

Iran not to stand threats despite commitment to diplomacy

4th round of nuclear talks with US postponed due to 'logistical reasons'



International Desk

Iran reaffirmed its commitment to diplomacy to resolve a long-running "unnecessary and artificial crisis" over its nuclear program while saying that it does not put up with threats and pressure.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the Iranian negotiators have laid out the legitimate positions and demands of the country during the last three rounds of negotiations with the

US on its nuclear program, adding that they have diligently worked toward reaching a "fair, reasonable, and lasting agreement."

The statement said that Iran does not tolerate approaches based on pressure and threats – all of which violate the principles of the UN Charter and international law and are designed to undermine Iran's national interests and violate the rights of the Iranian people. "In this regard, Iran strongly condemns the continuation of illegal sanctions

and pressure on its trade and economic partners, viewing it as further proof of the Iranian people's well-founded distrust and deep suspicion regarding the US' seriousness in pursuing diplomacy" it said.

New anti-Iran sanctions

Despite the three rounds of Iran-US negotiations, Washington has continued to impose new sanctions on Iran.

On Wednesday, the US imposed sanctions on entities it accused of involvement in the trade of Iranian oil and petrochemicals.

The sanctions are the latest round imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump on Iran since February, when he reimposed his so-called maximum pressure campaign on Tehran in his second term in office.

Separately, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth warned Iran that it would face consequences for supporting the Ansarullah resistance group in Yemen, who have attacked Israeli-bound ships in the Red Sea in what the group says is solidarity with the Palestinians.

Trump also said on Thursday that all purchases of Iranian oil or petrochemical products must stop and any country

or person buying any from the country would be immediately subject to secondary sanctions.

"They will not be allowed to do business with the United States of America in any way, shape, or form," he wrote on Truth Social on Thursday.

Trump's comments followed the postponement of the fourth round of talks between the two countries, which had been due to take place in Rome on Saturday.

Iran-US talks postponed

"Together with Omani and US interlocutors, we have decided to postpone the 4th round of talks for logistical and technical reasons," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X late Thursday.

"On Iran's part, there is no change in our determination to secure a negotiated solution. In fact, we are more determined than ever to achieve a just and balanced deal: guaranteeing an end to sanctions, and creating confidence that Iran's nuclear program will forever remain peaceful while ensuring that Iranian rights are fully respected," he added.

In Washington, State Department

spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said a meeting in Rome on Saturday between the United States and Iran had never been confirmed.

"We expect another round of talks that will take place in the near future," Bruce said.

Iranian diplomats had also been due to meet in Rome on Friday with representatives of Britain, France and Germany. However, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said the talks will not now take place.

"A technical meeting was planned prior to... (the) meeting between the United States and Iran," Barrot said in an interview.

"Since that meeting is not taking place, the technical meeting is no longer relevant, at least at that time," Barrot added.

Mediated by Oman, Iran and the US have held three rounds of talks in Muscat and Rome on April 12, 19, and 26 with the aim of reaching a deal on Iran's nuclear program and the removal of sanctions on Tehran.

Both parties have so far expressed satisfaction with the way the negotiations are moving on, praising the talks as "positive" and "moving forward."

Gazans 'going hungry' as aid efforts teeter on 'verge of collapse': Red Cross

Two months into Israel's full blockade on aid into Gaza, humanitarianists described Friday horrific scenes of starving, bloodied children and people fighting over water, with aid operations on the "verge of total collapse."

The United Nations and the Red Cross sounded the alarm at the dire situation in the war-ravaged Palestinian territory, demanding international action, AFP reported. "The humanitarian response in Gaza is on the verge of total collapse," the International Committee of the Red Cross warned in a statement.

"Without immediate action, Gaza will descend further into chaos that humanitarian efforts will not be able to mitigate."

The United Nations has repeatedly warned of humanitarian catastrophe, with famine looming as the blockade continues.

Israel strictly controls all inflows of international aid vital for the 2.4 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

It halted aid deliveries to Gaza on March 2, days before the collapse of a cease-fire that had significantly

reduced hostilities after 15 months of war.

Since the start of the blockade, the United Nations has repeatedly warned of the humanitarian catastrophe on the ground, with famine again looming.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) said a week ago that it had sent out its "last remaining food stocks" to kitchens.

"Food stocks have now mainly run out," Olga Cherevko, a spokeswoman for the UN humanitarian agency OCHA, told reporters in Geneva Friday via video link from Gaza City.

"Community kitchens have begun to shut down (and) more people are going hungry," she said, pointing to reports of children and other very vulnerable people who have died from malnutrition and ... from the lack of food."

"The blockade is deadly." Water access was also "becoming impossible," she warned.

The situation is so bad, she said that a friend had described to her a few days ago seeing "people burning ... because of the explosions and there was no water to save them."

At the same time, Cherevko lament-



ed that "hospitals report running out of blood units as mass casualties continue to arrive."

"Gaza lies in ruins, Rubble fills the streets... Many nights, blood-curdling screams of the injured pierce the skies following the deafening sound of another explosion."

She also decried the mass displacement, with nearly the entire Gaza population being forced to shift multiple times prior to the brief ceasefire.

Since the resumption of hostilities, she said, "over 420,000 people have been once again forced to flee, many with only the clothes on their backs, shot at along the way, arriving in overcrowded shelters, as tents and other facilities where people search safety, are being bombed."

Trump ousts national security adviser Waltz

US President Donald Trump ousted his national security adviser Mike Waltz on Thursday and named Secretary of State Marco Rubio as his interim replacement in the first major shakeup of Trump's inner circle since he took office in January.

Trump, in a social media post, said he would nominate Waltz to be the next US ambassador to the United Nations, adding that "he has worked hard to put our nation's interests first," Reuters reported.

The retired Army Green Beret and former Republican lawmaker from Florida had faced criticism for mistakenly adding a journalist to a chat group where sensitive military plans were discussed - a political embarrassment likely to feature during confirmation hearings for the UN post.

Rubio will be the first person since Henry Kissinger in the 1970s to hold the positions of secretary of state and national security adviser simultaneously.

"When I have a problem, I call up Marco. He gets it solved," Trump said at a White House event earlier on Thursday. A person familiar with the matter said



Trump wanted to get to the 100-day mark in his term before firing a cabinet-level official. News of the shake-up on Thursday was so abrupt that State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce learned about it from reporters at a briefing.

The national security adviser is a powerful role that does not require Senate confirmation. Trump had four national security advisers in his first term: Michael Flynn, H.R. McMaster, John Bolton and Robert O'Brien.

The Waltz ouster caps a month of personnel turmoil within Trump's national security establishment. Since April 1, at least 20 NSC staffers have been fired, the director of the National Security Agency has been dismissed and three high-ranking Pentagon political appointees have been shown the door.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Bodies of 33 victims of southern port blast identified



National Desk

Iranian authorities said on Friday that they have identified the bodies of 33 of the 70 people killed in the last Saturday's deadly explosion in the coun-

try's southern Shahid Rajaei Port. With four more bodies identified on Friday, the number of the identified people reached 33, Chief Prosecutor of Hormozgan Province Mojtaba Ghahremani said.

At least 70 people have lost their lives and more than 1,200 others wounded in the explosion and ensuing fire which rocked the Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern province of Hormozgan on Saturday.

An investigation is underway to determine the main cause behind the incident.

The port's customs office said the blast may have started in a depot

storing hazardous and chemical materials.

Authorities said on Tuesday that the port has resumed its activities after firefighters managed to fully contain a fire caused by the blast.

Despite the serious damage to the Bandar Abbas desalination plant and power plant, vital facilities have been restored in the shortest possible time, according to the authorities at the country's main port.

The port of Shahid Rajaei lies near the major coastal city of Bandar Abbas on the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which one-fifth of global oil output passes.

