Iran sees only unacceptable ideas in latest mediation to end war, official says

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Summary

New proposal sets out confidence-building measures, source says

Iranian official says Tehran only received unacceptable ideas

Houthi attack on Saudi refinery adds to oil supply concerns

Oct 28 (Reuters) - Qatari mediators have presented Iran with a new draft deal to end the war with the US and Israel, an official briefed on the negotiations said, but a senior Iranian official said Doha had only put forward unacceptable ideas that did not amount to an offer.

The official briefed on the negotiations, who is not from Iran, said a new draft peace proposal for the eight-month-old conflict was presented on Sunday and was being considered by Tehran, with a response expected by the end of the week.

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Qatar, along with Pakistan, has led mediation to end the war, which has disrupted global shipping and oil supplies and recently spread to Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The proposal presented by Qatar sets a seven-day timeline addressing both Tehran's and Washington's concerns, laying out daily confidence-building steps that each side must take, the official briefed on the negotiations said. The timeline could begin early next week and several countries would act as guarantors of the deal, the official added.

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Shortly afterwards, a senior Iranian official involved in the talks said Qatar had presented only "unacceptable ideas and not an offer", and that Tehran's policy on showing no flexibility over the nuclear issue remained unchanged.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Wednesday that Tehran remained in close contact with intermediaries to review ideas that could ensure the implementation of its own seven-day proposal aimed at ending the war in the Middle East.

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He said Iran continued to give diplomacy a chance to succeed, adding that Tehran's seven-day plan could be implemented in less than a week.

Washington wants Iran's decades-long nuclear programme to be part of negotiations to end the war from the outset, while Iran says its conditions — which include an end to the US blockade of Iranian ports and the lifting of sanctions on Iranian oil exports — must be met first. Iran rejects Western concerns that its nuclear programme is military in nature.

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ATTACK ON SAUDI OIL REFINERY

In late September, Iran presented its seven-day proposal under which Araqchi said the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy shipping channels, could be reopened if certain conditions were met. US President Donald Trump rejected it, prompting further Qatari mediation.

[1/2]Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian meets with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Moscow, Russia, October 27, 2026. Iran's Presidential website/WANA (West Asia News Agency)/Handout via REUTERS Purchase Licensing Rights

The draft discussed in Tehran on Sunday was different from that proposal, the official briefed on the negotiations said, though the details of the latest plan were not immediately clear. The official had previously told Reuters that the Qatari mediators had coordinated with Washington before going to Tehran.

Earlier mediation efforts to end the war that the US and Israel launched on February 28 helped produce an interim peace agreement in June, but it quickly unravelled.

In recent weeks, Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi forces have launched repeated attacks against Saudi Arabia — a key US ally and the world's largest crude exporter — opening a new front in the eight-month-old war.

Oil prices rose more than 1% to more than $115 per barrel on Wednesday after a Houthi attack on Saudi Arabia's largest oil refinery, Ras Tanura, stoking concerns over supply risks.

Fighting with the Houthis intensified last month as the militant group advanced against Saudi-backed forces towards the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, another important shipping lane on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula from Hormuz.

CONCERNS ABOUT RISK OF NEW STRIKES

The official briefed on the negotiations said there were concerns ahead of Sunday's meeting in Tehran that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, fighting for another term in a general election, could resume attacks on the Islamic Republic this week.

On Friday, Trump repeated threats to strike Iran again, while Iranian security officials told Reuters Tehran had drawn up detailed plans to attack Gulf undersea cables if the US and Israel resumed attacks.

On Monday, top officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan also met Iranian officials in Tehran as part of de-escalation efforts. Qatar said on Tuesday that Iran needs to stop threats against Arab Gulf states and open the Strait of Hormuz to show good intentions for mediation efforts to succeed.

Gulf states came under sustained bombardment earlier in the war.

The war also reignited fighting between Israel and the Iran-backed Lebanese armed group Hezbollah. It has eroded Trump's approval ratings ahead of the US midterm elections that decide control of Congress.

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