

TEHRAN -- Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent remarks advocating the "Greater Israel" scheme, describing it as a blatant declaration of intent to extend occupation over Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

Spokesman Esmail Baghaei called the plan a clear violation of the UN Charter and international law, warning it threatens the sovereignty of regional nations and reflects fascist ambitions. He urged the UN, OIC, and all governments to condemn this dangerous agenda. Baghaei also highlighted the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, condemning Israel's war of genocide and the use of starvation as a weapon against Palestinians since October 2023.

ANKARA (Dispatches) -- Saeed Khatibzadeh, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister and Head of the Institute for Political and International Studies, met with Turkey's National Security Council Secretary Okay Memiş here on Friday to discuss regional developments, including the crisis in Gaza. Both sides condemned Israel's ongoing aggression and expansionist policies, calling for stronger Islamic unity and coordinated efforts to address shared regional challenges. Khatibzadeh thanked Turkey for its solidarity with Iran and warned of U.S. and Israeli efforts to dominate West Asia.

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Aref Calls for Regional Unity as Eurasian Bloc Rallies Behind Iran



Karbala Draws 23 Million Devotees for Arbaeen of Martyrdom



Noshad Alemiyan Starts Grand Smash Sweden Tournament on High Note



Israeli PM's Threat to Annex Arab Lands Sparks Outrage



Iran, China, Russia Join Forces to Block Snapback Trigger

TEHRAN -- Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says Iran is actively collaborating with China and Russia to prevent the reactivation of UN sanctions through the so-called "snapback" mechanism threatened by European countries.

"We are working with China and Russia to stop it," Araghchi told national television late on Thursday. "If this does not work and they apply it, we have tools to respond. We will discuss them in due course."

The snapback mechanism, embedded in the 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), allows the automatic reinstatement of UN Security Council sanctions that had been lifted under the agreement. Iran, however, disputes the legitimacy of the European powers' efforts to trigger the provision.

Araghchi explained that although the term "snapback" does not explicitly appear in the JCPOA text, its mechanism is clearly established and has even been invoked by Iran itself in response to the US withdrawal from the deal in 2018.

"We used the snapback mechanism ourselves," Araghchi said. "When the United States left the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions unilaterally, we started to reduce our commitments in phases, eventually returning to pre-agreement conditions."

Iran's return to higher levels of uranium enrichment — including to 20% and then 60% enrichment — was enabled by preserving its nuclear infrastructure intact during the JCPOA years.

"The infrastructure was maintained so that when we decided to restart enrichment at higher levels, it took less than 24 hours," he noted.

Regarding the European powers' attempt to reimpose sanctions, Araghchi emphasized that their legal authority to trigger snapback is highly questionable under international law.

He said the European countries' recent statements demanding "zero enrichment" violate the terms of the JCPOA, effectively amounting to a rejection of the deal.

"When they say 'zero enrichment,' they no longer accept the JCPOA framework and therefore cannot claim the rights granted to members of the deal, including the right to activate snapback," Araghchi said.

In a detailed letter to the UN Security Council, Iran has laid out its position, asserting that Britain, France, and Germany are no longer legitimate JCPOA participants with the authority to reinstate sanctions through snapback. This position is supported by China and Russia, who share Tehran's view on the matter.

China and Russia's backing plays a critical role in Iran's diplomatic efforts to counter the snapback threat. Both countries are permanent members of the UN Security Council and have veto power over resolutions, including those related to Iran's nuclear program.

"We have been holding repeated technical and legal discussions with China and Russia over the years about the snapback mechanism," Araghchi said. "Their support is crucial in this ongoing legal and political dispute with the European countries."

He added that while the Security Council will ultimately decide

on the snapback's validity, Iran's alliance with China and Russia strengthens its position to resist the move.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the JCPOA and contains the snapback clause, is set to expire on October 18, 2025. Iran has warned that beyond this date, the snapback mechanism will no longer be available.

"Europeans have until the end of October to act," Araghchi noted. "After that, the mechanism expires automatically."

Economically, Araghchi downplayed fears about the potential impact of reinstated UN sanctions. He stressed that current unilateral US sanctions are far more broader than the Security Council measures that would return via snapback.

"People have exaggerated the impact of snapback," he said. "UN sanctions do not include oil or banking embargoes; they mostly target specific individuals and companies. The U.S. sanctions in place today are much broader."

However, he acknowledged that the reimposition of the arms embargo and the possible reclassification of Iran as a "threat to international peace and security" under Chapter VII of the UN Charter would have political and legal consequences.

"That would be a significant damage and we must counter it," he said. "We are prepared and have several tools to respond if snapback is triggered."

Iran also urged the international community to recognize that it has upheld its nuclear commitments as far as possible under increasingly difficult circumstances and that Europe's rigid stance undermines the deal's framework.

"Europe's insistence on zero enrichment is not compatible with the JCPOA, which allows enrichment up to 3.67 percent," Araghchi pointed out. "This shows they do not accept the deal, which should disqualify them from enforcing its snapback provisions."

Looking ahead, Tehran remains determined to use all diplomatic and legal channels to prevent the return of sanctions, leveraging its close ties with China and Russia to maintain support in the Security Council.

"This dispute will continue in the coming weeks," Araghchi said. "We hope for a diplomatic solution, but if snapback happens, we have prepared responses that will be announced in due time."

'Cooperation with IAEA Requires New Framework'

Araghchi also said the relationship between Tehran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has fundamentally changed following attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, and future cooperation must be based on a new framework. "The reality is that after this attack, changes have occurred. Our nuclear facilities were attacked and suffered damage. The IAEA first needs to tell us what the inspection protocol is for a bombed nuclear site. There is no such protocol because there is no precedent," he said.

"When you want to inspect a bombed facility, you have to clarify who will clear the rubble, how to approach the site, and what the threats are. There are dangers from unexploded ordnance and radiation," (Continued on Page 7)

Hezbollah Leader Warns Lebanese Government: No Disarmament Until Israeli Occupation Ends



Lebanon's Hezbollah chief Sheikh Naim Qassem gives a televised speech in this screengrab obtained from video released on Aug. 15, 2025.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Sheikh Naim Qassem, the secretary general of Lebanon's Hezbollah, issued a stern warning Friday, declaring that the resistance movement will not relinquish its weapons until the Israeli occupation ends.

Speaking on the occasion of Arba'een, the 40th day following the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), Qassem cautioned that the Lebanese government's recent decision to disarm Hezbollah risks igniting internal conflict.

"The resistance will not surrender its weapons as long as occupation persists and aggression continues," Qassem said in his speech, vowing that Hezbollah

will continue its fight against "falsehood," describing the United States and Israel as the "modern-day Yazid," referencing the tyrannical Umayyad ruler who opposed Imam Hussein (AS) in the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD.

The Hezbollah leader directly criticized the Lebanese cabinet's decision to pursue disarmament, calling it "implementing an American order and serve the Israeli project." He further declared, "Hezbollah will fight against the U.S.-Israeli project and we are confident of victory."

Qassem held the government "fully responsible for any strife that may occur," adding, "We don't want it, but there are those who are working to-

wards it."

He warned the government against dragging the Lebanese army into internal conflicts, emphasizing that while Hezbollah and its political ally Amal have so far refrained from street protests, they remain prepared to respond should the government fail to amend its stance.

"If confrontation is imposed, we are ready for it," he said.

The Hezbollah chief said the disarmament decision is a direct threat to the resistance and the Lebanese people, stating that the move to strip "Lebanon and its resistance and people of defensive weapons against any aggression means facilitating the killing of the resistance

fighters and their families as well as their expulsion from their homes."

Qassem stressed that instead of disarming Hezbollah, the Lebanese government should prioritize expelling Israeli forces from Lebanese territory. He urged the cabinet to "convene to discuss confronting the aggression and rebuilding the country, not to hand over the country to an insatiable Israeli aggressor or an American tyrant with limitless greed."

He further criticized the decision as "very serious" and unconstitutional, saying it violates Lebanon's pact of mutual coexistence.

"There is no legitimacy for any authority that contradicts the pact of mutual coexistence," Qassem said, underscoring that the resistance's legitimacy derives from the 1989 Taif Agreement—which ended Lebanon's civil war—and "the blood of its martyrs, not from you."

The decision to disarm Hezbollah has also drawn condemnation from legal experts in Lebanon. A prominent Lebanese lawyer described the government's move as "illegitimate" and equated it to "high treason" since it aligns with the interests of Israel, Lebanon's adversary.

Sheikh Qassem reaffirmed Hezbollah's vital role in protecting Lebanon's sovereignty, especially against repeated Israeli aggressions.

The move to restrict weapons to the state comes after Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, on August 5, tasked the army with devising a plan to disarm Hezbollah by the end of 2025. The government formally endorsed a U.S.-backed proposal aimed at this goal during a cabinet meeting two days later.

For decades, Hezbollah's armed resistance has been central to Lebanon's defense strategy, particularly against Israeli incursions.

U.S. Capital Under Siege: Trump Seizes Control of D.C. Police

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- In a brazen overreach of executive power, the Trump administration's recent move to seize control of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department has triggered a legal and political firestorm, exposing the deep tensions between federal authority and local self-governance.

This unprecedented federal intervention not only undermines the autonomy of the nation's capital but threatens to destabilize public safety under the guise of enforcing "law and order."

On Thursday night, U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi announced that Terry Cole, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, would assume command over the D.C. police department, effectively displacing Chief Pamela Smith, who answers to the city's elected mayor.

This directive came without consultation with local officials and ignores the democratic mandate underpinning the city's Home Rule—a principle allowing residents of Washington D.C. to govern their own affairs since 1973.

In response, the city's Attorney General Brian Schwab swiftly filed a lawsuit seeking an emergency restraining order, branding the federal takeover as illegal and

a threat to the dignity of more than 700,000 residents.

"This is the gravest threat to Home Rule that the District has ever faced," Schwab said, and rightly so. The Trump administration's aggressive maneuver disregards decades of hard-won local governance and community trust, pushing a top-down approach that will sow confusion and chaos within the police force.

Chief Smith herself warned that the federal order would "upend command structure" and pose a "dangerous" threat to law and order. Police departments rely heavily on clear chains of command, trust, and local knowledge—elements that a politically motivated federal takeover risks shattering.

The timing and nature of this intervention appear less about addressing any real crisis and more about advancing a punitive immigration agenda and projecting a tough-on-crime image ahead of the 2026 elections.

The Trump administration claims authority based on obscure statutes and an asserted state of emergency, yet Washington D.C.'s violent crime rates do not justify such drastic measures.

While crime has increased in parts of the city, its homicide rate

remains lower than many other major U.S. cities. Rather than supporting local solutions, the federal government's heavy-handed approach undermines community-based policing efforts that emphasize trust and cooperation—critical components for effective crime reduction.

Further complicating the issue is the rollback of previously agreed-upon policies concerning immigration enforcement. Chief Smith had issued guidelines limiting police cooperation with federal immigration agents in certain situations, reflecting the city's sanctuary policies designed to protect immigrant communities.

Attorney General Bondi rescinded these guidelines and demanded all new directives receive federal approval. This blatant federal intrusion not only disrupts local law enforcement operations but also threatens to alienate immigrant residents, fostering fear and distrust.

The Trump administration's actions also spotlight a troubling political dynamic. Washington D.C. is a majority-Black city with a predominantly Democratic leadership, frequently at odds with the Republican federal government.

The takeover appears to be less about public safety and more about exerting political control over a

jurisdiction that resists Trump's agenda. By deploying 800 National Guard troops and federal agents to patrol the city's streets and iconic landmarks, the administration is staging a show of force that feels more like occupation than protection.

This militarized presence, including Humvees outside Union Station and patrols in nightlife districts, heightens tensions among residents already grappling with the impacts of homelessness, economic hardship, and a pandemic recovery. Rather than fostering calm, the federal takeover risks escalating distrust between law enforcement and the community.

Moreover, the legal basis for this takeover is dubious. The Home Rule Act clearly limits presidential control over the city's police to 30 days without Congressional approval—a deadline fast approaching.

President Trump has suggested he may attempt to extend this period, further testing constitutional limits. The lawsuit filed by Attorney General Schwab challenges the legality of the federal order, underscoring that the president's powers do not extend to commandeering the police force to serve a partisan agenda.