
'Lift sanctions & apologize if you want to talk,' Iran's Rouhani tells Washington

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The US should first drop sanctions and apologize, if it wants to sit down for negotiations, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said, after Washington stepped up "maximum pressure" on Tehran.

"Negotiation is only possible if all the pressures are lifted, they apologize for their illegal actions and there is mutual respect," Rouhani [said](#) on Wednesday.

He stated that Tehran is open to talks with Washington, but the US is simply *"not ready for any dialogue"* and only seeks to *"subdue the people of Iran."*

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, meanwhile, said that the country will thwart any attempts of the US to block its oil trade.

[@khamenei_ir](#) U.S.'s efforts to boycott the sale of Iran's oil won't get them anywhere. We will export our oil as much as we need and we intend. They should know that their hostile measure won't be left without a response. Iranian nation does not sit idle in the face of animosities.

"The efforts to boycott the sale of Iran's oil won't get them anywhere. We will export our oil as much as we need and we intend," Khamenei wrote on Twitter.

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The warning came after US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, announced that Washington will stop issuing sanction waivers for the buyers of Iranian oil. It was done as part of the campaign to apply “*maximum pressure*” on Tehran, he said.

[@SecPompeo](#) Maximum pressure on the Iranian regime means maximum pressure. That's why the U.S. will not issue any exceptions to Iranian oil importers. The global oil market remains well-supplied. We're confident it will remain stable as jurisdictions transition away from Iranian crude.

The two states remained in a diplomatic standoff after President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the US out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear program last year. The US then re-imposed sanctions on Iran's energy and banking sectors.

Iran blasted the sanctions as illegal under international law and vowed to retaliate should Washington make moves to attack its oil shipment.

Earlier this month, the US listed Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a “*terrorist organization*.” Tehran responded in kind by doing the same with the US Central Command (CENTCOM).

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