FM Defends Nuclear Policy, Slams Germany's Stance

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejected Germany's claim that the Islamic Republic's reduced cooperation with the IAEA undermines diplomacy. He affirmed Tehran's commitment to the NPT, stating that the Supreme National Security Council will now handle cooperation with the IAEA "for obvious safety and security reasons."

Araghchi accused Germany of "explicitly" supporting Israel's "unlawful" strikes and violating its JCPOA obligations, further saying, "Iranians were already put off by Germany's Nazi-style backing of Genocide in Gaza, and its support for Sadam's [sic] war on Iran by providing materials for chemical weapons…support for the bombing of Iran has obliterated the notion that the German regime harbors anything but malice towards Iranians."

France Signals Hostage Deal with Tehran

France has said it may hold off on reimposing nuclear-related sanctions on the Islamic Republic if Tehran releases two French nationals accused by Tehran of spying for Israel after over three years of imprisonment in Iran.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said the charges against the two are "completely unjustified and unfounded" and called their release "an absolute priority," effectively tying the sanctions decision to what many view as a hostage diplomacy tactic by the Islamic Republic.

Later in the day, French President Emmanuel Macron commented on the arbitrary detention of the two and said, "It's a provocation against France and an unacceptable choice of aggression. It's unacceptable for France." He added that he plans to call the Islamic Republic's President Masoud Pezeshkian over the matter.

U.S. Sanctions Oil Smuggling Network

The U.S. Treasury today sanctioned networks aiding the Islamic Republic's oil trade, including companies tied to the IRGC-Quds Force, as well as vessels in Tehran's "shadow fleet."

Iraqi-British businessman Salim Ahmed Said was named for running a smuggling network that disguised the Islamic Republic's oil as Iraqi oil using bribery and forged documents.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced, "As President Trump has made clear, Iran's behavior has left it decimated. While it has had every opportunity to choose peace, its leaders have chosen extremism."

This marks the eighth round of sanctions targeting the regime's oil trade since President Trump issued his National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM-2) in February.

Topic of the Hour in Iran: Khamenei's Absence

The annual Muharram mourning ceremony was held last night at the Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyeh in Tehran, with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei being noticeably absent. His absence, amid a three-week-long disappearance from public events following Israel's attack on the Islamic Republic, has drawn public attention.

On the Radar

- Today, the funeral of two young men killed by security forces in Hamadan turned into a scene of public protest, with attendees chanting anti-regime slogans.
- Earlier today, security forces transferred dozens of Baluch people born in Iran who do not have government-issued identification documents and Afghan migrants to the Al-Ghadir detention camp in Zahedan. According to local sources, detainees are being held without access to food or drinking water, and authorities are blocking families from delivering aid.
- Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov announced that U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a detailed phone conversation about Iran and the broader Middle East. According to Ushakov, Putin emphasized that the Iran issue must be resolved solely through diplomatic means.
- During last week, security forces arrested at least 6 Kurdish civil rights activists and a Baha'i citizen in separate incidents. All were taken from their homes during raids, with their personal belongings seized. The charges in all the cases remain unclear.
- Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni announced that 400,000 Afghan migrants have been deported since March.
- The IDF announced the arrest of three individuals in Syria—Amer al-Ahmed, Malek al-Ahmed, and Salem al-Ahmed—for allegedly operating a terrorist cell linked to the Islamic Republic.

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