

Iran Set to Resume Nuclear Talks with European Nations

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Iran is scheduled to restart nuclear discussions with Britain, France, and Germany on Friday in Istanbul, marking a crucial step in efforts to prevent further international sanctions. The talks, announced by Iran's Foreign Ministry, follow warnings from European leaders that failure to re-engage could trigger punitive measures under a United Nations enforcement mechanism.

The meeting will take place at the deputy foreign minister level, according to Esmaeil Baghaei, a spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry. It will be the first time in weeks that the involved European powers, often referred to as the E3, will formally sit down with Iran, following heightened tensions in the region.

This diplomatic push comes after a month of escalated conflict involving Israel and the United States targeting Iranian nuclear infrastructure. The European Union's foreign policy chief and the foreign ministers of the E3 held a call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi last Thursday, urging a return to talks that had stalled following those attacks.

Iran, along with the E3, China, and Russia, remains part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a 2015 nuclear agreement that eased sanctions in return for limits on Iran's nuclear development. The United States withdrew from the deal in 2018, complicating diplomatic efforts.

The E3 has made it clear that unless Iran resumes meaningful negotiations, they are prepared to invoke the JCPOA's "snapback mechanism", a clause that allows the reimposition of United Nations sanctions. This could happen as early as the end of August. The clause enables one party to the agreement to restore sanctions before the underlying U.N. Security Council resolution expires on October 18.

In remarks carried by Iranian media, Araqchi pushed back against Western pressure, saying, "If the European Union and E3 want to have a role, they should act responsibly and abandon worn-out policies of threat and pressure, including the snapback, for which they lack any moral and legal ground."

Before the conflict between Israel and Iran, Tehran and Washington had held five rounds of indirect nuclear talks, mediated by Oman. However, major sticking points, especially over Iran's uranium enrichment levels, remain unresolved. Western powers are seeking strict limitations to prevent any pathway to weaponisation, while Tehran insists its nuclear program is solely for civilian energy use.

The outcome of Friday's meeting in Istanbul could determine whether diplomacy survives or if the world edges closer to a broader geopolitical standoff.