

Regional efforts underway to ease Tehran-Washington tensions

International Desk

Regional countries including Iraq and Qatar are pushing to mediate between Iran and the United States, aiming to ease rising tensions between Tehran and Washington, especially after recent protests and riots in Iran.

Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said on Tuesday that Baghdad was working to arrange a meeting between Iran and the US.

In a meeting with the ambassadors of EU countries, Sudani said Baghdad was "in contact with ... Iran and the US administration in order to establish a dialogue platform in Baghdad." However, he provided no details.

The efforts come as tensions between Iran and the United States have heightened in recent weeks following Washington's threat of military aggression against Iran on the pretext of supporting Iranian demonstrators who took to the streets over the past weeks to protest the country's economic situation

which later turned bloody.

Iraq's Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, who visited Tehran on Sunday, also discussed Baghdad's diplomatic initiatives with Iranian officials "to prevent the region from sliding into a new conflict," an Iraqi government official told The National on the same day.

The unnamed official added that Baghdad "seeks to bring viewpoints closer through hosting direct negotiations between the US and Iran," according to The National news website.

On his two-day visit to Tehran, the Iraqi foreign minister met his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi, President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari also said on Tuesday that Doha supports a diplomatic solution to the tensions between Tehran and Washington and is continuously consulting at the interna-

tional level to prevent an escalation of tensions between the two sides.

Ansari warned that any escalation in the region will have widespread consequences and affect all countries in the region.

Peaceful protests over economic woes erupted across Iran on December 28 but turned violent after the US President Donald Trump and other American officials said that Washington would resort to military action against Iran in the event of what they called Tehran's "suppression" of the protesters.

In response, Iranian officials warned the United States against any adventurism.

During the unrest, foreign-backed armed rioters damaged public property and caused casualties among civilians and security forces. Hundreds of people have been arrested for their involvement in the riots.

On Saturday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (c) welcomes his visiting Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein (l) in Foreign Ministry's building in Tehran, Iran, on January 18, 2026.

IRNA

said Iran considers the US president the main culprit for the killings and destruction carried out by foreign-linked elements in recent riots.

"The US president is responsible for casualties, damage, and false accusations directed against the Iranian nation," the Leader said, calling Trump a criminal.

Pezeshkian calls recent violent events in Iran part of 'failed' US-Israeli war



President Masoud Pezeshkian referred to the recent violent events in Iran as "the continuation of the failed and unsuccessful" campaign by the United States and the Israeli regime in the 12-day war against the Islamic Republic.

On Monday, Pezeshkian noted the "historic presence" of millions of Iranians who rallied to condemn the unrest, describing the unity of the Iranian people as a significant setback for adversaries of the nation. He emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran will pursue its path with renewed vigor, striving

to enhance cooperation with neighboring and Islamic countries. These remarks were made during a phone conversation with Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, where they discussed ongoing regional developments and the recent foreign-backed riots in Iran.

Praising Pakistan's commitment to fostering peace in the region, Pezeshkian expressed confidence in the collective strength of Muslim nations to counter threats to regional security. He acknowledged Pakistan's steadfast sup-

port for Iran's legitimate positions.

The Iranian president explained that "since the beginning of accepting responsibility, all our efforts have been to create convergence, empathy, and unity among all groups, parties, ethnic groups, and religions within the country, and to strengthen cooperation, friendship, and brotherly ties, and to develop relations at the best level with neighboring and Islamic countries."

"In parallel with these efforts, we have also witnessed malice, hostility, and intensified pressure from the United States and the Zionist regime to disrupt this path," he noted.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sharif reiterated Pakistan's solidarity with Iran, emphasizing its significance as a neighbor and a pivotal nation in the region.

"We have been closely monitoring the recent developments in Iran because the Islamic Re-

public of Iran is of great importance to us not only as a neighbor but also as an important and influential country in the region and the world," he stated.

Sharif expressed Pakistan's readiness to aid in reducing tensions and resolving conflicts, affirming that Iran, under the leadership of its prudent leaders, would triumph over its challenges with determination and pride.

Late last month, Iran witnessed street protests triggered by a sharp fall in the rial, the Iranian currency, and economic hardship in the capital, Tehran, and other cities.

The peaceful protests across Iran turned violent after US President Donald Trump and other American officials alleged that the United States would resort to fresh military aggression against Iran in the event of what they called Tehran's "suppression" of the foreign-backed terrorist riots.

Araghchi: Davos invite revocation based on 'lies, political pressure'

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister hit out at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos for cancelling his invitation over recent protests in Iran, saying the decision was based on "lies and political pressure."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was slated to speak on Tuesday at the annual gathering of global elites in Switzerland, but was disinvited after the WEF said it would not be "right" due to the "loss of lives of civilians in Iran over the past few weeks."

Araghchi said in an X post late Monday that his appearance was cancelled

"on the basis of lies and political pressure from Israel and its US-based proxies and apologists."

He called it a "blatant double standard" to disinvite him while inviting Israel after its war in Gaza, saying it "conveys moral depravity and intellectual bankruptcy."

Araghchi's post on X was



WEF

accompanied by a video saying the demonstrations were a "terror operation" spurred by Israel's Mossad spy agency. Iran's Ambassador to Switzerland Mahmoud Narimani also reacted to WEF's move, saying that the decision "shows their fear of Iran's voice reaching international audiences."

He described the move as an "unjustified action" which runs contrary to the international custom and decency, and damages the credibility of the World Economic Forum. Some shopkeepers last month staged peaceful protests in different Ira-

nian cities over economic grievances. The demonstrations, however, were steered toward violence after public statements by US and Israeli regime figures encouraged vandalism and disorder. During the unrest, foreign-backed armed rioters damaged public property and caused casualties among civilians and security forces.

Security and intelligence forces have captured more than 470 individuals in three provinces, identified as key figures behind the recent wave of violent unrest and terrorist activities linked to foreign-backed networks.

Parliament approves bill recognizing right to assembly



ICANA

National Desk

The Iranian Parliament on Tuesday passed a bill that recognized the right

of all individuals to hold and take part in gatherings and rallies days after recent protests over livelihood hardships caused a

serious security crisis for the country.

During an open session of the legislative chamber, lawmakers reviewed a report by the Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs and Councils regarding a bill on regulating the staging gatherings and rallies, in implementation of Article 27 of the Constitution, IRNA reported.

After hearing the views of both supporters and opponents, the MPs voted in favor of Article 2 of the bill. The article was ratified with 223 votes in favor, three votes against, and

no abstentions.

According to the approved and amended text of Article 2, all individuals enjoy the right to organize and hold gatherings and marches, or to participate in them, within the framework of Article 27 of the Constitution and other relevant laws.

A note appended to the article specifies one of the key conditions for holding demonstrations, stating that applicants seeking to organize gatherings or marches must not have an effective criminal record relevant to the matter.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON

