



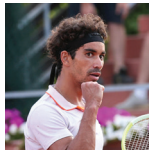
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Countdown begins for UN to reimpose Iran sanctions

Britain, France and Germany declare Tehran's nuclear programme in breach of 2015 deal

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Paris
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London

Britain, France and Germany have launched an unprecedented UN procedure to reinstate sanctions against Iran, which they consider to be in breach of a 2015 nuclear agreement.

Under what is known as the snapback procedure, the UN Security Council has 30 days to vote to continue to suspend six resolutions that had imposed measures against Tehran.

But if no resolution is passed

in that time, the sanctions will be reimposed.

The sanctions were suspended under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed in 2015, in exchange for Iran placing limits on its atomic programme.

"Iran's nuclear escalation must not go any further," French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot wrote on social media on Thursday.

The three nations, collectively known as the E3, decided to initiate the procedure after a call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday.

Mr Rubio welcomed the move

and said the E3 had clearly demonstrated Iran's "significant non-performance" of its nuclear commitments. He added that the US remains available for direct engagement with Tehran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his country "will respond appropriately to this illegal and unjustified action", Tasnim news agency reported.

A British official said the E3 "cannot allow the Iran nuclear file to fall off the agenda or for sanctions to be permanently lifted while Iran's programme escalates".

He noted that inspectors from

the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency had been denied access to Iranian nuclear sites "in clear violation of Iran's legal obligations".

Iran this week allowed IAEA inspectors to enter the country for the first time since June. However, the inspectors were only permitted to visit one site – the civilian nuclear power station at Bushehr.

The E3 have indicated willingness to engage in last-minute talks with Iran in the coming 30 days, which could lead to an agreement under which the sanctions remain suspended.

"Will it be easy? Honestly, no. Iranians will probably be tempted to escalate," a French diplomat told *The National*. "At the same time, they have always come back to the negotiation table. The worst-case scenario is not the most obvious."

The E3 previously suggested a six-month extension of the 2015 agreement, which expires in October, but Iran publicly rejected the proposal.

Russia, a close ally of Tehran, has called for a six-month extension without the snapback procedure – a move viewed with suspicion by the E3.

Thousands of Emirati women in key private sector jobs

RACHEL KELLY

The crucial role of women in building the future of the UAE has been laid out at a Dubai conference to mark Emirati Women's Day.

Those in attendance at the Emirati Women's Forum on Thursday heard that a huge number of female citizens are performing key roles in the private sector.

The number of Emiratis working in the private sector has reached 152,000, up from 100,000 in May last year, with UAE citizens employed across 29,000 companies in the country, said Shayma Alawadhi, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation.

"More than 70 per cent of these Emiratis working in the private sector are women," she said. In medicine and education, the proportion rises to more than 90 per cent, she added.

The UAE has embarked on a major push to encourage more citizens to join the private sector in recent years.

The Nafis programme, introduced in September 2021, has the objective of ensuring that 10 per cent of all private sector roles are occupied by Emiratis by the end of next year.

Under the initiative, companies with more than 50 employees must increase the proportion of Emiratis in their workforce by at least one percentage point every six months.

As a result, citizens are expected to make up 8 per cent of the country's private sector workforce by the end of this year.

Few areas have embodied the rise of Emirati women as clearly as the cultural and creative industries. Hala Badri, director general of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, shared figures that illustrate the growing dominance of women in creative spaces.

"Today, 80 per cent of our higher leadership are women," Ms Badri told *The National*. "About 78 per cent of the workforce in arts-related sectors is female."

"Across the authority, women make up around 60 per cent and more than 50 per cent of those working in museums are women."

These numbers, she added, have risen steadily over the past decade. A notable

Gazans forced to head south



A displaced Palestinian boy flees south from Gaza city with his family on Thursday after the Israeli military issued eviction orders. Reports, pages 2-3 AFP

Israel hits Houthi 'military target' in Yemeni capital

AMR MOSTAFA

Israel has announced a strike on a Houthi military target in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, after the Iran-backed group launched a series of drone and missile attacks on Israel.

Senior Houthi political figures were the targets of the attack on the city, Israel's Channel 12 reported on Thursday. But the Houthi-run Saba news agency

later quoted a member of the group who denied that any rebel leaders were at the site of the strike.

The attack on Sanaa came as Abdul Malik Al Houthi, leader of the Iran-backed group, was delivering a televised speech.

He vowed to continue support for the Palestinian people "with determination and resolve" as Israel wages war on Gaza. He also stressed that the militia

was "moving forward to develop its military capabilities more and more".

The Israeli military said it was operating "decisively" against the Houthis in Yemen "while simultaneously intensifying strikes" against Hamas in Gaza.

The Houthis have "been operating under the Iranian direction and funding in order to harm the state and its allies since the beginning of the war

[in Gaza], undermining regional stability and disrupting global freedom of navigation", the military added.

Earlier on Thursday, Israel said it intercepted two drones launched towards the country from Yemen.

On Wednesday it said it shot down a missile later claimed by the Houthis.

Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, the Houthis have been

attacking commercial ships in the Red Sea. The group claims the vessels are affiliated with Israel and that the attacks are acts of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The militia has also fired missiles and drones towards Israel, most of which have been intercepted. Israel has responded with strikes on Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, including Hodeidah port.

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