

Iran Now Free to Buy and Sell Weapons Legally

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The UN Security Council [arms embargo on Iran from 2007 has expired](#) Sunday, which will allow the nation to buy weapons. While Iran has repeatedly stated it has no intention of buying weapons of mass destruction, and WMD had no place in their defense.

The [Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran](#) said Iran may now buy any necessary arms and equipment from any source without any legal restrictions and solely based on its defensive needs while adding that Iran could export defensive armaments based on its policies.

In August, the Trump administration began a process aimed at restoring all the UN sanctions against Iran unilaterally, after the UN Security Council rejected a US bid to extend the conventional arms embargo on the country.

The Iran nuclear deal

In July 2015, Iran and six countries reached a historic agreement called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal.

The UN Security Council's five permanent members: the US, France, the UK, China, and Russia, plus Germany formed the six major powers involved in the deal with Iran.

The deal took two years of difficult negotiations and was aimed to restrict Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for lifting economic sanctions against Tehran.

Iran agreed to reduce its number of by two-thirds, agreed to reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98%, and limit uranium enrichment to 3.67%, which would allow it to have enough enriched uranium to maintain the country's energy needs, without having the ability to build a nuclear bomb.

Iran agreed to give access to inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN's nuclear watchdog agency, to its nuclear facilities, among other facilities, and the IAEA has repeatedly found Iran to be complying with the terms of the pact.

January 2016 saw the IAEA declaring Iran was living up to the deal, and all nuclear-related international sanctions against Iran were lifted, which coincided with Donald Trump taking office as President of the United States.

The Iran deal was one of the crowning diplomatic achievements of former President Barack Obama's tenure, which made it an immediate target of Trump, who wanted to dismantle everything which might be seen as part of the Obama legacy.

US President Donald [Trump reneged on the deal on May 8, 2018](#), and returned sanctions

and imposed new harsh ones, though opinion polls show a [majority of Americans are in favor](#) of staying with the deal, in what has become one of the biggest foreign policy decisions he's made since entering the White House.

Why Trump broke the deal

[Israel's concerns](#) about Iran's long-range ballistic missile program caused Trump to leave the Iran nuclear deal, along with the concerns of Republicans who felt the Iran nuclear deal didn't go far enough to limit the country's ability to develop nuclear weapons. During the 2016 election campaign, Trump was sharply criticized by Senators Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio for not taking Israel's side in any future dealings with Arab nations. After the criticism, Trump immediately changed his tactics when he told an audience at the [American Israel Public Affairs Committee \(AIPAC\)](#) annual conference that his "number one priority is to dismantle the disastrous deal with Iran", which he based upon [evidence provided by Benjamin Netanyahu](#), of Iran's development of ballistic missiles, not addressed by the JCPOA.

Besides Trump bending to Tel Aviv, the secondary reason for leaving the JCPOA was strictly personal: Trump has [attacked all of Obama's legacy achievements](#), attempting to undo every success, which includes health insurance known as the Affordable Care Act, which is currently in his sights.

What has happened since breaking the deal

Since Trump withdrew the US from the JCPOA, his administration has pummeled Iran with crippling economic sanctions, while Iran has accused the US of waging "economic war" and has rejected proposals from Trump to hold talks unless the US lifts sanctions and returns to the JCPOA.

Trump's presidency in the US has led to an escalation of tensions between Washington and Tehran, which reached a boiling point over the summer of 2019, and again in the early days of 2020.

Oil tanker attacks in the Gulf of Oman and an attack on two major oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, as both sides continued to issue threats, raising concerns of a regional war in the Middle East.

[Trump assassinated Iranian General Qassem Soleimani](#) in early 2020, which the Iranian's labeled an act of "international terrorism." Just days later, Iran announced it would no longer comply with the JCPOA, effectively abandoning the deal altogether. Iran retaliated with a missile attack aimed at US and coalition forces in Iraq; however, there were no US casualties.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned Russia and China not to disregard the imposition of all UN sanctions on Iran which Washington has demanded, and when asked whether the US would target Russia and China with sanctions if they refuse, Pompeo said: "Absolutely."

[Seyed Hossein Mousavian](#), a former Iranian nuclear negotiator, former ambassador to Germany, now a researcher at Princeton University has said Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA has dealt a major blow to world peace and security. "The JCPOA is the most comprehensive and complete document in the history of nuclear non-proliferation. By

destroying the JCPOA, Trump has dealt a major blow to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and global peace and security,” Mousavian said while adding, “I believe America’s security has diminished. The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is an integral part of global security.”

“It is true that Trump has caused billions of dollars in economic damage to Iran by imposing the most extensive sanctions, but with his withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran expanded its range of nuclear activities and enrichment, which the Americans themselves consider it as contrary to the U.S. security,” he added.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after Trump abandoned the deal, Tehran said its “strategic patience” is over and began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals, and on January 5 of this year, Iran issued a statement announcing the suspension of all limits under the JCPOA.

European position

Trump’s unilateral decision to withdraw the US from the JCPOA in May 2018 was promptly condemned by [US allies: the UK, France, and Germany](#).

“We do not accept the argument that Iran is entitled to reduce compliance with the JCPOA,” the three countries said in a joint statement.

“We do this in good faith with the overarching objective of preserving the JCPOA and in the sincere hope of finding a way forward to resolve the impasse through constructive diplomatic dialogue while preserving the agreement and remaining within its framework,” they said.

The three European countries added: “In doing so, our three countries are not joining a campaign to implement maximum pressure against Iran. Our hope is to bring Iran back into full compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA.”

US Presidential election possible outcomes

Trump’s “maximum pressure” policy on Iran has failed to achieve its goals and whoever wins the November 3 presidential election in America will have to reconsider the failed policy.

[Foad Izadi](#) said any US presidential candidate should change the policy because as a result of the maximum pressure, the Islamic Republic of Iran did not collapse or give up. He feels that Iran may benefit from either a Trump or Biden win.

“If Trump will be re-elected as president of the United States, he would accelerate the decline of the US, which is in favor of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and if Joe Biden will be elected as US president, the sanctions that Trump had imposed on Iran would be decreased, which would also benefit the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Izadi commented.

The Iranian position

Iran has developed a large domestic arms industry in the face of international sanctions and embargoes that have barred it from importing many weapons and is self-reliant in its defense capabilities.

“Iran’s defense doctrine is premised on a [strong reliance on its people](#) and indigenous capabilities ... Unconventional arms, weapons of mass destruction and a buying spree of conventional arms have no place in Iran’s defense doctrine,” said a Foreign Ministry statement carried by state media.

“Iran is an important regional power, and the United States is a global power, and until the cooperation of these two powers is realized, there will be no hope of resolving the regional crises,” stressed [Mousavian](#).

America’s diminished security

With Trump at the wheel, the US has inched closer to war and sparked a global crisis after tearing up the JCPOA.

“There is a direct line you can draw from Trump’s violation of the Iran deal and the risk of conflict today,” said [Jon Wolfsthal](#), who served as the nuclear expert for the National Security Council under Obama.

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