

Iran calls Persian Gulf islands ‘inseparable part of Iran’s territorial integrity’



The photo, published on November 17, 2024, shows sunset over Iran's Abu Musa Island in the Persian Gulf.
● MEHR

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman rebuked on Thursday the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)'s insistence on repeating

the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s "baseless and incorrect" territorial claims over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. Reacting to the final communi-

qué of the 46th GCC Summit in Bahrain, Esmail Baqaei said the islands are an "inseparable part of Iran's territorial integrity" and that any territorial claim over them is "groundless and invalid." Stressing that such positions run counter to the principles of respect for states' territorial integrity and good neighborliness, Baqaei said Iran has exercised "effective, continuous and undisputed" sovereignty over the three islands for centuries, and repeated claims do not change "geographical and historical realities" nor create any legal rights for claimants. Reiterating Iran's policy of good neighborliness and cooperation to safeguard regional security and stability, the spokesman urged the UAE and the GCC to avoid provocative positions that undermine neighborly relations.

Baqaei also dismissed unilateral claims by Kuwait regarding the Arash gas field, saying repeated statements and unilateral assertions "create no legal rights" for Kuwait.

He said achieving a fair and lasting agreement on the field requires bilateral dialogue, joint efforts and a constructive atmosphere to secure mutual interests.

Warning about Iran's red lines

Ali Shamkhani, a representative of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei at the Defense Council, warned the GCC against "unconstructive" claims regarding the three islands and the Arash gas field. Shamkhani described in a post on his X account on Thursday

the issues as Iran's red lines.

"The role of neighbors is to create security, not to play with the red lines of the Iranian nation," he said.

He warned that the GCC's "unconstructive" claims regarding the Iranian islands and the Arash field were raised again amid the malicious acts of the United States and the Israeli regime.

In its final communiqué, the GCC called on Iran to respond to the United Arab Emirates' efforts to resolve the issue through direct negotiations or by referring it to the International Court of Justice.

The Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran

and other parts of the world. However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands.

The islands fell under British control in 1921, but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.

The dispute over the Arash gas field, which Kuwaitis call al-Durra, dates back to the 1960s when Iran and Kuwait were awarded overlapping offshore concessions for the field following its discovery.

The field is estimated to hold 20 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, with production capacity of one billion cubic feet per day. Nearly 40% of the Arash gas field is located in Iranian waters.

Putin, Modi urge 'dialogue' on Iranian nuclear program

International Desk

In a joint statement on Friday, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated their commitment to peace and stability in the West Asian region, stressing the importance of resolving Iran nuclear issue through negotiations and dialogue.

"The parties emphasized the importance of resolving the issue of the Iranian nuclear program through dialogue," the document stated, as reported by TASS.

On September 26, the UN Security Council rejected a draft proposal by Russia and China proposing a six-month extension of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which sup-

ported the Iran nuclear deal, with the UN sanctions against Tehran taking effect on September 28.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stated on October 11 that Tehran sees no reason for resuming negotiations with the European trika — Britain, Germany, and France — on the nuclear issue due to the re-imposition of sanctions.

The joint statement following talks in New Delhi between the two leaders was published on the Kremlin website.

The document consists of 70 points, covering Putin's visit to India, trade and economic cooperation, partnership in energy, transport, cooperation in the Far East and the Arctic, cooperation in the peaceful uses of



Russian President Vladimir Putin (r) and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are seen after their talks at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on December 5, 2025.
● AFP

nuclear power and space, and other areas of interaction.



IRGC flexes naval muscles with ballistic, cruise missile launches

National Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy carried out on Friday simultaneous launches of ballistic and cruise missiles during a large-scale exercise in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman.

The launches were conducted from inland sites during the second phase of a major military drill by the IRGC Navy, codenamed 'Eghtedar' (authority) exercise, striking predetermined targets with high precision.

Various cruise missiles — Qadr 110, Qadr 380, Qadir — as well as the ballistic missile 303 were fired simultaneously from multiple points deep inside the country during the drill.

Moreover, participating drone systems carried out successful



attacks on simulated enemy bases, destroying the designated objectives.

In another segment of the exercise, air defense systems deployed on IRGC vessels practiced heavy countermeasures against incoming aerial threats simulating attacks on fast-attack boats and Iranian coasts.

On the first day of the event on Thursday, naval units conveyed their firm message by issuing warnings to American ships present in the region. The exercise, codenamed Shahid Mohammad Nazeri, took place across the Persian Gulf, the Nazeat maritime zone — Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Siri islands, the

Strait of Hormuz, as well as the Sea of Oman.

Advanced air defense systems, including Nawab, Majid and Misagh, operated under electronic warfare conditions, using artificial intelligence to detect flying and naval targets in reduced time and strike them precisely.

Nazeri was the commander of the elite commando units of the IRGC Navy. He is widely recognized in Iran for his direct involvement in the capture of 10 American sailors — nine men and one woman — who wandered into Iran's territorial waters on January 12, 2016.

Showcasing its capabilities and signaling deterrence against foreign powers, the Iranian Navy frequently conducts large-scale drills in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

Araghchi voices Iran's support for Lebanese sovereignty, invites counterpart

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi reiterated on Thursday the Islamic Republic's unwavering support for Lebanon's sovereignty as he invited his Lebanese counterpart, Youssef Rajji, to visit Tehran in the near future to discuss bilateral ties.

Highlighting the long-standing and friendly relations between the two countries, Araghchi reaffirmed in a message to Rajji the Islamic Republic's continued support for Lebanon's sovereignty, national unity, territorial integrity, security, and stability, particularly in the face of Israeli aggression. The top diplomat invited his Lebanese counterpart to visit Iran for consultations on strengthening bilateral relations and discussing regional and international developments.

Araghchi expressed confidence that the people and government of Lebanon will successfully overcome the current threats and challenges they are facing.

Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement reached a ceasefire agreement that took effect on November 27, 2024. Under the deal, Tel Aviv was required to withdraw fully from the Lebanese territory, but has kept forces stationed at five sites, in clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the terms of last November's agreement.

Since the implementation of the ceasefire, Israel has violated the agreement multiple times through repeated assaults on the Lebanese territory.

Lebanese authorities have warned that the Israeli regime's violations of the ceasefire threaten national stability.

Economic interdependence could ...

Regarding the Arash gas field, what legal, technical and diplomatic tools do Saudi Arabia and Kuwait possess to substantiate their claims, and how much might these tools enhance their chances of success?

The Arash gas field is shared between Iran and Kuwait, and it has recently been declared to overlap with parts claimed by Saudi Arabia. Although Iran and Saudi Arabia have delimited their maritime boundaries, Iran has not yet finalized such boundaries with Kuwait. As a result, maritime zones, including the seabed, subsoil and related resources, remain undefined between Iran and Kuwait. Negotiations spanning for decades have failed to produce a resolution. Defining maritime boundaries between Iran and Kuwait is therefore essential. Once those boundaries are established, Iran and Kuwait could address the

Arash field bilaterally and prevent the issue from becoming another permanent fixture in GCC communiqués. The Arab bloc has linked the islands issue to its collective security and the same dynamic must be prevented regarding the Arash field, and Iran should act to stop further alignment among Persian Gulf Arab states on this matter.

What legal, diplomatic and technical capacities does Iran possess to defend its rights against these claims?

Iran's options must be viewed as one part of a broader picture of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. Iran's de-escalation efforts, especially in recent years, have helped reduce tensions with Persian Gulf states. They recently underscored at the Manama Security Conference that Iran should not be excluded from regional security structures. These states have drawn lessons from history,

recognizing that excluding Iran cannot deliver regional stability and that lasting stability requires Iran's inclusion. Iran's most effective course is to continue this de-escalatory path while strengthening its national power and wealth. Unless Iran becomes sufficiently strong and develops extensive mutual economic interdependence with other states, anchoring its weight in bilateral and multilateral relations, the cost of opposing Iran or siding with its rivals will remain low for other countries.

If Iran's national power — economic, social, political and cultural — stagnates and fails to engage with other states and build up reciprocal dependencies, supporting the UAE will remain the cheaper option for other actors. By altering this equation Iran can halt the momentum behind claims to its territorial sovereignty and simultaneously align other countries with its stance.



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