

# Complex int'l conditions necessitate consolidation of Iran-China ties: *Pezeshkian*

## International Desk

Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday that the complex and changing international conditions make it necessary for Tehran and Beijing to further strengthen their bilateral relations.

In a message to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on China's National Day, the Iranian president described the Asian country as a key supporter of increase in the level of prosperity

in the world.

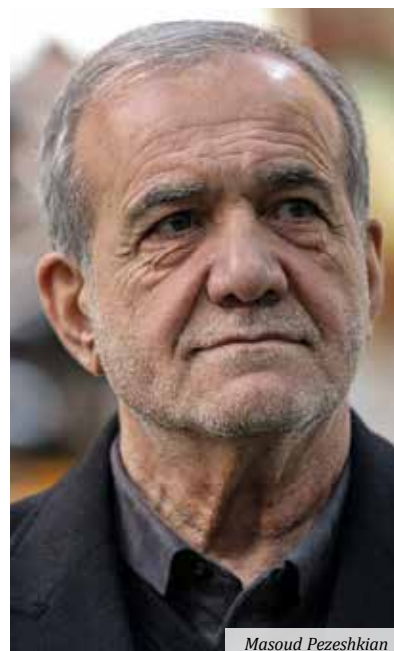
Pezeshkian emphasized that China's National Day is a symbol of unity, progress, and significant achievements, which has brought prosperity for the countries across world.

The Iranian president called a comprehensive strategic partnership signed between the two Asian countries an important priority for Iran, saying that changing and complex international and regional conditions have made strengthening comprehensive

relations more necessary than ever.

China is Iran's largest trade partner. Relations between the two countries have been expanding in recent years due to the Islamic republic's "Look to the East policy" policy.

Tehran and Beijing signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement in 2021 to reinforce their long-standing economic and political alliance. Both states are subject to different levels of illegal sanctions imposed by the United States.



Masoud Pezeshkian



Xi Jinping

## Gaza aid flotilla presses on, shrugs off Israeli 'intimidation'

### International Desk

A flotilla bound for Gaza with aid for the war-battered Palestinian territory said on Wednesday that it would continue its course despite what it called "intimidation tactics" by the Israeli military.

The flotilla of some 45 vessels carrying activists and politicians, including Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg and Nelson Mandela's grandson Mandla Mandela, departed Spain last month with the aim of breaking the blockade on Gaza, where the UN has said there is a famine.

"In the early hours of this morning, Israeli occupation naval forces launched an intimidatory operation against the Global Sumud Flotilla," the organizers said in a statement as the vessels approached waters off Egypt, where previous attempts have been intercepted.

Spain and Italy, both of which have sent naval vessels to escort the flotilla, have urged the ships to stop travelling towards Israel's declared exclusion zone off Gaza.

After departing Spain, the flotilla stopped in Tunisia for 10 days, where organizers said it was targeted in two drone attacks, before resuming its journey on 15 September.

One of the flotilla's main vessels, the Alma "was aggressively circled by an Israeli warship for several minutes" the group, whose name means "steadfastness" in Arabic, said in the statement.

"Shortly after, the same naval vessel targeted Sirius, repeating similar harassing maneuvers for an extended period of time – before finally departing," the statement added.

Marie Mesmeur, a French lawmaker from the radical left-wing LFI party who is on board the Sirius, said that she saw at least two unidentified ships, one of which was "very, very



Members of the group of ships of the Global Sumud Flotilla to Gaza are seen moored at the small island of Koufonisi, south of the island of Crete, on September 26, 2025.  
● AFP

close."

There was also "a military patrol boat with a huge light pointed at us", she said, explaining that during the incident all radar and internet communications on the boat were cut.

In another statement on X, the flotilla said it remained "vigilant as we enter the area where the previous flotillas were intercepted and/or attacked."

Israel has already blocked two attempts by activists to deliver aid by ship to Gaza, in June and July.

In June, twelve activists on board the sailboat Madleen, including Thunberg, were intercepted by Israeli forces 185 kilometers (115 miles) west of Gaza.

Italy and Spain dispatched naval vessels to escort the flotilla, following condemnation by the UN and EU of "attacks" off the Greek island of Crete last week when organizers said drones had dropped explosive devices on the activists' ships.

Spain's Minister for Digital Transformation Oscar Lopez, on Wednesday, urged the flotilla not to cross into Israel's declared exclusion zone, extending 150 nautical miles off Gaza. Italy, too, urged the activists to "stop

now" on Wednesday, after its frigate also halted at the 150-nautical-mile limit, broadcasting radio messages to the activists' vessels asking them to abandon their mission.

### Famine in Gaza

Famine was confirmed in Gaza Governorate by the world's top authority on food security and will spread further within the strip unless Israel's strikes stop and much more aid is allowed by the regime into the Palestinian territory, UN humanitarian said on August 22.

"This is irrefutable testimony... It is a famine, the Gaza famine," UN relief chief Tom Fletcher told reporters in Geneva just as the report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, a 21-agency partnership which includes UN entities and non-governmental organizations, was released.

More than half a million people in the Gaza Strip are facing catastrophic hunger conditions while more than a million more are in a food emergency phase, the report states. This man-made catastrophic famine could have been prevented by a steady flow of humanitarian aid into the territory, Fletcher pointed out.

## Gov't spox: Presence, absence of IAEA inspectors in line with national interests

### International Desk

Iranian government's spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Wednesday that Iran's approach towards the UN atomic agency is in line with the country's national interests, stressing that the presence or absence of the agency's inspectors in Iran is also within the stated policy.

Speaking during her weekly press conference in Tehran, Mohajerani said all the government's efforts were aimed at preventing further pressure on Iran's economy.

The issue of snapback mechanism which reinstated international sanctions on Iran, became a political tool and a lever of pressure against Iran, she said, adding, "All the measures that Iran is pursuing with the (UN atomic) agency are in line with national interests. The presence or absence of the agency inspectors is also within this framework."

In response to the question of whether Iran will continue enrichment of uranium, she said, "This is a matter that must be decided by the Supreme National Security Council."

On September 9, Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reached an agreement aimed at paving the way for resumption of cooperation, which had been suspended following the unprovoked Israeli-American attacks against key Iranian nuclear facilities in June.

The agreement with the IAEA was signed as a goodwill gesture by Iran to prevent the activation of the snapback mechanism by the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Despite Iran's efforts to prevent the acti-



Fatemeh Mohajerani  
● ISNA

vation of the mechanism, the three countries – France, Germany and Britain – activated the mechanism which paved the way for the reimposition of international sanctions that had been removed under the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Iran has rejected the reimposition of sanctions as "entirely unfounded, unlawful, and invalid" claims by the United States and the European countries.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a letter to his counterparts across the world on Sunday emphasized that, "No valid legal act has taken place that could restore the terminated resolutions. To claim otherwise is an attempt to mislead the international community and to impose unilateral political agendas under the guise of United Nations authority."

He warned that such assertions undermine the integrity of the Security Council and pose a serious threat to multilateral diplomacy. The foreign minister underscored that Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, terminated previous sanctions and set a clear timetable for their permanent expiration on October 18, 2025.

Araghchi argued that no state has the unilateral authority to reinterpret or extend its provisions.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran approves bill toughening penalty for spying for US, Israel

Iran on Wednesday approved a bill toughening penalties for those convicted of spying on behalf of Israel and the United States, as reported by AFP.

The bill was presented to Parliament on June 23, as Iran and Israel were engaged in a war that saw unprecedented Israeli strikes on the Islamic republic, which the US briefly joined.

Iran's president must sign off on the bill before it goes into effect. It comes after dozens of people were captured by authorities on suspicion of spying for Israel and the United States in the aftermath of the aggression

against Iran.

The text approving "tougher sanctions for spying and collaborating with the Zionist regime (Israel) and hostile countries, including the United States, on security and national interests" was approved, said the Guardian Council, the body responsible for overseeing legislation.

It did not specify which other countries were considered "hostile", according to state news agency IRNA, but said "all deliberate assistance is condemned as corruption on Earth" – one of the most serious charges in Iran, punishable by death.

The previous, existing law did not specify particular countries, and espionage was not necessarily considered a capital offence. The new bill sets a penalty of up to two years for "using, transporting, buying or selling unlicensed internet devices such as Starlink."

It also outlaws sending videos and images to "hostile or foreign channels that... could undermine national security," an offence punishable by up to five years in prison, according to IRNA.

The bill moreover bans "all illegal marches and gatherings during wartime."