

# Trump says Iran has proposal from US on its nuclear program

*Araghchi: Tehran ready to 'build trust, offer transparency'*



US President Donald Trump speaks to members of the media accompanying him aboard Air Force One, after leaving Abu Dhabi at the end of his Middle East tour on May 16, 2025.

● **BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP**

sists the Islamic Republic must give up. Trump made the comment aboard Air Force One as he ended his trip to the United Arab Emirates, the last stop on his three-nation tour of the Middle East that also included Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

At nearly every event he attended in the region, he insisted that Iran could not be allowed to obtain a nuclear bomb — something American intelligence agencies assess Tehran is not actively pursuing.

A reporter asked Trump: "On Iran, has the US given them a formal proposal? Has Steve Witkoff handed that over?"

"They have a proposal," Trump responded. "But most importantly, they know they have to move quickly, or something bad is going to happen."

Speaking on a visit to Qatar Thursday, Trump said the United States was "getting close" to a deal with Iran that would avert military action.

"We're not going to be making any nuclear dust in Iran," he said.

Trump has said he presented Iran's leadership with an "olive branch", adding that it was an offer that would not last forever.

He further threatened to impose "massive maximum pressure", including driving Iranian oil exports to zero if talks failed.

On Thursday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke to journalists at the Tehran International Book Fair and said that Iran did not have any proposal from the Americans yet.

## Conflicting statements

Araghchi also criticized what he called conflicting and inconsistent statements from the Trump administration, describing them as either a sign of disarray in Washington or a calculated negotiation strategy. Witkoff at one point suggested that Iran could enrich uranium at 3.67%, then later began saying that all Iranian enrichment must stop.

Iran's top diplomat also stressed that none of the country's nuclear facilities will be dismantled.

"Defending the rights of the Iranian people in the nuclear field, including [uranium]

enrichment, is one of these principles and rights of the people that we will not compromise on, neither in the media nor at the negotiation table. This is the right of the Iranian people, and no one can deny it," Araghchi said.

He reiterated that Tehran is ready to "build trust and offer transparency" regarding its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of anti-Iran sanctions.

## US companies in Iran

Araghchi reiterated that Tehran has no objection to US companies operating in the country, including in the oil and gas sector.

"We have no ban on the economic presence of American companies in Iran," Araghchi said, attributing the lack of US business activity to primary sanctions imposed by Washington.

"This ban has been imposed by the United States itself," he said.

"If American companies wish to invest in Iran's economy, the US must lift its own primary sanctions."

Iranian and American officials have been in Oman and Rome for the negotiations, always mediated by Oman's Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, a trusted interlocutor between the two nations.

## International Desk

US President Donald Trump said Friday that Iran has an American proposal over its nuclear program as negotiations between the two countries go on.

Trump's remarks represent the first time he's acknowledged an American proposal is with Tehran after four rounds of negotiations between US

Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Negotiations have gotten into the "expert" level — meaning the two sides are trying to see if they can reach any agreement on the details of any possible deal. But one major sticking point remains Iran's enrichment of uranium, which Tehran insists it must be allowed to do and the Trump administration in-

## Russia, Ukraine meet for first direct talks since 2022

Two sides agree on POW swap, discuss cease-fire

## International Desk

The first direct peace talks between Russia and Ukraine since Moscow's 2022 military operation ended Friday after less than two hours with the two sides agreeing on prisoner swap, cease-fire, and meeting between the two countries' leaders.

Vladimir Medinsky, the head of Russia's delegation at Ukraine peace talks in Istanbul, said on Friday after the negotiations that Moscow was satisfied with the results and was ready to keep talking to Kiev.

Medinsky said Russia and Ukraine had agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners of war each in the coming days, one of the largest such swap since the beginning of the conflict.

"The Ukrainian side requested direct talks between the leaders of the states. We have taken note of this request," Medinsky added.

"We have agreed that each side will present its vision of a possible future cease-fire and spell it out in detail. After such a vision has been presented, we believe it would be appropriate, as also agreed, to continue our negotiations," Ukraine's top negotiator, Defense Min-

ister Rustem Umerov, confirmed the swap in a separate statement and said a cease-fire and a possible Zelensky-Putin meeting had been discussed.

Thousands of prisoners have been released in a series of exchanges between Kiev and Moscow since 2022.

During the talks, a senior Ukrainian official said Russia introduced new "unacceptable demands" to withdraw Ukrainian forces from huge swaths of territory. The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to make official statements.

He said the Ukrainian side reiterated it remained focused on achieving real progress — an immediate cease-fire and a pathway to substantive diplomacy, "just like the US, European partners, and other countries proposed," the official added.

The two sides sat at a U-shaped table but remained far apart in their conditions for ending the war.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had opened the session by urging the parties "to take advantage of this opportunity," adding that it was "critically important that the cease-fire happens as soon as possible."



● **AFP**

Both countries engaged in diplomatic maneuvering this week as they tried to show that they are eager to negotiate. On Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin spurned an offer by Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy to meet face-to-face in Turkey. Zelenskyy accused Moscow of not making a serious effort to end the war by sending a low-level delegation.

Ukraine has accepted a US and European proposal for a full, 30-day cease-fire, but Putin has effectively rejected it by imposing far-reaching conditions.

Russia's attacks have killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, the UN says, and razed towns and villages. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers have died, and likely a larger number of Russian troops, officials and analysts say.

## Council of Europe: Israel must end mass killing of civilians, deliberate starvation in Gaza

The Council of Europe on Friday said Gaza was suffering from a "deliberate starvation".

"The time for a moral reckoning over the treatment of Palestinians has come — and it is long overdue," said Dora Bakoyannis, rapporteur for the Middle East at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, AFP reported.

The 46-member Council of Europe works to safeguard human rights and democracy. "No cause, no matter how just or pure, can ever justify every means," Bakoyannis said in a statement.

"The mass killing of children and unarmed civilians, the deliberate starvation, and the relentless pain and humiliation inflicted upon Palestinians in Gaza must end." Since March 2, Israeli forces have blocked

all humanitarian aid entering Gaza for its 2.4 million inhabitants, now threatened with famine, according to several NGOs. US President Donald Trump said earlier Friday that "a lot of people are starving" in the besieged territory.

Bakoyannis said that "it takes a smart and brave nation to recognize when its actions are causing more harm than good. What is unfolding in Gaza helps no-one".

Breaking a two-month cease-fire, Israel resumed its offensive on March 18, with the declared goal of obtaining the release of all hostages still held in Gaza.

Gaza rescuers said Israeli strikes and shelling on Friday killed 74 people in the war-battered Palestinian territory. Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Basal reported "74 martyrs as a result of the



● **AFP**

ongoing Israeli bombardment across the entire Gaza Strip since last night until this moment," most of them in the north of the Palestinian territory, after the agency earlier reported more than 50 dead. Since the beginning of Israel's attacks on Gaza in October 2023, at least 53,010 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have been killed.

## Tehran, E3 confer Iran's nuclear talks with US

Iran, troika determined to make optimal use of diplomacy: Gharibabadi

## International Desk

Iran met with European powers on Friday to discuss its ongoing negotiations with the United States, which are aimed at settling a decades-old dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, who attended the talks in the Turkish city, said in a post on X: "We exchanged views and discussed the latest status of the indirect nuclear negotiations (with the US) and the lifting of sanctions."

Gharibabadi said, if necessary, Tehran would meet again with Germany, Britain and France — the European parties to the 2015 deal along with China, Russia and the United States — to continue discussions, after several meetings since last year.

He added that, "Iran and the three European countries are determined to sustain and make optimal use of diplomacy".

The European nations — known as the E3 — were among the world powers that negotiated the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal along with China, Russia and the United States.

US President Donald Trump, in his first term as president, torpedoed the accord in 2018 by unilaterally withdrawing the

United States.

A year later, Iran responded by rolling back its own commitments under the deal, which provided relief from sanctions in return for UN-monitored restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities.

Following the US withdrawal from the deal, relations between Iran and Europe began to deteriorate due to the Europe's failure to fulfill its commitments under the agreement and opted to follow in the footsteps of the US.

Now, the three European powers are weighing whether to trigger the 2015 deal's "snapback" mechanism, which would reinstate UN sanctions in response to what they call Iranian non-compliance — an option that expires in October.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in an article published by the French weekly Le Point, warned of "irreversible" consequences if Britain, France and Germany move to reimpose United Nations sanctions.

Such a stance "risks provoking a global nuclear proliferation crisis that would primarily affect Europeans themselves", Iran's top diplomat warned.

"While we continue the dialogue with the United States, we are also ready to talk with the Europeans," Araghchi said.



**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
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