

# UN pushes for Iran's nuclear talks, says 'time of the essence'

A top UN official on Tuesday pushed world powers and Iran to urgently work to restore a 2015 deal that lifted sanctions on Tehran in return for restrictions on its nuclear program, warning that its "success or failure matters to all of us." Iran's 2015 deal with Britain, Germany, France, the United States, Russia and China is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The US quit the agreement in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term as president, and Iran began moving away from its nuclear-related commitments under the deal, Reuters reported. "Time is of the essence," UN political affairs chief Rosemary

DiCarlo told the Security Council, which enshrined the deal in a 2015 resolution. "While the onus is on the JCPOA participants and the US, their success or failure matters to all of us. The region cannot afford further instability." Deputy US Ambassador Robert Wood told the council that, "Though diplomacy is the best option, the United States has also been clear that a nuclear Iran can never be an option. We are prepared to use all elements of national power to ensure that outcome." Iran and the so-called E3 grouping of the UK, France and Germany agreed in November to continue holding talks in the near future in an attempt

to find a way out of an impasse over Tehran's nuclear program. However, Britain, the three European countries in a letter earlier this month told the Security Council that they are ready - if needed - to trigger a so-called "snapback" of all international sanctions on Iran to prevent the country from what they called acquiring a nuclear weapon. It came after the UN nuclear watchdog - the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - said this month that Iran is accelerating enrichment of uranium to up to 60% purity. The European countries will lose the ability to take such action on October 18 next year when the 2015 UN resolution



Members of the UN Security Council listen as Geir Pedersen, the UN special envoy for Syria, speaks during a meeting in New York City on December 17, 2024.

● MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/AFP



on the deal expires. "We will take every diplomatic step to prevent Iran from requiring a nuclear weapon, including the triggering of snapback, if necessary," Britain's deputy UN Ambassador James Kariuki told the council on Tuesday. Iran's UN Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani told the council that invoking the "snapback" of sanctions on Tehran would be "unlawful and counterproductive."

"The so-called snapback is not a tool in your hand to be abused for threatening Iran. Iran has made it very clear that such a provocative move will be reciprocated with a firm and proportionate response," he said.

## President in Cairo to attend D-8 summit



● IRNA

### International Desk

Iranian president left Tehran for Cairo on Wednesday to take part in the summit of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, which he called it an opportunity to bring the Islamic countries closer to each other. Masoud Pezeshkian made the remarks before leaving Tehran. Pezeshkian said meetings at this level are very effective for active diplomacy that can bring Islamic countries closer together economically, politically, culturally and socially. Referring to his "good negotiations" with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia in November, the Iranian president described Egypt as a country with a great civilization and an influential country in the Islamic world.

"The deeper and more intimate we make our relations with Islamic countries, the more conspiracies against our country and other Islamic countries will be neutralized," the Iranian president said. The D-8 organization consists of eight developing countries, namely Iran, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt. The D-8 was established in 1997 to improve cooperation between countries stretching from South-east Asia to Africa. Pezeshkian's visit to Egypt is the first by an Iranian president to the African country in more than a decade. Relations between Egypt and Iran have generally been fraught in recent decades but the two countries have stepped up high-level diplomatic contacts since the eruption of the Gaza crisis last year as Egypt tried to play a mediating role.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Senior diplomat warns of Syria's disintegration, spread of insecurity to Iraq

A high-ranking Iranian diplomat said destruction of Syria and rendering it weak in the face of the Israeli regime's aggression have always formed part of the United States and the regime's agenda, warning that the Arab country could fall apart amid the conflicting foreign interests that have come to affect it. Kamal Kharrazi, head of the Islamic Republic's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, made the remarks in

Tehran on Wednesday, in a meeting with Mohamed al-Hassan, the United Nations special representative for Iraq and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Press TV reported. Kharrazi cited remarks made by former US president Barack Obama during his tenure, in which he said, "Assad must go" as an example of Washington's destructive ambitions towards Syria. Kharrazi expressed concern about the

Israeli regime's efforts at availing itself of the power vacuum in the Arab country as well as Tel Aviv's violation of the country's sovereignty through extensive strikes in the country. The official also warned about Syria's disintegration on the back of the opposing interests of the foreign parties that have thrown their support behind the militants. He also said insecurity in Syria could, meanwhile, spread to neighboring Iraq.

## Iran urges IAEA's impartiality by addressing noncompliance with JCPOA

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) urged the United Nations nuclear agency's Director General Rafael Grossi to maintain the body's impartiality by taking into account other parties' non-commitment to their obligations towards the Islamic Republic. "This international institution has to preserve its impartiality and adopt a professional behavior," Mohammad Eslami said in Tehran on Wednesday following a weekly meeting of the Iranian cabinet, referring to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Press TV

reported. "It is not acceptable for an international institution to address just one aspect of the issue, in a provocative manner at that, and refuse to point to the main aspect, which is the obligated parties' non-commitment," he said. The remarks came after Grossi told the Italian news agency ANSA that Iran had "developed much stronger capabilities" regarding various aspects of its nuclear energy program, alleging, "It (the Islamic Republic) has uranium at 60% — 90% is military grade."

He went as far as to claim that the Islamic Republic "is thus practically at the same level as nuclear-armed states." Back in 2018, the Islamic Republic resorted to a number of legitimately retaliatory measures in line with its entitlement under its 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers. The steps came in response to the United States' unilateral and illegal withdrawal from the deal and its Western allies' refusal to restore the deal to its former glory by bringing Washington back into the accord.

## Northern Syria serving ...

This group, which is a military coalition centered around Syrian Kurds, is supported by the United States; however, Ankara considers it a threat to its national security and views it as an offshoot of the PKK, which has been armed against the Turkish government for over three decades in southeastern Turkey. Reports from news agencies indicate that new military movements are currently taking place in northern Syria. Turkey and its allied militia forces are reinforcing their troops along the border with Syria, and it appears that these military groups are preparing for a large-scale assault on areas controlled by Syrian Kurds. According to reports, armed individuals affiliated with Turkey have brought significant mili-

tary equipment close to the border city of Ain al-Arab (Kobani). This is not the first time that Kobani has been subjected to military attacks by Turkey-backed armed forces. In 2019, Kobani was also attacked; that year, the United States initially opposed Turkey's military assault on the Kurds, but later Turkey and the United States reached an agreement behind political negotiations on the matter. Ultimately, in 2019, after Turkish-affiliated military forces captured parts of the region, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the establishment of a safe zone in these areas for the relocation of Syrian refugees, extending 444 kilometers in length and 32 kilometers deep into Syrian territory. Erdogan fears Kurdish in-

dependence and it is clear that, under the guise of this military operation, he aims to weaken the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Syria. However, it is uncertain whether the forces aligned with and influenced by his government will remain as quiet this time or if they are nurturing other objectives. Another question is whether the United States will be willing to compromise again on Ankara's demands, and will the Kurds once more become the victims of US political games in Syria? What is evident is that the United States, particularly over the past decade, has consistently relied on Kurdish forces to achieve its objectives in Syria. Via their support, Washington has managed to gain control over the country's oil resources and maintain its

military bases in Syria. A few days ago, Julani, the leader of the ruling military group in Syria, stated, "All armed groups in this country will be disbanded, and weapons will only be in the hands of government forces." This raises the question of whether the military assault on the Kurds could be part of a shared scenario between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Turkey, or if each player is pursuing different goals. These are just some of the speculations surrounding the issues that could shape the landscape of potential changes in northern Syria. We must wait and see what unfolds in the coming days in the arena of military conflicts in the region and what impact each of the opponents and internal and external players in Syria will have.