

Iran will give Europe two months to save nuclear deal - Rouhani

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Europe has two months to negotiate sanctions relief for Tehran, otherwise the country will initiate 'phase three' in its rollback of commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has said.

"Europe has another two-month deadline for negotiations, agreement, and a return to its commitments," Rouhani warned at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

Tehran has been calling on the EU to provide relief from the sweeping sanctions that were imposed by Washington after the US unilaterally left the 2015 deal, known as the JCPOA. Iranian officials have warned that they will gradually reduce their commitments under the agreement if this does not happen.

In early July, Iran activated the 'first phase' of this strategy by increasing its stockpile of enriched uranium beyond the 300kg limit imposed by the JCPOA. The 'second phase' – enriching uranium beyond 3.67 percent – was effected shortly afterwards.

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Rouhani didn't specify what the next step would be, but he hinted that it would play an important part in transforming the nation's nuclear program.

"The third step is of an extremely important nature, and will considerably accelerate the

activities of the country's nuclear energy organization," he said.

Rouhani stressed that the impact of the move *"will be extraordinarily huge."*

France previously suggested offering Iran \$15 billion in credit lines if it returns to complying with the JCPOA in its entirety. The move would help Iran to negate US sanctions, which have targeted its oil trade and financial sector. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi confirmed that the country would revert to the agreement if the EU continues to buy oil from Iran or provides a suitable credit line.

Washington insists that sanctions are necessary to pressure Iran into shutting down its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, as well as cutting ties with several militant groups in the Middle East. Tehran, however, denies any wrongdoing and says the sanctions are unjustified and illegal under international law.
