

'Encouraging progress': Iran, US wrap first round of Switzerland talks



Iran's delegation including Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (C) and Parliament Speaker Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf (right) arrive for a quadrilateral meeting between the United States, Iran, Pakistan and Qatar at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex near Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, on June 21, 2026.
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also been agreed to prevent fighting from erupting again, they said. Lebanon was pitched into the conflict as Hezbollah resistance group attacked Israel over the war on Tehran, prompting Israel's brutal strikes on Lebanon.

Building on Islamabad MoU

Sunday's meeting followed an interim deal digitally signed last week between the presidents of Iran and the US and stretched into the early hours of Monday. The memorandum, which contains 14 clauses, calls on the US to cease hostilities on all fronts — including in Lebanon, suspend oil and petrochemical sanctions, release Iran's frozen assets, and lift the naval blockade on Iranian ports. "The discussions were held in a positive and constructive atmosphere and yielded encouraging progress," Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wrote on X, adding that the first round of talks had "concluded successfully." Esmail Baghaei, spokesman for Iran's negotiating team and also the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said Iran had achieved "favorable progress" in the first

round of talks over the issuance of waivers for oil and petroleum product exports. The talks involved "an exchange of important messages," specifically regarding clauses 10 and 11 of the 14-point memorandum reached between the two countries, he said.

Sanctions 'waived', frozen assets 'released'

Baqaei said in a televised interview that the clauses address "two critical issues" that are issuance of waivers for the export of Iranian oil and derivatives and the US commitment to unfreeze Iranian funds. The Iranian official added that under clause 13 of the memorandum, negotiations toward a final agreement cannot proceed to the next stage until those steps are completed. Iran's oil and petrochemical sector has been under US sanctions since 2018, when Washington reimposed measures aimed at driving Iranian crude exports to zero. The campaign, part of a broader "maximum pressure" policy, has fallen short of fully halting shipments, though it has significantly reduced Tehran's oil revenues. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who is also a member of the Iranian negotiating team, in a post on social media said Tehran has secured waivers for oil and petrochemical exports, the release of some frozen assets and the launch of a reconstruction and development plan for Iran.

"Oil and Petrochem exports are waived, blockade lifted, some frozen assets released, and major reconstruction & development plan launched for Iran. 1st real test: Lebanon deconfliction cell," he wrote.

The US Treasury said Monday it is temporarily lifting sanctions on Iran to allow the Islamic Republic to produce, sell and deliver crude oil and related products through August 21.

"All transactions" that were previously prohibited involving the production, sale, and transport of Iranian-origin crude oil "are authorized through 12:01 am eastern daylight time, August 21, 2026," according to a license published by the Treasury Department, which administers US economic sanctions.

The Iranian delegation is led by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf while the US Vice President JD Vance is heading the American delegation in the negotiations.

Vance declared Monday that a "very good foundation" had been laid for negotiations towards a final deal with Iran.

Tehran has agreed for inspectors from the UN's nuclear watchdog to return to the country, Vance claimed, a year after Iran suspended some cooperation and blocked inspectors from key nuclear sites bombed by the US and Israel in 2025's 12-day war.

Baqaei said that "a very brief discussion took place regarding the nuclear issue, but there was no discussion of details" and that nuclear talks had not begun.

International Desk

Iran and the United States made "progress" at the first round of Switzerland talks aimed at reaching a final peace deal, with the Iranian side saying it achieved "favorable progress" on some important issues.

Mediators Pakistan and Qatar said the negotiators reached agreement on a "roadmap towards reaching a final deal within 60 days" on sanctions imposed on Iran as well as the country's nuclear program, with technical talks to continue for the rest of the week at the Swiss resort of

Burgenstock.

"Encouraging progress has been made including the creation of a mechanism for further technical talks," they said, detailing a contact channel set up to "avoid incidents and miscommunication" at the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global oil supply route.

Tehran had effectively closed the waterway in retaliation against the joint attacks by Israel and the United States on February 28 that touched off the war in the Middle East.

A "de-confliction cell", between the parties and the Lebanese authorities has

Pezeshkian: Iran will not bow to excessive demands in negotiations

President due in Pakistan today for one-day visit

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian reiterated on Monday that Tehran will not yield to "excessive demands" or any attempt to disregard the rights of the Iranian people during the ongoing negotiations between Iran and the United States to end war.

Speaking at a ceremony marking National Guilds Day, Pezeshkian said the talks are being conducted with dignity and strength and within the framework determined by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

He also emphasized the strategic role played by guilds and trade unions in preserving national stability and maintaining services to the people throughout the recent imposed war by the US and the Israeli regime.

Pezeshkian also referred to the Israel's war on Lebanon, hailing the recent ceasefire in Lebanon as a significant

diplomatic victory for the Iranian negotiating team in the talks with the US. "The fact that today, as a result of the resistance of our negotiating team, the other side has been compelled to back down on the issue of Lebanon and has ceased the killing and slaughter of the oppressed people of that country is no small achievement," Pezeshkian said. Iran has insisted on a halt to Israel's attacks in Lebanon as a precondition for the resumption of negotiations.

On Sunday, Tehran and Washington began new round of negotiations to how implement a Memorandum of Understanding reached between the two countries in Pakistan last week.

Islamabad has played a significant role in establishing a ceasefire between the two countries after the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in February. IRNA said on Monday that President Pezeshkian will travel to Pakistan on Tuesday for on a one-day visit to hold consultations and exchange views with



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a ceremony marking National Guilds Day in Tehran on June 22, 2026.
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top Pakistani officials.

Expressing appreciation to Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for "his mediation between Iran and the United States" is among the objectives of the visit, said Habibollah Abbasi, director of public relations at the president's office.

Qatari PM lauds Islamabad MoU for 'stopping the war'

International Desk

Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani said on Monday that with a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between Iran and the United States in Pakistan, "We have reached a state of stopping the war."

The Qatari foreign minister made the remarks in an interview with Al Jazeera.

He said that the preliminary agreement between Washington and Tehran "took great effort with our partners in Pakistan and regional and international support to create suitable conditions for negotiations." The Qatari official, whose country played a role in mediating between Iran and the US, said the aim of the MoU is to stop the war and lay the foundation for further talks.

"Other issues being discussed between Washington and Tehran include Iran's nuclear file, the status of the Strait of Hormuz and regional security", he added.

Qatar's foreign minister said the initial agreement establishes an institutional framework for the ongoing negotiating process.

Iranian and American presidents separate-



Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani
● AFP

ly signed the MoU on Wednesday to end a recent aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran. The agreement between Iran and the US was finalized on Sunday, following months of intensive negotiations mediated by Pakistan, with support from other regional countries.

Under the agreement, the war and all military operations, including in Lebanon, have ended immediately, and the US naval blockade against Iran has been lifted.

The MoU also provides for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping. The two sides have now engaged in 60-day negotiations to address outstanding issues, including the lifting of all sanctions against Iran and Iran's nuclear program.

France seeks to ...

Could France's insistence on including Iran's missile program and regional policies in the agreement further complicate efforts to reach a comprehensive deal?

Yes, without question. One of the key reasons behind the relative success of the 2015 nuclear agreement was that negotiations remained confined to the nuclear issue. The broader the scope of negotiations becomes, the greater the number of variables and stakeholders involved, reducing the likelihood of reaching an agreement.

For years, France has argued that any lasting agreement should also encompass missile-related and regional dimensions. From Iran's perspective, however, these issues fall outside the scope of nuclear negotiations and are closely tied to deterrence capabilities and national security considerations. As a result, introducing such files into the talks could deepen existing divisions and make the path to an agreement lon-

ger and more complex.

At the same time, it is important to note that raising these demands does not necessarily mean they will be met. In many international negotiations, parties put forward their maximum demands at the outset, while the final agreement typically emerges from the balance of power and the genuine priorities of the sides involved.

Given the United States' central role in these negotiations, to what extent can Washington bring its European allies behind its preferred framework? Are there serious differences between the US and Europe over the scope and conditions of a potential agreement?

The United States remains the decisive player in this file and, if the political will exists in Washington, it has considerable capacity to bring its European allies on board. Both the experience of the 2015 nuclear deal and the reimposition of sanctions after the US withdrawal demonstrated that, despite political objections, Europe has limited ability in

practice to push back against Washington's strategic decisions.

That does not mean, however, that there are no differences. Europe generally takes a broader security view of its surrounding environment, placing greater emphasis on issues such as the missile program, regional security, migration, and stability in the Middle East. The United States, by contrast, may at times be willing to prioritize the nuclear issue and temporarily set aside some secondary demands in pursuit of a quicker agreement.

The differences between the United States and Europe therefore relate more to the scope and level of ambition of a potential deal than to the principle of reaching one. If Washington concludes that a more limited but workable agreement serves its interests, it will likely be able to rally most of its European allies behind that approach. Even so, Paris will continue trying to ensure that Europe's security concerns are reflected in the final text to the greatest extent possible.



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