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## Iran won't return to nuclear talks as long as US makes 'unreasonable demands': *FM*

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Iran's Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi (3rd L, front row) and his counterparts pose for a family photo during a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on water resources management in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on October 22, 2025.  
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### The way to ease US-Iran standoff

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OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

The instigation of the UN "snapback" mechanism and the return of sanctions have once again placed Iran and the United States at a critical juncture. Washington believes that intensified economic and political pressure can force Tehran into accepting fresh negotiations. Iranian officials, however, maintain that dialogue is possible only when based on mutual respect, equality and reciprocity. Between these two views lies a narrow diplomatic space. US President Donald Trump has publicly declared that he is ready to strike "the best deal" with Iran. Yet simultaneously, his administration has launched a "maximum pressure" campaign to "create the environment for diplomacy." Reports in the Wash-

ington Post suggest that this approach seeks to compel Iran to accept a series of conditions, including zero uranium enrichment and limits on missile capabilities. For Tehran, these demands resemble a call for unilateral concession rather than genuine dialogue. Iran's official response has been firm but measured. Senior diplomats have stated that Iran would consider any proposal that is "reasonable, balanced and fair," but it will not abandon its right to peaceful uranium enrichment and expects reciprocal steps to restore trust. This stance reflects Iran's long-standing approach to diplomacy: openness to engagement, but rejection of coercion. The assumption in Washington that pressure can deliver a diplomatic breakthrough is a misconception. Decades of experience show that external pressure tends to harden Iran's negotiating position. The war in June, when coordinated Israeli and US strikes targeted Iranian nuclear sites, made this clearer. Instead of deterring

Tehran, such actions reinforced its determination to resist and strengthen its defense and deterrence capabilities. Under such military threats, expecting discussions on missile limitations is unrealistic. Economically, Iran has so far been able to cope with the reimposed sanctions with relative stability. The government has prevented the kind of panic seen in previous sanction periods by stabilizing financial markets. This resilience reduces the leverage of external pressure and means Tehran sees no need to rush into an unfavorable deal. Still, Iran's leadership is fully aware of the long-term costs of sustaining an economy under sanctions. Its approach remains pragmatic: diplomacy is a viable path if conducted on fair and balanced terms. Yet meaningful negotiations require a realistic framework. With both sides divided on key issues, a comprehensive agreement appears distant. However, small, concrete steps could help rebuild the

minimal trust necessary to move forward. Maintaining informal communication channels with US intermediaries is therefore essential. Through these channels, Tehran should continue delivering two clear messages: first, that it will resist economic and military pressure; second, that this resistance does not preclude openness to reasonable proposals considering mutual interests. History offers useful guidance. During the five rounds of talks earlier this year—before the June conflict—Iranian and American experts reportedly made tangible progress on technical issues related to uranium enrichment. They examined mechanisms such as a regional consortium for enrichment and enhanced verification under international supervision. Although those talks were suspended after the attacks, the technical groundwork remains relevant and could serve as a realistic starting point.

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