UN Security Council Resolutions on Iran

- Fact Sheets & Briefs

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The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has adopted seven resolutions as part of international efforts to address Iran's nuclear program, although only one is in effect today. When Iran and the P5+1 reached a comprehensive nuclear deal on July 14, 2015, the UN Security Council endorsed the deal and put in place measures to lift UN sanctions that targeted Iran's nuclear program. The resolution, 2231, retained some restrictions on ballistic missile activities and arms sales. It was passed on July 20, 2015 by a unanimous vote.

The central demand in the first six resolutions was that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment program, as well as undertake several confidence-building measures outlined in a February 2006 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors resolution - including reconsidering the construction of its heavy-water reactor and ratifying the IAEA Additional Protocol. The council initially laid out these calls in a nonbinding Security Council presidential statement adopted in March 2006. (See ACT, April 2006.)

Almost all the resolutions were adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, making most of the provisions of the resolutions legally binding on Iran, or all UN member states. Four of them included a series of progressively expansive sanctions on Iran and or Iranian persons and entities. The sanctions represented one track in a “dual-track approach” pursued by the permanent five members of the council and Germany (the so-called P5+1), to address Iran’s nuclear program. The other track involved a series of proposals to reach a negotiated settlement. (See History of Proposals on the Iranian Nuclear Issue.) Details on the first six resolutions can be found below the information for Resolution 2231.

UN Security Council Resolutions Quick Links


Security Council Resolution 2231

On July 20, 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously passed resolution 2231.

The full text of Resolution 2231 is available here.

Resolution 2231’s Principal Provisions

This resolution endorsed the comprehensive nuclear deal (known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) reached between Iran and the P5+1 on July 14, 2015, and laid the groundwork for the Security Council to lift nuclear-related sanctions on Iran when Tehran completed key steps under the deal that restricted its nuclear activities. Iran met the requirements in January 16, 2016.

Resolution 2231 retains the arms embargo on Iran for five years after implementation and the sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program for eight years. Both could be lifted earlier if the IAEA reaches a determination about Iran’s nuclear program known as the Broader Conclusion. These sanctions are "nuclear-related" as they were put in place under Resolution 1929. Iran is also “called
upon’’ not to undertake activities on ballistic missiles designed to be nuclear-capable.

The resolution requests that if states engage in the sale of dual-use materials to Iran, they use the procurement channel application process set up by the JCPOA to regulate Iran's imports of these materials.

Resolution 2231 also requests that the IAEA undertake the necessary monitoring and verification to implement the deal.

Resolution 2231's Monitoring Mechanisms

The resolution also puts in place language laying out the procedure to reimpose UN sanctions.

The Security Council resolution requests reports from the IAEA on implementation of the deal and the agency's efforts to reach a broader conclusion about Iran's nuclear program. The Resolution also requests reports every six months from the UN Secretary General on implementation of Resolution 2231.

Prior UN Security Council Resolutions

Security Council Resolution 1696

On July 31, 2006, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1696 under Article 40 of the UN Charter. Fourteen countries voted in favor of the resolution; only Qatar voted against it.

The full text of Resolution 1696 is available here.

Resolution 1696's Principal Provisions

In Resolution 1696, the council called on Tehran to suspend its enrichment program and verify its compliance with the IAEA Board of Governor’s requirements. It encouraged Iran to take these steps as confidence building measures.

The resolution expressed the council’s “intention...to adopt appropriate measures under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations” if Iran did not cooperate. However, such measures would not be adopted automatically. The resolution underlined that the council must undertake “further decisions...should such additional measures be necessary.”

The first Security Council resolution to address the Iranian nuclear program, Resolution 1696 did not contain sanctions, but was the basis for future sanctions resolutions Specifically it:

- Demanded that Iran suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA.
- Called on states to follow their existing domestic law and international law to “exercise vigilance and prevent the transfer of any items, materials, good and technology that could contribute to Iran’s enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and ballistic missile programmes.”

The resolution warned Iran that its failure to comply by August 31, 2006 could result in punitive Security Council measures, such as economic sanctions.

Resolution 1696’s Monitoring Mechanisms

The resolution called for a report from the Director General of the IAEA by August 31 on Iran’s compliance with this resolution.

Security Council Resolution 1737
On December 23, 2006, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1737 unanimously under Article 41 of the UN Charter in response to Iran’s failure to comply with Resolution 1696.

The full text of Resolution 1737 is available here.

**Resolution 1737’s Principal Provisions**

The resolution echoed the principal provisions of Resolution 1696, requiring Iran to suspend uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, and to take other confidence-building measures. In addition, Resolution 1737:

- Obligated Iran to suspend work on its heavy-water reactor projects rather than just reconsider them.
- Called on Iran to ratify the IAEA’s Additional Protocol.

**Resolution 1737’s Sanctions**

The resolution imposed sanctions against both the state of Iran and Iranian individuals and entities deemed to be providing support for Iran’s proliferation-related activities.

Resolution 1737 decided that all states should:

- Prevent the supply, sale, or transfer of designated nuclear and ballistic missile-related goods to Iran to ensure that Iran cannot employ the designated goods in its enrichment-related, reprocessing, or heavy water-related activities, or its development of nuclear weapon delivery systems.
- Refrain from providing technical or financial assistance, training, or resources related to certain nuclear and ballistic missile-related goods.
- Refrain from importing designated nuclear and ballistic missile-related items from Iran.

Three provisions in Resolution 1737 targeted Iranian individuals and entities by calling on states to:

- Exercise vigilance regarding the entry into their territory of individuals engaged in Iran’s nuclear or ballistic missile activities.
- Freeze the funds, financial assets, and economic resources of designated individuals who are involved with Iran’s nuclear programs.
- Preventing the “specialized teaching or training of Iranian nationals” of subjects that would enhance Iran’s nuclear goals.

The resolution did permit states to export nuclear and ballistic missile-related goods that are not itemized in the resolution’s control lists if: certain guidelines were followed, end-user controls were put in place, and the 1737 Committee was notified. It was also necessary for states to notify the IAEA to export certain nuclear and ballistic missile-related materials to Iran.

**Resolution 1737’s Monitoring Mechanisms**

Resolution 1737 set out numerous measures to monitor compliance with the resolution. In paragraph 18 it established a Committee (known as the 1737 Committee) to oversee the implementation of the resolution’s key provisions. A subsequent paragraph required states to furnish reports to the Committee detailing their compliance with the resolution.

In addition, the Director General of the IAEA was required to report to the IAEA Board of Governors and to the Security Council within 60 days of the resolution being issued on whether Iran had suspended its enrichment and heavy water-related activities. The UNSC then reviewed Iran’s actions based on the findings of that report. It was then incumbent upon the council to decide to either suspend or terminate the resolution’s sanctions if Iran complied with them. In the event that Iran had...
not complied with the sanctions, the Security Council was empowered to adopt further measures as it saw fit.

**Security Council Resolution 1747**

On March 24, 2007, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1747 unanimously under Article 41 of the UN Charter.

The full text of Resolution 1747 is available [here](https://www.armscontrol.org).

**Resolution 1747’s Principal Provisions**

This resolution was adopted as a result of Iran’s failure to comply with the previous two resolutions. It called on Iran to take the steps required by the IAEA Board of Governors and outlined in Resolution 1737 to verify that its nuclear program has only peaceful purposes. Resolution 1747 also encourages Iran to consider the June 2006 proposals to reach a long-term comprehensive agreement with the P5+1.

**Resolution 1747’s Sanctions**

The resolution repeated and enhanced some of the key sanctions from Resolution 1737 while also introducing some new measures.

Resolution 1747 enhanced its predecessor’s sanctions by:

- Calling on states to exercise “restraint” (in addition to the “vigilance” called for in 1737) regarding the entry of persons into their territory associated with Iran’s nuclear program. Resolution 1747 added further names to the list of individuals entering their territory who must be reported to the 1737 Committee.
- Requiring states to freeze the “funds, other financial assets and economic resources” of 28 additional individuals and entities.
- Expanding the list of items prohibited for export to or import from Iran to include any arms or related material.

Resolution 1747 also introduced the following new sanctions:

- Called on states to “exercise vigilance and restraint” in the supply, sale, or transfer of major military weapons systems and related material to Iran, as well as the provision of any technical assistance, financial assistance, or other service related to the provision of these items.
- Called on states and international financial institutions “not to enter into new commitments for grants, financial assistance, and concessional loans” with the Iranian government unless for humanitarian or developmental purposes.

**Resolution 1747’s Monitoring Mechanisms**

Like its predecessor, all states were required to report to the 1737 Committee within 60 days of Resolution 1747’s adoption on the steps taken to implement it. Also within 60 days, the Director General of the IAEA was instructed to furnish a report on Iran’s compliance with the resolution to both the IAEA Board of Governors and to the Security Council.

**Security Council Resolution 1803**

On March 3, 2008, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1803 with 14 of the council’s 15 members voting in favor. Indonesia abstained from the vote stating that it “remain[ed] to be convinced of the efficacy of adopting additional sanctions” against Iran.
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The full text of Resolution 1803 is available [here](https://www.armscontrol.org).

**Resolution 1803’s Principal Provisions**

This resolution was adopted as a response to Iran’s decision not to comply with any of the previous resolutions. It reiterates the council’s desire that Iran halt its enrichment program and urges Iran to comply with the IAEA.

**Resolution 1803’s Sanctions**

Resolution 1803 enhanced the previous sanctions on individuals and entities involved with Iran’s nuclear program by:

- Augmenting the list of people that states must report to the 1737 Committee if they enter their territory.
- Requiring states, for the first time, to “prevent the entry into or transit through their territories” of designated individuals involved in pursuing Iran’s nuclear ambitions.
- Expanding the number of individuals subjected to frozen funds, financial assets, and economic resources.

Resolution 1803 also outlines sanctions that apply directly to the Iranian state, by:

- Broadening the scope of restrictions on the supply, sale, or transfer of nuclear and ballistic missile-related items to Iran established in Resolution 1737 and setting down new provisions to prevent Iran from developing its nuclear program.
- Calling on states to be vigilant “in entering new commitments for public provided financial support for trade with Iran,” lest such support be used by Iran to pursue its nuclear weapons ambitions.
- Calling on states to “exercise vigilance over the activities of financial institutions in their territories with all banks domiciled in Iran,” to prevent such activities from enhancing Iran’s nuclear program.
- Calling on states to inspect cargo going to or from Iran on aircraft and vessels owned or operated by Iran Air Cargo and Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting the cargo consists of goods prohibited under resolutions 1737, 1747, or 1803.

**Resolution 1803’s Monitoring Mechanisms**

Like its predecessors, Resolution 1803 set out a number of reporting mechanisms that states and the Director General of the IAEA were to fulfill to monitor compliance with this resolution. Echoing previous resolutions, Resolution 1803 required states to file reports with the 1737 Committee within 60 days of being issued, detailing the steps taken to implement the resolution.

It also requested the Director General of the IAEA to submit a report to the IAEA Board of Governors and to the Security Council within 90 days of the resolution’s adoption, stating the extent to which Iran had complied with Resolutions 1737, 1747 and 1803. Upon receiving the Director General’s report, the Security Council was empowered to suspend, terminate or extend the sanctions in place against Iran as deemed appropriate.

Resolution 1803 extended the 1737 Committee’s scope from overseeing the implementation of only Resolution 1737 to also overseeing the implementation of Resolutions 1747 and 1803.

This resolution also introduced a requirement that states must report to the Security Council when they inspect the cargo of an Iranian aircraft or vessel. The report must be filed within five working days of the inspection and it must detail “the grounds for the inspection, as well as information on its time, place circumstances, results and other relevant details.”
Security Council Resolution 1835

Resolution 1835 was unanimously adopted on September 27, 2008.

The full text of Resolution 1835 is available here.

Resolution 1835’s Principal Provisions

In contrast to its predecessors, Resolution 1835 was not adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, nor did it set out new provisions that Tehran was required to comply with. Instead, it simply reaffirmed the four previous resolutions, as well as a statement made by the Security Council’s President on March 29, 2006. It then reaffirmed the council’s commitment “to an early negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.”

Resolution 1835’s Sanctions

This resolution did not outline new sanctions against Iran.

Resolution 1835’s Monitoring Mechanisms

This resolution did not outline new monitoring mechanisms.

Security Council Resolution 1929

On June 9, 2010, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1929, with 12 countries voting in favor, Brazil and Turkey voting against, and Lebanon abstaining.

The full text of Resolution 1929 is available here.

Resolution 1929’s Principal Provisions

The resolution reiterated the UNSC’s demands from previous resolutions that Iran halt all enrichment activity and other activities related to nuclear weapons development.

Resolution 1929’s Sanctions

This resolution, the sixth round of sanctions against Iran, included:

- Banning Iran from investing in nuclear and missile technology abroad, including investment in uranium mining.
- Establishing a complete arms embargo on Iran, banning the sale of “battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems” to Iran.
- Prohibiting Iran from undertaking any activity related to ballistic missiles. The resolution requires states to take necessary measures to prevent technology relevant to ballistic missiles from reaching Iran. It also updates the list of items banned for transfer to and from Iran.

Resolution 1929 also subjected Iran to a new inspection regime designed to detect and stop Iranian smuggling. States are:

- Called upon to inspect vessels on their territory that are suspected of carrying Iranian prohibited cargo, and are expected to comply with these rules on the high seas, including disposing of confiscated Iranian prohibited cargo.
- Required to refuse services to ships that are not in compliance with these sanctions.

Lastly, this resolution included financial sanctions targeting Iran’s ability to finance proliferation
activities by:

- Subjecting three companies related to the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, 15 IRGC-related companies and 40 other Iranian companies to an asset freeze.

Further, states were:

- Requested to report any circumventing of sanctions by Iran.
- Required to obligate their citizens and corporations to “exercise vigilance” when doing business with Iran or Iranian entities that contribute to proliferation efforts.
- Called upon to limit their interactions with Iranian financial institutions.

**Resolution 1929’s Monitoring Mechanisms**

Resolution 1929 requested that the Secretary-General create a panel of eight experts to “assist the Committee in carrying out its mandate” and “make recommendations on actions the Council, or the Committee or State, may consider to improve implementation of the relevant measures.”

It “urge[d]” states and relevant UN bodies to comply with the recommendations of the Panel of Experts and “call[ed] upon” states to submit a report 60 days after the adoption of the resolution on how they plan to comply with the sanctions regime. It also requested a report within 90 days of the resolution’s adoption from the IAEA on whether Iran had complied with the demands of this and previous resolutions.

**Source URL:** https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Security-Council-Resolutions-on-Iran