IRGC warns of wider energy disruption if US blocks crude exports

Iran keeps oil sale mechanisms unchanged, minister says

An AFP photo shows ships docked along a pier in the Gulf of Oman.

Economy Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) warned on Wednesday that energy export routes serving the United States and its allies would be disrupted if Washington continued blocking Iran's oil and gas exports, hours after the US reinstated a naval blockade of Iran's southern ports.

"Now that the [US] pirates have blocked the route for exporting oil and gas to the world through the Indian Ocean, endangering the interests of America's economic rivals, they should expect the closure of other oil and gas export routes that serve the interests of the United States and its allies," the IRGC said in a strongly worded statement.

The statement did not specify which export routes could be targeted but noted that regional energy exports would be "for everyone or for no one."

Iran tightened control over the Strait of Hormuz after US strikes resumed against coastal targets in southern Iran last week.

The Guards said the key conduit would remain closed "until the end of US aggression and hostile acts" and that it would not reverse its position on preventing vessels from sailing through the waterway.

Before the 40-day US-Israeli war against Iran that began on February 28, about one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments passed through the strategic channel.

Under a peace memorandum with the US last month, Iran had pledged safe passage for ships through the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran has said vessels should only use a northern route under Iranian control.

The United States restored its naval blockade on Tuesday evening with 20 warships, hundreds of fighter jets and military drones, as US Central Command (CENTCOM) says, to prevent the Islamic Republic's oil exports while ensuring maritime security in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

During the first blockade, imposed in mid-April and lasting for more than two months, US forces reportedly intercepted dozens of vessels linked to Iran, turned many of them back, seized at least two oil tankers and attacked several others in the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

Also, the US Treasury on July 7 revoked a temporarily sanctions waiver on Iranian oil after three vessels were targeted in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran strongly condemned the US move, calling it a "flagrant violation" of Clause 10 of the memo signed between Washington and Tehran.

Iran's oil minister said on Wednesday that the country's oil sales were continuing under existing mechanisms despite the renewed US measures.

Mohsen Paknejad said that after the waiver took effect, Iran had decided to preserve its sanctions-evasion mechanisms in the oil trade rather than dismantle them, according to Shana News Agency,

Paknejad said the decision was based on what Tehran viewed as Washington's record of failing to honor its commitments.

"The passage of time confirmed that Washington had violated Clause 10 of the agreement," he said.

The minister said Iran had moved substantial volumes of crude beyond the blockade line before it was reinstated.

Reuters reported on Wednesday that Iranian vessels had managed to pass through the Strait of Hormuz before the United States brought back the blockade.

Citing shipping data, Reuters said traffic through the Strait of Hormuz increased on Tuesday, with most of the vessels linked to Iranian trade. Vessel-tracking data from Kpler showed that nine of the 11 ships transiting the strait on Tuesday used Iran's shipping route.

ISA: Nahid-3 project in progress; Soleimani constellation's 1st phase planned

Hassan Salarieh
● ISNA

Economy Desk

Iran plans to continue expanding its space program through 2026, including the first phase of the Shahid Soleimani satellite constellation and the unveiling of its first domestically developed radar satellite, Press TV reported.

Speaking at a news conference on Wednesday, Hassan Salarieh, deputy information and communications technology minister and head of the Iranian Space Agency (ISA), said the country's main space projects this Iranian year, which began on March 21, include expanding satellite control centers, launch sites and specialized laboratories, along with progress on the Nahid-2 and Nahid-3 communications satellites and the Shahid Soleimani constellation.

"The projects we are pursuing in the space industry fall into several main categories, including infrastructure projects, satellite design and manufacturing projects, as well as data- and imagery-based service projects," Salarieh said.

He said Nahid-3, Iran's next-generation communications satellite, is being designed to provide services in geostationary orbit (GEO). The project remains in the design stage, while construction of major subsystems, including its propulsion system, is underway.

Salarieh said the Shahid Soleimani satellite constellation would be deployed in several phases. The first phase includes 24 satellites — 18 operational and six backup spacecraft — which are planned to be placed into orbit.

He said the Iranian Space Agency also plans to unveil additional prototypes of the constellation and launch the satellites once the required launch vehicle is ready.

Salarieh said work on Iran's Earth observation satellites would also continue this year, including preparations to launch the Pars-2 satellite after completing its qualification tests.

He said Pars-2, unveiled in February 2025, is one of Iran's main remote-sensing satellites and is expected to expand the country's imaging satellite fleet.

Salarieh also said Iran would soon unveil the prototype of its first domestically developed radar satellite, Rad-1, while development of the more advanced Rad-2 radar satellite is also underway.

Iranian firms start work on Afghan rail link to bolster China corridor

Economy Desk

Iranian companies have begun construction of an 800-kilometer railway linking Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan, a project aimed at expanding regional rail connectivity and completing a transport corridor connecting Iran, Afghanistan and China, Iran's state railway chief said.

Jabbar Ali Zakari, deputy minister of roads and urban development, told ILNA that the project is being financed by the Afghan government and will be carried out under a "railway-for-minerals" arrangement, under which Iran will build the railway in return for participating in the development of and investment in Afghanistan's mining sector.

The chief executive of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways said the agreement was based on economic cooperation and the development of Afghanistan's mining potential.

He said completion of the railway would facilitate trade between Iran and Afghanistan, help connect the regional rail network to China, and strengthen Iran's position in international transport and freight transit corridors.

He had earlier told ILNA that freight traffic along the Afghan rail route was expected to continue growing, adding that Iran hoped cargo volumes on the route would reach about 3 million metric tons by March 21, 2027.

Iran trade center in Canada launches exporter support program

● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iran's Trade Center in Canada has launched a program to help Iranian companies expand into international markets, including Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Africa, the Caucasus and Eurasia, its director said.

Mohammad Vahidi Rad told IRNA the initiative was designed to facilitate the entry of Iranian products into overseas markets and was not limited to direct sales in Canada.

"This program is not limited to the direct sale of goods in the Canadian market. It uses Canadian business networks, standardization, branding and commercial structures," he said.

Vahidi Rad said the program is open to companies, manufacturers, suppliers and other businesses with the production capacity, experience or readiness to enter international markets.

He said manufacturers, service providers and knowledge-based companies offering products, services, technical expertise or production capacity for overseas markets could also participate, particularly those seeking support with evaluation, export readiness, standardization, packaging, business planning, commercial promotion or specialized networking.

"The goal of this program is to identify and select capable and reliable Iranian businesses whose products and services have the potential to enter, expand and be commercialized in the Canadian market or in other target markets through Canadian business networks," Vahidi Rad said.

He said the Trade Center would support selected companies from the initial assessment stage through export preparation, assessment of export potential, market-entry planning, commercial introductions and the development of cooperation models.

"Depending on the product, production capacity, market conditions and the outcome of specialized assessments, this cooperation may include export preparation, packaging improvements, standardization, customized production, joint manufacturing, supply arrangements, partial project financing, product adaptation for target markets, logistics, commercial introductions and B2B marketing," he said.

Vahidi Rad said Canada would not necessarily be the final destination for many projects. Instead, Iranian products could be prepared for export to the United Arab Emirates, Africa, the Caucasus, Eurasia and other markets by using Canadian business networks, branding, standardization, packaging and corporate structures.