

**Every session of the General Debate at the United Nations General Assembly is an opportunity for heads of state and governments to raise important topics for their countries on the global stage, but for Iran, it has always been doubly important. Since the time is short for Iranian presidents to make a much-needed detailed speech, they have to pack their schedules with meetings with other delegations. Although there's so much that the other heads of state do not know about the false anti-Iran narrative that has been circulating for far too long, the same does not apply to the general public. This is why in recent years, Iranian presidents have sat down with journalists from various media outlets, and Masoud Pezeshkian was no exception. This year, Mr. Pezeshkian gave momentous interviews with the American NBC News and the Qatari Al Araby TV during the General Assembly. What follows next is our English translation of the most important parts of those interviews:**

## Iran ready to prove peaceful nuclear aims for sanctions removal

# Trump should lead with trust-building act: *Pezeshkian*

### INTERVIEW

**NBC:** I do have to ask you, is it strange for you to be in the United States? Our country bombed your country. You're here. What's that like?

**PEZESHKIAN:** First and foremost, we came to attend the UN General Assembly. The UN is based on the principle that nations can talk things over, coexist under laws, with no aggression, war, or crimes, and solve problems. We came with this mindset, yet unfortunately, we don't see those goals here. Still, turning up is better than not showing up at all.

**Let's get to the news of the day and the potential snapback and return of sanctions. Why won't Iran allow UN inspectors to inspect all the bombed-out nuclear facilities?**

That's the story they're pushing. We had an agreement with the agency [in Cairo] and were supposed to stick to it. Within the frameworks where the European trio was to hammer out talks, we also were to patch things up with the agency. Under that deal, they could come in and inspect, while we negotiate existing issues with the US. Access to enriched materials was also part of it. We were ready to play by the agreement. It's the US that doesn't want or have any interest in a peaceful and calm path — just as they tore up the JCPOA before.

**But to be clear, your country will allow all the UN inspectors to all of the nuclear facilities that were bombed out? I just want to be clear on that.**

These matters came up in talks, and it was agreed the snapback would be halted so inspections could get underway. The problem is that they refused to agree and want to press ahead with the snapback instead.

**If the votes don't go your way and the snapback sanctions come back, will you ban the UN inspectors from Iran?**

If they're going to pin the blame on us now for not allowing access to our nuclear sites, how do they expect to come after snapback?



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (r) gives an interview to Tom Llamas, anchor of "NBC Nightly News," on the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, the US, on September 26, 2025.

● NBC

That's totally wrong. We allowed and wanted it to happen, all within international law and the NPT treaty, which we are members of, but they refused to act by those rules.

**Mr. President, I'm not sure if you've seen the reports today, but there's this new report in the Washington Post. It shows a satellite image. This is the "Pickaxe Mountain," and it's alleging that right now, Iran is building a secret nuclear facility. What do you say to this?**

If they speak honestly, since we have an agreement with the IAEA, they can come and see for themselves. Using satellites to claim things and then say they've "spotted" something is easy. We were ready, and still are ready, to cooperate with the agency. Instead of showing pictures and then cooking up frameworks filled with delusions, the agency should come and do on-the-ground inspections. We want to work with the agency under the law — why would they want to spread the rumor that we're headed for nuclear weapons based on baseless suspicions?

**You mentioned nuclear weapons. Where exactly is that roughly 900 pounds of enriched uranium right now that is publicly unaccounted for?**

That's not a hard task. The same IAEA should come, assess, and check out the process. The sites

under agency supervision were off-limits to them, but they illegally entered, and unfortunately, international bodies did nothing. Now, inspection, assessment, and verification aren't tough. We're ready for these things, so what's the need to trigger snapback?

**For our American viewers at home, how do you explain that the reports that say your enriched uranium is at 60 percent, but all you need is 3.5 percent for civilian power purposes? Why is that uranium enriched to 60 percent, which is much closer to an atomic bomb?**

What's clear is that the agreement process was in place, but President Trump tore it up. We agreed in talks on each side's responsibilities. We did our part, but when the US left the JCPOA, European countries also practically withdrew. They claimed not to have left, but all European companies meant to operate in Iran pulled out, and financial ties were cut. So, Europeans didn't uphold their commitments either. It was natural for Iran to step out of that framework, but this doesn't mean bomb-making.

We've clearly stated multiple times that this is not even on the table. The Leader, as the country's number-one figure and as the religious and intellectual leader of the society, has categorically announced it to be Haram (forbidden) to head towards nuclear weapons. When

it's declared Haram, no one in the Islamic Republic has the right to pursue nuclear weapons. This is a firmly held belief, publicly known, and unchangeable. Therefore, we are ready to carry on any cooperation needed with the agency.

**Israel and the US are going to meet tomorrow in the White House as you probably know. There's this report I just showed you about this new — some are alleging — secret nuclear facility. Do you worry that more war is coming to Iran?**

Look, we're not after war, but we are not afraid of it either. President Trump says they've come to bring peace, but the reality is that the current approach will set fire to the entire region. Can a few planes make a country surrender? Their actions have instead stoked unity and cohesion within our country and among Muslim nations.

**I appreciate your answer, Mr. President. I'm going to ask you in a different format: Is Iran preparing for more war?**

We have not started any war and won't. But if anyone attacks us, we will do our best to deal a crushing blow. We'll definitely keep beefing up our defense so no one can easily make aggressive moves against us. Why are people in Gaza being bombarded every day while international organizations claiming to be powerful can't do anything about it? Why has nothing been done to stop the killing of nearly 65,000 innocent people in Gaza?

**Take me back to the 12-day war: As the president of a country, what was it like to see your country bombed, your top scientists killed, your top military generals assassinated?**

Naturally, if your commanders are taken out like that while the world looks on, and countries claiming to defend human rights even back such atrocities, what feelings does that stir? Doesn't it breed hatred for their claimed humanity, laws, and human rights? Our commanders were martyred one night in their homes. Scientists were assassinated. What wrong had our scientists done? Just on the suspicion that they might one day build a bomb — does that justify killing anyone? What law in the global judicial system allows bombing someone just because they might do something in the future, and no one speaks up? This is a tragedy — not just for our country but for the region and perhaps the world. The Zionist regime's actions have deepened hatred in hearts.

**There was clearly an intelligence breakdown. Do you believe that UN inspectors are agents of Israel, as has been alleged by some in Iran?**

Look, an undeniable fact is we've had intelligence gaps. Exactly who did those things isn't confirmed, but is suspected. Some say it's likely those very people. Part of the issue is technology that can hand over information and addresses

to them, and another part relates to inspections, talks, and meetings that gave them away.

These issues have caused a wall of distrust within our country against those wanting to talk things over with us. Since we're NPT members and IAEA members, they should not have allowed attacks on agency-supervised nuclear sites. No one has the right to bomb installations under IAEA supervision, but they did, and these acts were not even condemned.

**Some have said there were up to 21,000 people arrested in Iran after the bombings. What do you say to that allegation?**

I don't have the exact figure now as our judiciary is following up on that, but what you call "an intelligence breakdown" involved some people, internally or for money or other motives, who may have been deceived or were deceivers. Certainly, some inside also carried out these acts. Wherever our intelligence system could identify access points, it stopped them. But to think 20 or 25 thousand were involved — I doubt such a number exists.

**You spoke about your trip here and the reason why you are here. The Europeans have asked that you negotiate with the Americans. Have you been able to negotiate, have you been able to talk with the Americans?**

Our foreign minister was supposed to sit down with the Americans, but before it could be done, they laid down the condition that we accept their terms first, then talk. If you have to accept their conditions beforehand, there's no point in talking — that's why no talks happened.

Even here in America, which claims to have democracy and freedom, a significant part of our delegation was not allowed in; Also, they rejected the accommodation we wanted near the General Assembly venue, forcing us to settle on other lodgings. They even stopped Iranian team members from moving freely or meeting other delegations.

**To be clear, there's been no communication between the two countries during this UN General Assembly?**

Our foreign minister had phone contact with Mr. Witkoff, and I personally met with the French president.

**But nothing meaningful?**

Well, we reached conclusions with France and other Europeans; They were to strike a deal with the American delegation on how to interact. The first agreement was rejected; Then, foreign ministers met again, reaching another deal with Europe. But again, Americans shot it down. The US is preventing an agreement between us and Europe in the international system.

**The way we are sitting right now, would you sit across from President Trump like this to negotiate, to talk to him?**



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (r) and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi (l) hold a signed agreement on practical modalities to resume inspections in Iran, while Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty applauds, in Cairo, Egypt, on September 9, 2025.

● STRINGER/DPA