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Qatar steps in to mediate as Trump says US not talking to Iran

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[1/4] Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf meets with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, in Tehran, Iran, August 27, 2026. Iranian Parliament... [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) [Read more](#)



Summary

- Qatari prime minister visits Tehran, seeks to reopen Strait of Hormuz
- Gulf neighbor has served as back channel between Tehran and Washington
- US and Iran have halted attacks for now, peace talks still stalled
- US seems to have shifted from military to economic pressure on Iran

DUBAI/WASHINGTON, Aug 27 (Reuters) - Qatar's prime minister visited Tehran on Thursday in an effort to revive stalled diplomacy six months into the war, as U.S. President Donald Trump said Washington was not currently talking to Iran.

"We don't want to speak to them. We're not looking to meet or anything," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office after the White House said a U.S. economic campaign against Tehran would continue until Iran decides to negotiate meaningfully.

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Major combat operations have been paused for weeks but there has been little progress toward a wider peace agreement or reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route. Six months after U.S. and Israeli forces attacked Iran, killing its supreme leader and maiming his son and successor, the Iranian government is under economic siege, but it still holds power and has shown little urgency to negotiate.

Trump, facing [political pressure at home](#) over higher energy prices ahead of November congressional elections, has opted to focus on economic sanctions, but aggressively enforcing them would require taking measures against Iranian trade partners such as China and India.

In Tehran, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani urged a return to diplomacy during talks with Iran's top negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Thursday, Qatar's foreign ministry said.

Iran in turn called on regional neighbors to prevent the U.S. from using their territory to carry out military or economic attacks on Iran, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on his Telegram account.

Mohsen Rezaei, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told the Qatari prime minister that Tehran would strike U.S. military and economic interests if Washington engaged in "mischief" against Iran, Iranian media reported.

Rezaei said the United States must take steps to meet Iran's conditions before Tehran moved to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Those conditions include an end to the U.S. blockade on Iranian ports, compensation and removal of sanctions.

"We do not trust the United States; it has repeatedly betrayed diplomacy and negotiations," Rezaei said.

A June memorandum of understanding between Washington and Tehran collapsed in part over the future of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman through which about a fifth of global energy supplies passed before the war.

Iran has sought to exert control over the strait and charge fees to ships it authorizes, while Washington insists it should remain an open international waterway.

Al Thani said on X that he stressed the importance of freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. He and the Iranian foreign minister also discussed a proposal to establish a temporary joint Iranian-Omani shipping corridor through the strait and a joint project to clear mines, Qatar's foreign ministry said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Wednesday that Iran and Oman had agreed in principle on administering traffic in the strait and sharing revenues, but a senior Iranian source later said the two countries were [still working on the details of an agreement](#).

Iran is preparing a [list of conditions](#) for reopening the Strait of Hormuz after mediators asked Tehran to set them out, Rezaei said. Ships would use a designated central channel if the U.S. met Iran's conditions, he said through an interpreter in an Al Manar TV interview.

'NO NEGOTIATIONS HAPPENING'

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Thursday that Trump "continues to retain all options on the table" with regard to Iran.

"We've had Operation Epic Fury to destroy their military. Now we have Operation Economic Outcast to destroy their economy," Leavitt said in an interview with Fox News.

"No negotiations are happening right now, and this will continue until the president feels that maybe they come to the table in a meaningful way," she said. "We have not seen that yet."

Tehran has lived under various forms of U.S. sanctions since the Islamic revolution in 1979.

Despite suffering heavy military losses, Iran retains enough missile and drone capability to strike Gulf states that host U.S. forces and disrupt shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

The International Maritime Organization has reported 70 incidents in the strait since February 28 that have killed 19 seafarers.

Thousands of others have died, mostly in Iran and Lebanon, since the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran with the stated goals of denying Iran a nuclear weapon, helping Iranians topple their government, and destroying Tehran's missile program.

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