

# Deputy FM: Iran serious in nuclear talks with US, rejects delay

## IAEA chief optimistic about ongoing negotiations



Vehicles of the US delegation are escorted by Italian police at the entrance of the Omani Embassy in Rome where a second round of nuclear talks between Iran and the United States was held on April 19, 2025.  
● ANDREAS SOLARO/AFP

### International Desk

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Sunday that Iran is serious in the nuclear talks with the US, stressing that the Islamic Republic does

not want any delay in the negotiations. Gharibabadi, who briefed the Parliament's National Security Committee on the two rounds of negotiations between Iran and the US, said that Iran wants the removal of sanctions in the ongoing ne-

gotiations. He said that Tehran will not negotiate on the principle of its right to enrich uranium because Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons and enriches uranium for peaceful purposes. Meanwhile, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi expressed optimism on talks between the US and Iran on Tehran's nuclear program, saying that the second round of the talks in Rome "really could have collapsed" due to the high level of risks looming over the hotly-debated issue. Both sides were "prepared to discuss concrete aspects with each other," Grossi told Italy's La Repubblica newspaper in an interview published on Sunday. Grossi said he was satisfied with progress to date. "The talks really could have collapsed in this second round. Then everything would have come to a halt," he said. "The risk was there. Instead, the spirit of Rome showed it is possible to make progress," the IAEA head said without

providing details. Iran and the US concluded the second round of nuclear talks in Rome on Saturday, which are being mediated by Oman. After the negotiations, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who leads Iran's delegation, said that both sides reached better understanding of a series of principles and goals during the second round of negotiations. Araghchi said that the talks were held in a "constructive atmosphere" and are "moving forward." Iran's top diplomat added that technical negotiations at the expert level will be held in Oman on Wednesday. The two sides will review the result of the Wednesday's negotiations in separate talks which is scheduled to be held in Oman on Saturday to "see how close we are to the principles of an agreement." A senior US official also said Tehran and Washington made "very good progress" in the second round of talks. Oman's Foreign Ministry in a statement

after the talks said that Araghchi and US special envoy in the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, agreed to enter into the next phase of the discussions that would aim to "seal a fair, enduring and binding deal" which would ensure "Iran completely free of nuclear weapons and sanctions and maintaining its ability to develop peaceful nuclear energy." President Donald Trump has been pushing for a rapid deal with Iran while threatening military action against it. Araghchi and Witkoff led the first round of the negotiations in Oman, which were described by the two sides as "positive and constructive." The negotiations are aimed at reaching a diplomatic agreement surrounding the Iranian nuclear program and to put an end to decades of disputes over the issue. Western countries including the US have long accused Iran of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons – an allegation Tehran has consistently denied, insisting that its program is for peaceful civilian purposes.

## US protesters stage nationwide rallies against Trump's policies



### International Desk

Thousands of protesters rallied in Washington and other cities across the US on Saturday to voice their opposition to President Donald Trump's policies on deportations, government firings, and the wars in Gaza and Ukraine.

Outside the White House, protesters carried banners that read, "Workers should have the power," "No king-ship," "Stop arming Israel" and "Due process," media footage showed. Some demonstrators chanted in support of migrants whom the Trump administration has deported or has been attempting to deport while expressing solidarity with people fired by the federal government and with

universities whose funding is threatened by Trump.

"As Trump and his administration mobilize the use of the US deportation machine, we are going to organize networks and systems of resistance to defend our neighbors," a protester said in a rally at Lafayette Square near the White House.

The administration is carrying out "a direct assault on the idea of the rule of law and the idea that the government should be restrained from abusing the people who live here in the United States," Benjamin Douglas, 41, told AFP outside the White House.

Wearing a keffiyeh and carrying a sign calling for the freeing of Mahmoud Khalil, a pro-Palestinian student protester arrested last month, Douglas said individuals were being singled out as "test cases to rile up xenophobia and erode long-standing legal protections."

Other protesters waved Palestinian flags while wearing keffiyeh scarves, chanting "free Palestine," and expressing solidarity with Palestinians killed in Israel's war in Gaza. Some demonstrators carried symbols expressing support for Ukraine and urging Washington to be more decisive in opposing Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine. Since his January inauguration,

Trump and his billionaire ally, Elon Musk, have gutted the federal government, firing over 200,000 workers and attempting to dismantle various agencies.

The administration has also detained scores of foreign students and threatened to stop federal funding to universities over diversity, equity and inclusion programs, climate initiatives and pro-Palestinian protests. Rights groups have condemned the policies.

Near the Washington Monument, banners from protesters read, "Hate never made any nation great," and "Equal rights for all does not mean less rights for you."

"We are in a great danger," said 73-year-old New York protester Kathy Valy, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, adding that their stories of how Nazi leader Adolf Hitler rose to power "are what's happening here."

"The one thing is that Trump is a lot more stupid than Hitler or than the other fascists," she said. "He's being played... and his own team is divided."

Demonstrations were also held in New York City and Chicago, among dozens of other locations. It marked the second day of nationwide demonstrations since Trump took office.

## Israeli airstrikes kill over 25 people in Gaza



Mourners bid farewell to a Palestinian child killed in an Israeli strike, at the Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on April 19, 2025.  
● AFP

Gaza's civil defense agency reported that Israeli airstrikes since dawn on Sunday killed at least 25 people across the Gaza Strip, including women and children. Israel resumed its aerial and ground assault on Gaza on March 18, reigniting fighting after a two-month cease-fire that had paused more than 15 months of war in the coastal territory.

"Since dawn today, the occupation's airstrikes have killed 20 people and injured dozens more, including children and women across the Gaza Strip," Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for the civil defense agency told AFP.

In a separate statement later, the agency reported that five people were killed in an Israeli drone strike on a group of civilians in eastern Rafah.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday vowed to continue the war and bring home the remaining hostages held in Gaza without yielding to

Hamas's demands.

"We are at a critical stage of the campaign, and at this point, we need patience and determination to win," Netanyahu said in a statement, rejecting calls from Hamas to end the war and withdraw troops from Gaza. Since Israel resumed its offensive last month, at least 1,827 people have been killed in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry.

The overall death toll in the Gaza war has reached 51,201, the majority of them civilians, according to the ministry, figures the UN considers reliable.

The war broke out after Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel in October 2023, which resulted in the deaths of 1,218 people on the Israeli side, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

During that attack, Palestinian fighters arrested 251 people, 58 of whom are still held hostage in Gaza, including 34 the military says are dead.

## US approach to nuclear ...

All of this has paved the way for a constructive path in the indirect talks, and if the Zionist factions and their lobbying arms within the US Congress do not weigh in too heavily or throw a wrench into the process, and if the talks keep moving along this trajectory, there is a real possibility of reaching a desirable outcome.

One particularly striking aspect of this round is that the US entered the negotiations going against the grain of Israeli preferences. The Zionist regime remains vehemently opposed to any continuation of these talks, pushing instead for war and escalation. However, this time it seems that President Donald Trump is not quite the same man he was five years ago. His transformation became apparent when, just

a few days before the talks were set to begin, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flew to meet Trump in the US. Despite Netanyahu's presence, Trump publicly announced that the US intended to negotiate with Iran and that no one can interfere in these talks. This open declaration—made right in front of Netanyahu—clearly did not sit well with the Israeli leader.

As for the outcome of the second round, it appears that both sides are now gearing up for technical discussions on nuclear matters. As repeatedly stated, the Islamic Republic of Iran is pursuing a peaceful nuclear program and has no intention of using this technology for non-peaceful purposes. This was confirmed during a recent visit to Iran's nuclear facilities by Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agen-

cy Rafael Grossi who signed off on the peaceful nature of Iran's activities. That said, the specific applications and scope of Iran's nuclear program will be addressed in the upcoming expert-level negotiations on Wednesday, during which both teams will hash out the technical details. As previously said, uranium enrichment remains a red line for Iran, although the exact level of enrichment will be subject to further negotiation.

Regarding the format of future Iran-US talks, the overarching policy set forth by the Leader continues to favor indirect negotiations. However, if talks proceed positively in the future, the possibility of shifting the format—either to continue indirectly or to begin direct engagement—can be reassessed based on the Leader's guidance.



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