

# **“UN Finally Declares Iran in Nuclear Violation”**

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**By Amichai Stein**

JERUSALEM—Israel is mulling military action against Iran in the coming days, three sources familiar with the matter told ABC News on Thursday.

Sources told ABC that they were not aware of a specific U.S. role in a potential Israeli strike, but that the U.S. could play a logistical role, including through intelligence sharing with Israel.

Earlier on Thursday, the UN nuclear watchdog's 35-nation board of governors passed a resolution formally declaring Iran in breach of its nonproliferation obligations for the first time in almost 20 years, diplomats at the closed-door meeting said.

"(The board) finds that Iran's many failures to uphold its obligations since 2019 to provide the Agency with full and timely cooperation regarding undeclared nuclear material and activities at multiple undeclared locations in Iran . . . constitutes non-compliance with its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with the Agency," the International Atomic Energy Agency board resolution text seen by Reuters said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stated, according to state media, that this declaration will further complicate nuclear talks with the US, scheduled for Sunday in Oman.

Diplomats at the closed-door meeting said the board passed the resolution submitted by the United States, Britain, France and Germany with 19 countries in favor, 11 abstentions and three states—Russia, China and Burkina Faso—against.

A central issue is Iran's failure to provide the IAEA with credible explanations of how uranium traces detected at undeclared sites in Iran came to be there despite the agency having investigated the issue for years.

The May 31 IAEA report, a board-mandated "comprehensive" account of developments, found three of the four locations "were part of an undeclared structured nuclear program carried out by Iran until the early 2000s and that some activities used undeclared nuclear material."

U.S. intelligence services and the IAEA have long believed Iran had a secret, coordinated nuclear weapons program it halted in 2003, though isolated expe-

riments continued for several years. IAEA director general Rafael Grossi said this week the findings were broadly consistent with that.

Iran denies ever having pursued nuclear weapons.

The top U.S. general responded to the IAEA report, saying it is "certainly troubling."

Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told lawmakers that the international community appeared to be thinking about what they would do about the IAEA's latest resolution, which declared that Iran was in breach of its non-proliferation obligations.

What comes next?

While the resolution alluded to reporting Iran to the UN Security Council, diplomats said it would take a second resolution to send it there, as happened the last time it was declared in non-compliance in September 2005, followed by referral in February 2006.

This major step is the culmination of several festering stand-offs between the International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran that have arisen since President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of a nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers in 2018 during his first term, after which that deal unravelled.

Since Iran bristles at resolutions against it and this is the most significant one in years, it is likely to respond with a nuclear escalation, as it has said it will. That could complicate the current talks between Iran and the U.S. aimed at imposing new curbs on Iran's accelerating atomic activities.

Snapback mechanism may be implemented, angering Iran further.

The next step following this decision will be to see if the snapback mechanism will be activated. The same sanctions will be imposed on Iran by the UN Security Council.

Iran has threatened to take action related to its nuclear program if the decision is passed, and even if the snapback mechanism is activated.

Iran has already decided on two measures in response to the IAEA's decision.

The first is opening up a new enrichment site in a safe zone, and the second is substituting first-generation centrifuges in Fordow with sixth-generation centrifuges.

A third enrichment site that Iran announced as a countermeasure has already been built and is ready to operate when equipped with machinery, the head of Iran's atomic energy organization Mohammad Eslami told state media on Thursday.

An IAEA official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Iran had provided no further details such as the location of the site.

Tehran has condemned the IAEA resolution, calling it a "political" decision, without technical or legal foundations, Iranian state TV said.

The sixth round of nuclear talks between the U.S. and Iran are set to take place this Sunday in Muscat, the Omani Foreign Minister confirmed on Thursday morning.