

## Pezeshkian to Macron:

## Iran welcomes dialogue, but demands West's respect for rights



Masoud Pezeshkian

## International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that Tehran has always welcomed dialogue to resolve differences, but it is the US and Europe that, as a trust-building measure, should respect



Emmanuel Macron

Iran's rights and stop trying to impose their excessive demands.

The Iranian president made the remarks in a phone conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday.

"It is not Iran that must prove its hon-

esty and build up trust; rather, it is the United States and Europe that must win Iran's trust by their sincerity".

Pezeshkian said that Iran has repeatedly declared that based on a religious decree issued by Iran's Leader and within the framework of its own security and defense doctrine, it has never sought to obtain nuclear weapons.

However, Iran has come under mounting pressure and sanctions on the false pretext of attempting to build nuclear weapons, he added.

Pezeshkian added that resolving misunderstandings through logic and dialogue is the principled approach of the Islamic Republic, noting that force and threats only worsen disputes rather than resolving them.

The French president, for his part, said he would work to set up a new negotiating framework so that a clear outcome could be reached between Iran and the Western countries.

"It is essential that our interactions and dialogues keep going in the direction of building transparency and trust so that we can reach an agreement, lift the sanctions, and improve and expand mutual relations," Macron said.

He also expressed appreciation for what he described as Iran's "practical steps" toward removing certain barriers and implementing previous agreements reached in earlier meetings. It seems that the French president was referring to the release of two French nationals by Iran.

## French nationals granted conditional release

On Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Tehran has released two French nationals on bail, who had been imprisoned for more than three years on spying charges.

He said that the detainees have been released "by the order of the presiding judge."

The duo, he added, "will remain under supervision pending the next stage of judicial proceedings."

Macron on Wednesday identified the two as Cécile Kohler and Jacques Paris. Kohler and Paris were arrested in May 2022 while visiting Iran.

He welcomed this "first step" and said talks were underway to ensure their return to France as "quickly as possi-

ble."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said that they were in "good health" at the French ambassador's residence but declined to give details on when they would be allowed to leave Iran.

On October 21, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Vahid Jalalzadeh said Mahdih Esfandiari, an Iranian academic illegally imprisoned in France over pro-Palestine social media posts, had been included in a prisoner exchange plan.

Tehran came up with a political and consular package that both countries were to implement to expedite the release of Esfandiari, who had been arbitrarily detained in the European country for speaking out against the Israeli regime's genocide in Gaza, the official noted at the time.

The 39-year-old Iranian translator and university lecturer residing in Lyon was arrested by the French police over her activity on a pro-Palestine Telegram channel.

Scheduled to go on trial in Paris from January 13, she was released on bail last month in a move welcomed by Tehran.

## Mamdani; Bellwether of fight against Trump's despotism, cronyism

First Muslim mayor elected to lead largest US city in historic win

## International Desk

Zohran Mamdani, the newly elected mayor of New York City, issued a direct call to US President Donald Trump in his victory speech on Tuesday, saying he would enter City Hall with a firm plan to counter the politics of division and cronyism that helped elevate him to the White House.

Muslim lawmaker Mamdani has been elected as the 111<sup>th</sup> mayor of New York, the first person of South Asian descent and the first person born in Africa to lead the largest city in the United States. The 34-year-old mayoral candidate and assemblyman from Queens emerged victorious in the race on Tuesday to lead New York after polls closed in a heated contest that grabbed the world's attention. Mamdani outperformed his chief opponent — former governor Andrew Cuomo — with at least 50 percent of support after 85 percent of the votes had been counted.

Speaking to supporters in Brooklyn after victory, Mamdani said New York had shown it would be the "light" in a "moment of political darkness."

"Here we believe in standing up for those we love," he said.

Whether you are an immigrant, one of the many Black women that Trump has fired from a federal job, a single mom still waiting for the cost of groceries to go down, or anyone else with their back against the wall, Mamdani said.

"No more will New York be a city where

you can traffic in Islamophobia and win an election."

The mayor-elect then issued a direct message to the president, saying if any city could show the nation how to defeat Trump, it was the "city that gave rise to him".

"So, if there is any way to terrify a despot, it is by dismantling the very conditions that allowed him to accumulate power. This is not only how we stop Trump, it's how we stop the next one. So, Donald Trump, since I know you're watching, I have four words for you: turn the volume up," Mamdani said before declaring.

"If anyone can show a nation betrayed by Donald Trump how to defeat him, it is the city that gave rise to him."

Mamdani, who was born in Uganda and became a naturalized American citizen after graduating from college, went on to cast himself as the embodiment of resistance. "New York will remain a city of immigrants, a city built by immigrants, powered by immigrants and, as of tonight, led by an immigrant," he said. "So hear me, President Trump, when I say this: To get to any of us, you will have to get through all of us."

Trump, who has spent months insulting Mamdani and warning that the city would be ruined if he won, seemed to be watching.

New York has remained relatively unscathed by Trump's administration, as he has targeted cities including Los Angeles and Washington, dispatching the



Democratic candidate for New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani reacts after winning the 2025 New York City mayoral race, at an election night rally in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, the US, on November 4, 2025.

● REUTERS

National Guard.

The current mayor, Eric Adams, enjoyed an unusual alliance with the Republican president, whose administration dropped a federal corruption case against the mayor so he could better assist with the president's immigration agenda.

Trump has threatened to slash federal funding to the city and mount an outright takeover — threats that became a cornerstone of Mamdani's rivals' campaigns against him.

Mamdani was leading Cuomo by more than 8 percentage points, with 91 percent of the vote counted, around midnight ET. The result capped a stunning surge for the Democratic socialist after he won the June primary, and a dramatic fall from grace for Cuomo, who had waged a well-funded independent bid.

## Araghchi hails Iran-China-Russia cooperation against US unilateralism

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi praised "constructive cooperation" between China, Iran, and Russia in countering the unilateralism of the US and certain Western countries.

"The constructive cooperation between China, Iran, and Russia in countering the unilateralism of the United States and certain Western countries in the United Nations was of great significance," the Iranian foreign minister told his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in a phone conversation on Wednesday.

The Iranian minister also condemned the Israeli regime for its continued destabilizing actions in West Asia, urging the international community to stand against the "warmongering and hegemonic policies" of Israel to prevent further escalation in



Abbas Araghchi



Wang Yi

the region.

For his part, Wang Yi reaffirmed the strategic nature of the Tehran-Beijing ties and underscored the need for continued coordination and regular contacts between the two countries at the UN and other multilateral institutions.

The Chinese minister also praised Iran's peaceful approach to using nuclear energy and reiterated China's support for Iran's nuclear rights as a principal member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Both sides highlighted the constructive meeting between their presidents in September and expressed hope that the upcoming session of the High-Level Cooperation Mechanism would accelerate the implementation of agreements reached under the framework of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Back in 2021, Tehran and Beijing signed a 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership agreement, marking a milestone in bilateral relations between the two countries.

## IAEA chief demands Iran's cooperation boost with UN agency

## International Desk

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi urged Iran to "seriously" improve cooperation with the agency's inspectors, stressing that it was not yet necessary to refer Iran to the UN Security Council as a result of the breakdown of inspections.

Grossi told the Financial Times that while the IAEA has carried out about a dozen inspections in Iran

since an unprovoked aggression by Israel and the United States in June, it had not been given access to nuclear facilities such as Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan, which were bombed by the United States.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei subsequently said that Grossi was "fully aware of the peaceful nature" of Iran's nuclear program and should not express "unfounded opinions" on it. Iranian officials have blamed the IAEA for providing a justification

for Israel's bombing, which began the day after the IAEA board voted to declare Iran in violation of obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Grossi told the FT that while the agency was trying to approach the relations with Iran with understanding, the country still needed to comply.

"You cannot say, 'I remain within the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons treaty', and then not comply with obligations," Grossi said.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON

