFCIRC 214)." Kanaani said that Tehran would continue to engage in positive cooperation within the framework of the deals established with the agency, emphasizing the importance of the IAEA's neutrality.

In a statement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry denounced the European countries' decision not to fulfill their JCPOA obligations calling the action illegal, in contradiction to their JCPOA commitments and Resolution 2231. The Foreign Ministry

described it as a move that fosters tension and harbors ill intentions.

European nations have alleged that Iran has not adhered to its JCPOA commitments since 2019. However, the Iranian Foreign Ministry provided a comprehensive explanation, reminding them that "in response to the unlawful withdrawal of the United States and the reimposition of tough sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran took remedial measures in accordance with its rights under Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA. These steps align entirely with the procedures outlined in the JCPOA." The Iranian Foreign Ministry also issued a warning: "We caution the European parties against implementing measures that fuels tension, as these will undoubtedly complicate bilateral relations and have a detrimental impact on the cooperation process, including negotiations aimed at lifting sanctions."

Despite earlier optimism, the recent meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors became a forum for counterproductive claims by Western parties against Iran's nuclear program. This overshadowed the relatively positive atmosphere of mutual cooperation, with their actions being seen as excessive.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso establish security alliance



**AL JAZEERA**— Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have signed a mutual defense pact, as the three Sahel countries aim to help each other against possible threats of armed rebellion or external aggression.

The charter, known as the Alliance of Sahel States, signed on Saturday binds the signatories to assist one another – including militarily – in the event of an attack on any one of them. "Any attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one or more contracted parties will be considered an aggression against the other parties," it said. It also binds the three countries to work to prevent or settle armed rebellions.

### Thousands in Australia rally for Indigenous referendum

**REUTERS** – Thousands rallied in Australia on Sunday to support recognizing the country's Indigenous people in the constitution, a proposal that is struggling ahead of a referendum next month.

If approved on Oct. 14, the measure would enshrine Indigenous people in the constitution and set up an advisory body to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people input on policies that affect them. Indigenous Australians, who account for 3.8% of the population, face disadvantages including discrimination, poor health and education outcomes and high incarceration rates.

### 18 civilians killed by militias in DR Congo

**AFP** – Eighteen civilians and one soldier were killed in attacks by militia groups in western DR Congo, where sectarian violence has flared since June 2022, government officials said Sunday.

The civilians were killed in the village of Final in Kinshasa, around 190 kilometres southeast of the capital Kinshasa, allegedly by the "Mobondo" militia last Monday, government spokesman Patrick Muyaya said after a government cabinet meeting.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



### Italy's PM calls for EU help after island migrant surge

Italy's prime minister warned Sunday that the "future of Europe is at stake", after droves of migrants landed on the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa.

Thousands of migrants on vessels from the North African coast landed on Italy's southernmost island this week, sparking a crisis that has rekindled debate over the division of responsibility among the EU nations, AFP reported. At a press conference with European Commission

President Ursula von der Leyen during a visit to the island, Giorgia Meloni said the bloc needed to work together to face the challenges of uncontrolled migration.

It is "the future that Europe wants for itself that is at stake here, because the future of Europe depends on Europe's capacity to face major challenges," Meloni said. Between Monday and Wednesday, around 8,500 people – more than the island's entire local pop-

ulation – arrived in 199 boats, according to the UN migration agency.

"Irregular immigration is a European challenge that needs a European response," von der Leyen said, calling on other members of the bloc to take in some of the migrants. The Italian Red Cross, which runs the overcrowded Lampedusa migration centre, said Sunday that 1,500 migrants remained there despite having a capacity for just 400.