

Iran says nuclear deal subject to Tehran's red lines, E3 says agreement 'close'

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VIENNA: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said on Friday the West's "haste" to reach a nuclear deal "cannot prevent the observance of Iran's red lines," including economic guarantees.

Negotiations on reviving a 2015 Iran nuclear accord appear near a climax, amid talk of an imminent ministerial meeting. Such a meeting, said Amirabdollahian, "requires full compliance with the red lines."

Jalina Porter, a US State Department spokesperson, said a possible deal was close, but cautioned that unsolved issues remained.

Indirect talks were close to reaching an agreement, the chief British envoy said on Friday as she and her French and German colleagues flew home to brief ministers.

"We are close. E3 negotiators leaving Vienna briefly to update Ministers on state of play. Ready to return soon," Stephanie Al-Qaq said on Twitter.

"Our delegation will continue to work hard to reach a final and good agreement," Iranian media quoted Amirabdollahian as telling the EU's top diplomat Joseph Borrell by telephone.

"We are ready to finalize a good and immediate agreement," he said, adding: "Most of Iran's requests have been considered in the upcoming agreement."

Among remaining issues is an effort by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to resolve questions about nuclear material that the Vienna-based agency suspects Iran failed to declare.

The IAEA has found particles of processed uranium at three apparently old sites that Iran never declared and has repeatedly said Tehran has not provided satisfactory answers.

Iran wants the IAEA investigation ended as part of an accord, but Western powers have argued that the issue is beyond the scope of the 2015 deal, to which the IAEA is not a party.

IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi is to travel to Tehran on Saturday hoping to agree on a process that would lead to the end of the investigation, potentially clearing a way for the wider agreement, diplomats said.

The 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers was designed to make it harder for Iran to accumulate the fissile material for a nuclear weapons, an ambition it has long denied.

Then-President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the deal in 2018, reimposing tough economic sanctions on Tehran. Iran responded by breaching many of the deal's restrictions.



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