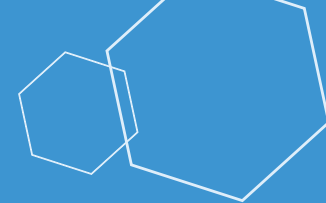




GLOBAL
EUROPE



The Iran Nuclear Deal: Explained



The Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was negotiated and concluded by Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) together with the EU on 14 July 2015. It was endorsed by UN Security Council (UNSC) **Resolution 2231**, which was unanimously adopted by UNSC member states on 20 July 2015. The agreement aimed to block Iran's pathway to obtaining nuclear weapons and limit Iran's nuclear programme to civilian purposes, in exchange for relief from international economic sanctions. It set out an inspection process and schedule while also preparing for the removal of United Nations sanctions against Iran.

On 16 January 2016, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verified that Iran had complied with initial key steps to limit its nuclear programme in its report to the UNSC, triggering relief from international sanctions. However, two years later, on 8 May 2018, the US administration under President Trump announced its unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and proceeded to gradually tighten sanctions, leading to international concern for the future of the deal.

In response to the US policy of 'maximum pressure', Iran responded by gradually suspending its compliance with the JCPOA in several key areas, after an initial policy of 'strategic patience'. The remaining JCPOA participants, the so called P4+1 (China, Russia, Germany, France, the UK) together with the EU and Iran firmly opposed the US withdrawal from the deal and have striven to keep it alive in the intervening years.

In advance of the 2020 UN General Assembly, the US notified the UN Security Council on 20 August 2020 that it was launching a 30-day process to 'snapback' UN sanctions against Iran. The other UNSC members firmly rejected the US claim on the basis that

TIMELINE

24 November 2013: An interim pact was reached between Iran and the P5+1 on Iran's nuclear programme called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

14 July 2015: Iran and the P5+1 reached an agreement on the JCPOA.

20 July 2015: The UN Security Council adopted resolution 2231, formally endorsing the JCPOA.

16 January 2016: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verified Iran's compliance with initial key steps of the JCPOA triggering the lifting of international sanctions on Iran.

8 May 2018: The Trump administration announced the unilateral withdrawal of the US from the JCPOA citing concerns with the expiry of nuclear restraints and Iran's ballistic missile programme.

20 August 2020: US attempts to reimpose UN sanctions against Iran. UNSC members firmly rejected the US claim on the basis of US withdrawal from the JCPOA.



the US had no authority to launch such a process, due to its withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018.

Since April 2021, the remaining parties to the JCPOA have been engaged in discussions in Vienna under the auspices of the Joint Commission on the JCPOA to negotiate the potential pathway for a US return to the deal. While the US delegation has been present in Vienna, it has not participated directly in the meetings, instead relying on intermediaries to conduct negotiations indirectly with Iran.

After the sixth round of talks in June 2021, the chief EU envoy, Enrique Mora, expressed his belief that a deal was close to being struck and Russia's foreign ministry stated that a deal would be done by 14 July 2021 on the sixth anniversary of the JCPOA. However, the election of conservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi as Iranian President on 18 June 2021 may serve to slow the momentum of the negotiations.

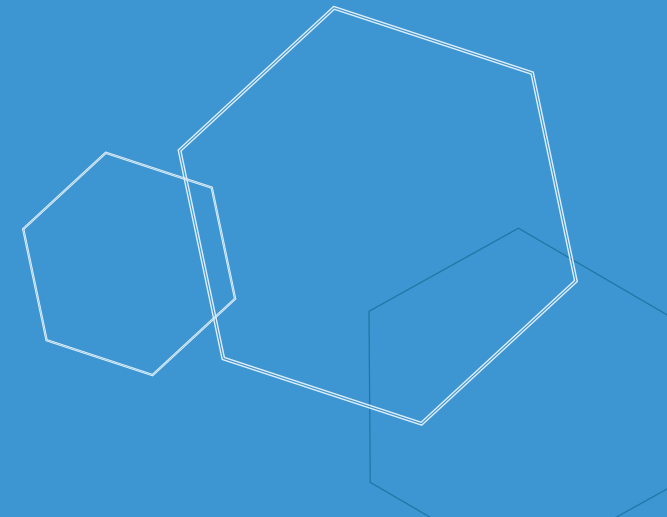
While it is not yet clear when the talks will resume, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese President Xi Jinping called on all parties involved in the Iran nuclear talks to seize a window of opportunity for an agreement on Monday 5 July 2021.

18 October 2020: UN arms embargo on Iran expires leading the US to threaten further sanctions.

18 February 2021: Biden administration rescinded the Trump administration's restoration of UN Sanctions on Iran.

6 April 2021: First round of negotiations of the JCPOA Joint Commission begins at the Grand Hotel in Vienna.

20 June 2021: Diplomats from the parties to the JCPOA conclude the sixth round of negotiations and returned to their capitals for final political decisions.



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