

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The Situation in Iran

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Introduction

The United Nations Security Council Charter, under chapter 7, Articles 39, 41 and 42, states that the 'Situation in Iran' is a threat to international peace and security. It is also important to acknowledge that, unlike the General Assembly, all Security Council resolutions on Iran are legally binding under Article 25 of the aforementioned Charter.

The Situation in Iran is an interconnected crisis spanning four important vectors. Firstly, Iran's non-compliance with the JCPOA to restrict its nuclear enrichment in 2015, despite being a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty, strained already tense relations with Western countries, with reports that Iran has now enriched 60% Uranium for non-civilian use. Another important vector to take into account is regional military escalations such as the Israel-Gaza war and an increased American presence in the region. Iran's asymmetric warfare, such as funding non-state actors and blocking international shipping straits, is also fuelling the conflict.

This makes the situation in Iran not simply an American military invasion, but rather a conflict that has been brewing since the regime change in 1979, and when the Ayatollahs took power or when Iran decided to enrich its Uranium to beyond civilian levels at 60% enrichment, citing no definitive use by the IAEA. The situation has recurring issues in the region and the overall globalised world and is a complex and intricate issue for the international community that requires an immediate and a long-lasting solution to ensure peace and stability in West Asia and the overall world .

Definition of Key Terms

Nuclear Proliferation

Spread of nuclear weapons capabilities to additional states.

JCPOA

The 2015 landmark nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 to lift heavy sanctions on Iran, in return for the state's enrichment of Uranium to below civilian levels only. However, later collapsed in 2018 when President Trump decided to reimpose sanctions on Iran and withdraw from the agreement.

IAEA

International organisation responsible for nuclear safeguards and verification.

Sanctions

Economic/diplomatic restrictions imposed to influence state behaviour.

Enrichment

The process of increasing the concentration of uranium-235 in uranium.

Proxy Group

Groups supported by states that operate independently from conventional state militaries.

Humanitarian Exemption

An exemption allowing certain humanitarian goods/services despite sanctions.

De-escalation

Actions intended to reduce the likelihood or intensity of conflict.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

A landmark international treaty that entered into force in 1970 that aimed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and promote cooperation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy

Background Information

Historical Roots of the Situation:

Before 1979, Iran was ruled by a Monarch, called a Shah. This Shah was actively funded and supported by Western countries such as France and the United States, who helped the Shah gain power from the Qajar Dynasty in 1925 to gain access to Iran's strategic minerals. The government therefore served Western interests and adopted many of their values. But the freedom to speak against the Shah didn't exist; this sparked anger against him, paired with his failure to stand up for Iran's interests and constant exploitation of the state. This anger led to widespread protests and violence led by Ruhollah Khomeini, eventually leading to the overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of a hardline Islamic State in Iran. This is now called the 1979 Iranian Revolution, that is now an Islamic Republic with strict values and norms.

Immediately after the revolution, Iran was left weak. Neighbouring Iraq under Saddam Hussein attempted to capitalise on the situation and get large swaths of land for itself. However, this eight-year-long offensive strengthened the newly established regime, legitimising the Ayatollah's rule and uniting the people against a common enemy. This made it easier for the Islamic Clerics that ruled Iran with the Ayatollah to enforce Islamic practices and develop a

strong anti-Western identity, as Iran began rebuilding itself after the war destroyed its economy and infrastructure.

After the war, Iran entered a period of economic reconstruction through isolation and cautious liberalisation. However, post the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, Iran adopted a more aggressive foreign policy, taking a more hard-line approach and, pivotally, enriching its Uranium production, resulting in far reaching consequences for the already strained relationship Iran had with the West. Iran decided to enrich up to 60% Uranium on April 2021, post-Israeli sabotage attacks on Iran's Enrichment facilities that resulted in Blackouts throughout the nation.

Iran and its Nuclear Program:

Immediately after Ahmadinejad assumed office and decided to enrich Iran's Uranium for nuclear purposes, Iran was met with heavy sanctions by states such as Germany, the UK and the United States, who froze Iranian assets and stopped all trade with the country. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) later found Iran to be non-compliant with international nuclear agreements and referred Iran to the United Nations Security Council, where Iran was pressured to comply with international norms. Despite international pressure, Ahmadinejad's government decided to go ahead with Nuclear Enrichment. Between 2006 and 2010, the UN Security Council passed six major resolutions targeting Iran. Four of these included progressively harsh, legally binding global sanctions, freezing international Iranian assets and embargoing Iranian oil.

However, after Ahmadinejad stepped down as President in 2013, Iran signed the JCPOA in 2015, often called the Iran Nuclear Deal, under the comparatively progressive president Hassan Rouhani, in which Iran agreed to restrict enrichment in exchange for lifting some sanctions. However, citing non-compliance and legal violations, the United States, under President Trump, withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, reinstating sanctions on Iran and cutting ties again with the Islamic Republic.

Economic Pressures:

After the decision to enrich Uranium in Iran, the United States decided to enact "Maximum Pressure" on Iran and targeted its Central Bank and Oil exports. These sanctions led to high inflation and the devaluation of Iran's currency, the Rial. Today, the Iranian Rial is valued at 1.374 Million to the dollar, compared to the 70 Rials for one dollar in 1980. This led to public protest over deteriorating living standards, which were met with violence. However, through

shadow fleets and oil transfers, Iran managed to bypass international sanctions. But it is still immensely strained by sanctions, with average Iranians forced to buy food and necessities at 89% higher than usual, or at 110 dollars. Paired with billions of Iranian dollars frozen in offshore banks, making it inaccessible to the government to provide the basic requirements for its people. This has forced Iran to embrace self-reliance and rely on other partners such as China or Russia, which has gradually eased the economy, but is still strained in a dollarised system.

Regional Geopolitics:

To counter Western influence in the region and establish power in West Asia, the Iranian State supports regional non-state actors such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen and PMF in Iraq. This is known as the Axis of Resistance and is supported by Iranian Hard Power. Iran also controls the Strait of Hormuz, an important chokepoint for global oil trade and its Proxy in Yemen controls the Bab-el-Mandeb, which directly threatens the world's trade security. Iran is also locked in a cold war with its southern neighbour, Saudi Arabia, with each funding opposing factions in conflicts throughout the region.

Escalations and Current Situation:

Today, after years of tension and friction, paired with the Israel-Palestine War, conflict erupted when America and Israel attacked Iran by launching airstrikes on key Iranian cities and infrastructure. Even going to the extent of killing Iran's supreme leader, triggering a widespread aerial conflict in the region beginning on February 28th 2026. This has effectively destabilised West Asia and its economies, with subsequent Iranian bombings of United States Air bases in places like the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Iran also closed the Strait of Hormuz, shutting down Oil and Gas supply to the entire world on the same day Iran recieved its first set of attacks from Israel.

Organisations and Major Countries Involved

Iran

Asserts its sovereign right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and views its domestic ballistic network and proxy network as non-negotiable conventional deterrence against hostile Western and regional powers, rejecting UN sanctions as illegal.

United States of America

Focuses on preventing a nuclear-armed Iran through the use of its Hard Power and UNSC pressure, demanding strict limits on Iran's enrichment, missiles and proxy funding.

Israel

Considers a nuclear-capable Iran as a security threat and reserves the right to use military action if such were to happen, targeting Iran's nuclear infrastructure and proxy logistics.

Saudi Arabia and the GCC:

Prioritises protecting critical energy infrastructure and national territory from cross-border drone and missile attacks, supporting diplomatic containment and nuclear non-proliferation. More recently, Iranian backed proxies in Yemen have launched attacks against Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni government whom they actively fund, opening a new frontier to the Situation in Iran

IAEA

The UN-affiliated technical body charged with nuclear safeguards. Demands Iran fulfil its legal obligations under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, restore monitoring access, and account for undeclared nuclear materials.

Possible Solutions

Any resolutions approved within the Security Council remain binding. With this in mind, the first and most obvious way forward is to establish a United Nations-monitored maritime safety corridor across the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb to coordinate the safety of commercial vessels and resume the flow of trade in the region. This would prevent accidental military engagement and ensure the free flow of trade in the region.

Further, sanctions on Iran that target humanitarian goods must be lifted to protect civilians in the region and must be replaced with a committee monitored by the Security Council to offer economic incentives and other processes that will lead to de-escalation of the conflict. Further, any humanitarian violations must be recorded and dealt with by the international community, with Iran assuring that its proxy funding will be limited and will not cause violence or crimes against humanity.

Finally, all countries in the region must adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty under the IAEA to ensure that the pursuit of nuclear weapons is monitored must be ensured and the guarantee that Iran is going to use its Nuclear Capabilities for civilian purposes only is ensured.

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