

# Leader excoriates 'outrageous' US demands in nuclear talks

## International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday called US demands for zero uranium enrichment in Iran "excessive and outrageous," expressing doubt about success of the ongoing nuclear talks between the two countries.

"I don't think nuclear talks with the US will bring results. We don't know what will happen," Khamenei said in a ceremony held to commemorate the first martyrdom anniversary of former president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May 19, 2024.

"No one is waiting for permission from anyone. The Islamic Republic has its own policies, its own methods, and it pursues its own agenda," the Leader underlined. US chief negotiator in nuclear talks Steve Witkoff said on Sunday that the US administration'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.



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks at a ceremony in Tehran, Iran on May 20, 2025 to mark the first anniversary of a tragic incident that took the lives of former Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian as well as six others onboard a helicopter in northwestern Iran.

● [khamenei.ir](#)

"Everything begins... with a deal that does not include enrichment... because enrichment enables weaponization, and we will not allow a bomb to get here," he added.

## Conflicting statements

Earlier this year, Witkoff had indicated that the US would accept Iran maintaining a limited enrichment capability,

but the Trump administration has since hardened its public stance.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday repeated the US stances, saying that the Trump administration is working to reach an agreement that would allow Iran to have a civil nuclear energy program but not enrich uranium.

He admitted that achieving such a deal "will not be easy."

Rubio told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the administration was offering an "off-ramp" for Iran to pursue prosperity and peace.

"It will not be easy, but that's the process we're engaged in now," Rubio said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Tuesday criticized "positions from the United States that were inconsistent with any logic and reason."

Iran's top diplomat said these stances "have caused serious disruptions in the negotiation process."

Iranian officials have repeatedly announced that the Islamic Republic will not abandon its uranium enrichment program.

Since April 12, Iran and the US have held four rounds of talks on Iran's nuclear

program, with US President Donald Trump threatening Iran with military attack if no agreement is reached.

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 insists Iran must give up.

## Next round of talks

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Tuesday Iran has received a proposal for the next round of indirect negotiations.

"We have received a proposal regarding the next round of indirect talks between Iran and the US, and it is under review," Gharibabadi.

No further details about the content or timing of the proposed negotiations have been released.

The comments come a day after a Wall Street Journal reporter said that the next round of the talks is expected to take place this weekend in Rome.

## Israel's offensive, aid blockage draw condemnations UK, Canada, France threaten Tel Aviv with 'concrete actions'

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Israel's new military offensive in the Gaza Strip and its ban on the entry of humanitarian aid into the Palestinian territory drew strong criticism across the world, even by its western allies.

The British government ramped up its criticism of Israel's military offensive by suspending free trade talks Tuesday and hitting West Bank settlers with sanctions. The moves came as international pressure mounts on Israel following a nearly three-month blockade of supplies into Gaza that led to famine warnings. Even the United States, a staunch ally of Israel, has voiced concerns over the growing hunger crisis, AP reported. Foreign Secretary David Lammy described the situation in Gaza as abominable and said that while an existing trade agreement was in place, the government could not continue discussions with an Israeli cabinet pursuing what he called egregious policies in the West Bank and Gaza.

"The world is judging," Lammy said. "History will judge them. Blocking aid. Expanding the war. Dismissing the concerns of your friends and partners. This is indefensible. And it must stop."

The actions came a day after the UK, France and Canada issued a joint statement condemned Israel's handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the occupied West Bank.

## 'Cruel, indefensible' actions

Israeli's ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, was summoned to the Foreign Office on Tuesday where Middle East Minister Hamish Falconer planned to call the 11-week blockade of aid to Gaza "cruel and indefensible."

Lammy announced that in addition to previous sanctions imposed by the UK, it was now imposing sanctions on a further "three individuals, two illegal settler outposts and two organizations supporting violence against Palestinian community."

He said the illegal Israeli settlements were spreading across the West Bank with the "explicit support" of this Israeli cabinet.

Lammy's remarks followed those of Prime Minister Keir Starmer who said the suffering by children in Gaza was "utterly intolerable" and repeated his call for a cease-fire. Starmer joined French President Emmanuel Ma-



Israeli tanks deploy near the Gaza Strip on May 20, 2025.

● [JACK GUEZ/AFP](#)

cron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Monday in issuing one of the most significant criticisms by close allies of Israel's handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the West Bank.

The three leaders threatened to take "concrete actions" if Israel did not cease its renewed military offensive and significantly lift restrictions on humanitarian aid. Netanyahu said the statement was "a huge prize" for Hamas.

Starmer called for increased shipments of humanitarian aid into Gaza, saying the basic quantity allowed by Israel is "utterly inadequate."

## Insufficient aid

While Israel allowed trucks with baby food and desperately needed supplies to begin rolling into Gaza on Monday, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher described the volume of aid a "drop in the ocean of what is urgently needed."

The world's patience with Israel is wearing thin after more than 53,000 Palestinian deaths, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count. Israel's latest onslaught has killed more than 300 people in recent days, local health officials said.

In recent weeks, Macron intensified diplomatic efforts to put pressure on Israel, urging a cease-fire and calling for lifting the blockade of humanitarian aid.

Last month, Macron said France should move toward recognizing a Palestinian state, possibly in June when France and Saudi Arabia co-host an international conference about implementing a two-state solution.

Macron, who has said that recognizing Palestine is not a "taboo" for France, last week suggested that revisiting the EU's cooperation agreements with Israel is on the table.

Tensions between France and Israel have escalated after Macron called for stopping arms deliveries for use in Gaza in an October radio interview, prompting Netanyahu's strong criticism.

France also sought to impose a ban on Israeli military companies to prevent them from exhibiting weapons at the Euronaval trade exhibition.

## Iranian lawmakers decry UK move to designate IRGC

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Iranian lawmakers strongly condemned a move by members of the British Parliament to designate the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization, vowing to take legal action.

During a parliament meeting on Tuesday, the Iranian parliamentarians in a statement said that the Iranian legislature, based on its legal duty to defend national sovereignty, security, and the authority of Iran's Armed Forces, strongly condemns the Britain's move.

The statement said the initiative, driven by "Zionist regime orders and the propaganda of the terrorist [MKO] group", lacks any legal basis or political legitimacy.

The lawmakers also censured Britain for continuing its colonial and meddlesome approach toward independent nations.

Referring to Britain's "dark history" of meddling in Iran, the statement said Britain has repeatedly endangered the Iranian people's security and well-being through interference and acts of aggression.

The statement came after a cross-party group of more than 550 British lawmakers and peers have signed a letter calling on the UK government to label the IRGC a terrorist organization.

The UK government has not formally

banned the IRGC, but it has imposed sanctions on its members and entities.

The appeal came shortly after British police charged three Iranian nationals on May 3 with offences under the National Security Act, alleging they acted on behalf of Iran's intelligence service.

Britain and Iran summoned each other's envoys after the Iranians were charged with spying in the UK.

Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that the British charge d'affaires was summoned following the "suspicious and unjustified detention" of a number of Iranian nationals in the UK.

The head of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Third Western European Department voiced Tehran's strong protest against the British government's move, as well as unjustified accusations leveled against the Islamic Republic.

The official said detention of Iranian nationals is contrary to the accepted rules and standards of international law and human rights, because they were charged without any evidence.

The UK Foreign Office then responded on Monday by summoning Tehran's ambassador to the UK.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said the UK would not tolerate what she called "growing state-backed threats on UK soil."



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

