

# Iran yet to receive message from US on nuclear talks: *President, FM*

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran had not received any message from the United States regarding the resumption of negotiations on the country's peaceful nuclear program. On the sidelines of the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, in response to reporters' inquiries about any message from US President Donald Trump, Pezeshkian stated, "No, we have not received any message at the moment." Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also addressed a press gaggle following the cabinet meeting, saying, "No specific message has been sent or received from the US government. What is being discussed is merely in the media. Right now, there is no conclusion regarding negotiations, and our benchmark is the past mistrust. Naturally, this mistrust cannot be easily overcome with nice words; it has to be demonstrated through actions."

Araghchi said talks with the European parties are ongoing, adding that Tehran is waiting to know the stances of the other side. If Iran concludes that negotiations may be conducted with the US, such talks will be held on equal standing, he stated, adding that Tehran has not arrived at such a conclusion yet. "While we had made an agreement in the past, they (the US) scrapped the deal," the foreign minister said, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) from which the US withdrew in 2018. About two weeks ago, Pezeshkian remarked, "Trump must first prove that he will follow through on his words. We will engage in dialogue whenever he honors his commitments." Previously, in an exclusive interview with NBC, he mentioned that Tehran is "principally" ready to negotiate with the United States. Recently, Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs Mohammad Javad



Abbas Araghchi  
● president.ir



Masoud Pezeshkian  
● IRNA

Zarif noted during a panel discussion at the Davos meeting, "I hope that this time, in his second term, Trump will be more serious, focused, and

realistic so he understands the consequences of his departure from the JCPOA, which was imposed upon us." He added that following the US with-

drawal from the JCPOA, Iran now possesses "significantly greater nuclear capacity," but he reassured that Iran poses no nuclear or security threat.

## Trump's 'ethnic cleansing' Gaza proposal catches huge flak

Palestinians wait next to their belongings in central Gaza, on January 25, 2025 as the Israeli military is warning Palestinians not to return to northern Gaza.  
● ABDEL KAMM HANA/AP



International Desk

As Palestinians return to northern Gaza after a 15-month war, US President Donald Trump's suggestion to "clean out" the war-ravaged strip and relocate its inhabitants to Egypt and Jordan has ignited a firestorm of criticism from activists as well as across the Middle East, even from America's firmest Arab allies. While Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — the region's two economic heavyweights, also seen as being closest to Trump — have officially remained silent, they have telegraphed their displeasure.

Media outlets in both countries known to be close to the state have been replete with articles and op-eds condemning the president's comments. Abu Dhabi normalized ties with Israel during Trump's first term, and Riyadh has expressed readiness to do so under certain conditions. Yet for both, his proposal is tantamount to a direct national security threat. Besides destabilizing Egypt and Jordan, US talk of driving out Palestinians from their homeland after the war is seen as vindication by those that have long lambasted the UAE and Saudi Arabia for selling out the

Palestinian cause. On Saturday, Trump called to "just clean out" Gaza and resettle Palestinians in Egypt and Jordan, describing the enclave as a "demolition site" after Israel's genocidal war. There was immediate condemnation from the Palestinians, who, along with Jordan and Egypt, rejected the idea over fears that Israel would never allow the Palestinians to return to Gaza if they were forced to leave. Despite widespread opposition to the proposal from Palestinian leadership, the UN and US allies in the region, Trump on Monday repeated his suggestion. He reiterated he would "like to get [Palestinians from Gaza] living in an area where they can live without disruption and so much revolution and violence." The remarks, apparently at odds with existing US policy and international law, have been widely rejected by the Arab world as a potentially fatal blow to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but were embraced by Israel's right wing. US Senator Bernie Sanders denounced Trump's proposal, calling it "ethnic cleansing" and a war crime, urging all Americans to condemn it. Meantime, even Trump loyalists tried to make sense of his words.

"I really don't know," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, when asked on CNN's "State of the Union" about what Trump meant by the "clean out" remark. Graham, who is close to Trump, said the suggestion was not feasible. He said Trump should keep talking to Mideast leaders, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and officials in the United Arab Emirates. "I don't know what he's talking about. But go talk to MBS, go talk to UAE, go talk to Egypt," Graham said. "What is their plan for the Palestinians? Do they want them all to leave?" The Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation issued statements vehemently rejecting any call for the displacement or relocation of Palestinians from their land. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei has also rejected the Trump's plan. Posting a message on X on Tuesday, he wrote, "The idea of cleaning out Gaza as part of the plan for the colonial annihilation of Palestinian people has long been underway using American lethal weapons and ammunition, as well as its political, intelligence and financial support". Resistance groups of Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis were quick to lash out at Trump for his proposal.

## US avoids criticizing Iran's HR record for first time after 15 years

International Desk

The United States for the first time after a decade and half refused to criticize the human rights record of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the United Nations Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. At the 48th Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva this year, the US refrained from taking to task Iran's human rights record after 15 years. Based on records, the United States has filed recommendations on the Islamic Republic over Human Rights issues since 2010. However, Iran faced criticism this year from other member states including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland and Paraguay. Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs vehemently condemned double standards and unfair human rights mechanisms in the world. Kazem Gharibabadi, who headed the Iranian delegation to the 48th session of the Working Group on the UPR, made the remarks at a meeting which was held at Iran's initiative. Gharibabadi expressed Iran's grave concern and strong criticism of double standards, selective approaches and political and instrumental exploitation of human rights across the world. The UPR is an essential mechanism of the council aimed at improving the human rights situation for member states. Iran is one of 14 states reviewed by the UPR working group.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran not at ...

Understandably, Iran's approach to negotiations with Western countries has shifted. They must first demonstrate goodwill regarding nuclear negotiations and agreements, allowing Iran to reciprocate. This shift stems from their past failures to honor obligations, especially economic ones. Western countries fell short in fulfilling their commitments, particularly in releasing Iranian financial assets as agreed. They devised lengthy convoluted processes and ultimately broke their promises. They wasted Iran's time and eroded its trust. These experiences left Iran with bitter experiences in negotiations with the West. If future talks are to occur, Western countries must provide guarantees regarding their commitments.

This applies to oil sales as well. If negotiations with the US resume, it must first adhere to its commitments in this area. Despite fluctuations, Iran's oil production and sales have surged in recent months. Oil production has risen from around 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) to around 3.4 million bpd. According to the Seventh Development Plan, Iran aims to boost its crude oil output to 4.5 million bpd. A plan is in place for this target and the necessary capacities are available to achieve it. Domestic and foreign investors are keen to help realize the goal. The next challenge is Iran's ability to sell oil. The country currently faces sanctions in various sectors, including oil exports. In recent years, Iran employed various strategies to ship

oil abroad and offset sanctions. Although Mr. Trump's approach to oil sales might be stricter than his predecessor's, ratcheting up pressure on Iran's oil trade, Tehran will not be at a loss against intensified sanctions. There are numerous avenues to sell oil, although they may come with setbacks and losses. Iran will do its utmost to devise appropriate strategies to mitigate losses. The extent of pressure on Iran depends on various factors, but Iran's profound influence in the Middle East is undeniable; not everything boils down to financial matters and economic pressures. Political dynamics and future developments will shape various matters and the aftermath of the cease-fire in Gaza and Lebanon may positively impact them.