

FM spox: Iran not to seek permission for uranium enrichment

‘Tehran open to regional nuclear fuel consortium’



International Desk

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said on Monday that Iran is not going to ask for permission from anyone to enrich uranium, the main sticking point in the ongoing nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington. The United States is in no position to urge other countries ask for permission

to exercise a right recognized under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Baqaei said during his weekly press conference in Tehran. US officials have recently voiced strong opposition to Iran's uranium enrichment activities, while Tehran has repeatedly insisted that it was "non-negotiable." In the latest comments by the US offi-

cials regarding Iran's uranium enrichment, Steve Witkoff, the US chief negotiator in nuclear talks, said on Sunday that the US government's "red line" in nuclear talks with Iran is that Iran cannot maintain any ability to enrich uranium.

"We have one very, very clear red line, and that is enrichment. We cannot allow even 1% of an enrichment capability," Witkoff told ABC's "This Week" program.

If the argument that any country enriching uranium necessarily is after producing nuclear bomb or is able to produce such weapons, so all enrichment facilities in South Korea, Brazil, and many other countries should be dismantled, the Iranian official said.

Baqaei said that Iran's nuclear program dates back to 60 years ago and the US cannot expect Iran to shut down its peaceful nuclear program, calling the US demand irrational, immoral, and unlawful.

Tehran and Washington have held four rounds of Omani-mediated nuclear talks since April 12, the highest-level contact

between the two countries since the United States abandoned the 2015 nuclear accord.

Since then, there have been reports of Iran's proposal for the formation of a regional consortium to enrich uranium. However, Baqaei denied that Iran had proposed the idea but said it was floated in the past by several countries.

"One of the justifications (for such a proposal) is that the Middle East region and the Persian Gulf countries may need nuclear power and would like to build new power plants, and these power plants require nuclear fuel," said Baqaei.

"If such an initiative is proposed, we would welcome it and could also participate in it, but it should be noted that such an initiative is in no way intended to replace Iran's uranium enrichment program," he added.

On Tuesday, The New York Times quoted four anonymous Iranian officials as saying that Tehran had proposed "a joint nuclear-enrichment venture involving regional Arab countries and American investments."

The venture would serve "as an alterna-

tive to Washington's demand that it dismantles its nuclear program," it added. On Sunday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran would continue enrichment "with or without a deal." Araghchi said that the US officials are completely far from the realities of negotiations.

"I think they are completely far from the realities of negotiations and enrichment will continue in Iran," Araghchi said.

"If they are interested in ensuring that nuclear weapons are not produced (by Iran), we are fully prepared, but if they have unrealistic demands, they will not achieve any results," Iran's top diplomat added.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi also said on Monday that the nuclear talks "will lead nowhere" if Washington insists that Tehran drop its uranium enrichment activity to zero.

"Our position on enrichment is clear and we have repeatedly stated that it is a national achievement from which we will not back down," Takht-Ravanchi said.

Pezeshkian sanguine about Iran-US talks leading to regional stability



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) shakes hands with Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi in a meeting in Tehran on May 18, 2025.
● [president.ir](#)

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday expressed hope that nuclear talks between Iran and the US would lead to a fair agreement that guarantees lasting stability in the region.

The Iranian president made the remarks in a meeting with the Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi on the sidelines of Tehran Dialogue Forum (TDF), a gathering of high-level officials from dozens of countries to discuss regional cooperation, diplomacy and global peace.

"We hope that through the sincere and dedicated efforts of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, these talks will result in a fair agreement that ensures lasting peace and stability in the region," Pezeshkian said. In a separate meeting with Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani, the Iranian president said that reaching an agreement with the US is possible but only if Washington abandons its bullying tactics.

Confirming Pezeshkian's comments, Al Thani said experience has shown that in dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran, pressure

and coercion have been ineffective while dialogue and mutual understanding have proven successful. The two sides also discussed ties, with the Iranian president voicing optimism that the bilateral agreements would swiftly enter the implementation phase to benefit both countries and their peoples.

The Iranian president also held other meetings with the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Nechirvan Barzani, Secretary of Armenia's Security Council Armen Grigoryan, Taliban's caretaker foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and the Nurlan Yermekbayev, secretary general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). All of them have been invited to take part in Tehran Dialogue Forum, which opened in the Iranian capital on Sunday.

Senior officials from 53 countries, including ministers, and heads of think tanks and intellectuals, took part in the two-day meeting.

Top general warns Iran's enemies of devastating harms if airspace violated

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri warned that any hostile move by enemies against the Islamic Republic, including violation of the country's airspace, will cost them dearly. Bagheri made the remarks after a high-profile meeting of the air defense units in the Iranian capital Tehran on Monday, Press TV reported.

"The ill-wishers of the Iranian nation and enemies should know that any violation of our country's airspace will inflict significant harms on them, and will expose them to the costs that are definitely much higher than the results they may expect," Iran's highest-ranking military commander stated.

He underscored dramatic progress that has been made in improving the air defense capabilities during the past year. Bagheri highlighted that certain sections of the Air Defense units have experienced a fivefold increase in comparison with the preceding year as regards the number of radars, monitoring systems, and detection devices used for tracking hostile moves.

The top general stated that Air Defense capabilities in the fire control systems, interception, and detonation of intruding aerial targets have developed by two to three times in some cases.

He underlined that Iran's airspace is



being monitored constantly, and the Armed Forces are a hundred percent prepared to confront any act of aggression.

The chief of staff of the Armed Forces highlighted that Iranian Air Defense units control the country's airspace round the clock, and prepare themselves for any possible scenario through frequent exercises and drills.

The volume of investment in the fortification of Iran's Air Defense has risen by several times, Bagheri noted.

Iranian officials say the Islamic Republic will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which is entirely meant for defense.

Genocide in broad ...

"From this moment, Khan Yunis will be considered a dangerous combat zone," he said on social media.

Page 1 > Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a video posted on Telegram, said that "the fighting is intense and we are making progress."

"We will take control of all the territory of the strip," he added. "We will not give up. But in order to succeed, we must act in a way that cannot be stopped," Netanyahu said. Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard on Monday condemned Israel's plans to take control of the Gaza Strip, saying the move would violate international law.

"If this means annexation, it is against international law. Sweden stands firm in its belief that Gaza's territory must not be changed or reduced," she said.

She also urged Israel to allow a resumption of humanitarian aid to Gaza. After more than two months of a total blockade, the World Health Organization issued a stark warning on the humanitarian crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip, saying "two million people are starving".

Under mounting pressure, Israel allowed limited aid into the besieged territory on Monday.

Netanyahu cited "practical and diplomatic reasons" for the resumption. Gaza's civil defense agency said 52 people were killed in Israeli attacks on Monday across the territory.



Palestinians move with their belongings as they flee the northern cities of Jabalia and Beit Lahia Gaza Strip towards Gaza City amid continuous Israeli strikes in the besieged Palestinian territory on May 17, 2025.
● [BASHAR TALEB/AFP](#)

The UN's OHCHR rights office decried actions that are "in defiance of international law and tantamount to ethnic cleansing", citing the latest attacks, displacement, the "methodical destruction of entire neighborhoods" and denial of humanitarian aid.

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