

The Case of Continuing UN Sanctions on Iran: *A Strategic Imperative for Europe and International Security*

Editorial Opinion

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Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Iran has, for over four decades, positioned itself as a destabilizing actor in the Middle East and beyond. Its revolutionary ideology, rooted in a radical Shia theocratic worldview, has consistently manifested in policies that undermine international peace, regional stability, and global security. Iran perceives itself as an ideological counterweight to Western civilization and actively seeks to expand its influence through a combination of nuclear escalation, proxy warfare, ballistic missile development, and alignment with revisionist powers such as Russia and China. Europe, in particular, remains a key target of Iranian hostility—viewed not only as a historic adversary but also as the frontline of Western civilization.

The United Nations and the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) now face a critical juncture: whether to continue or lift sanctions against Iran. At stake is not only the credibility of international agreements but also the strategic security of Europe and the wider international community. The activation of the Snapback Mechanism represents more than a diplomatic tool—it is a defining moment for global governance. By responding decisively to Iran's violations, the UN and the E3 have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership, uphold international law, and prevent a further slide into instability. Failure to act, on the other hand, risks emboldening Tehran, prolonging regional and global conflicts, and undermining the very foundations of the rules-based order. The United Nations and the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) face a critical decision on whether to continue or lift sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Given Iran's persistent defiance, destabilizing conduct, and alignment with Russia, the continuation and strict enforcement of sanctions is not only justified but essential. The activation of the Snapback

Mechanism represents a historic opportunity for Europe to uphold international law, safeguard security, and counter Tehran's aggression.

Status of the Snapback Mechanism

On August 28, the E3 triggered the Snapback Mechanism, enabling the reinstatement of UN Security Council sanctions against Iran. This step followed Tehran's failure to comply with nuclear commitments, particularly its refusal to cooperate fully with the IAEA. The activation initiates a 30-day negotiation window before sanctions are automatically reimposed. While the E3 signaled readiness for dialogue, Iran's conduct left them with no alternative but to act. The United States endorsed the decision, while Russia and China strongly opposed it.

The Nature of the Iranian Regime

Iran is not a defensive power but a radical Shia theocracy with an expansionist and revolutionary vision. It perceives itself as the antithesis of Western civilization and actively works to undermine Europe. Its destabilizing strategy includes terrorism, proxy warfare, nuclear escalation, and alliance with Russia and China.

Iran's Aggressive Regional and Global Policy

Iran continues to arm and finance proxies such as Houthis, Hezbollah, Hamas, and PIJ. It supplies drones to Russia for use against Ukraine, enriches uranium near weapons-grade levels, and systematically represses its own population, particularly women and minorities.

Why the Snapback Must Be Implemented Without Delay

Europe and the UN must act swiftly to leverage Iran's current vulnerabilities, undermine the Iran-Russia alliance, uphold agreements, and prevent Tehran's delay tactics. History has shown that appeasement only strengthens authoritarian regimes.

Why the E3 and UN Must Remain Firm

Lifting sanctions would reward defiance, undermine leverage, and weaken the credibility of global governance. Unity among the E3 and the UN is essential to constrain Tehran's aggressive policies.

Recommendations to the UN

1. Renew and enforce all sanctions, including those under the snapback mechanism.
2. Strengthen IAEA authority and monitoring.

3. Sanction individuals and entities financing Iran's proxies.
4. Condemn drone exports to Russia through a UN resolution.
5. Establish a UN human rights accountability mechanism targeting Tehran's abuses.

Conclusion

The activation of the Snapback Mechanism is not a mere diplomatic formality—it is a strategic necessity. Iran's foreign policy is aggressive, expansionist, and revolutionary, posing systemic threats to Europe, the Middle East, and global peace. Through its proxies, nuclear escalation, and alliance with Russia, Iran is actively challenging the rules-based international order. By acting decisively, the UN and E3 can contain Iran's malign influence, uphold international law, and safeguard the international order. This moment carries historic weight: sanctions are the most effective non-military instrument available to prevent Tehran from advancing its destabilizing agenda. If Europe and the UN fail to act now, Iran will continue to strengthen its military-industrial complex, expand its terrorist networks, and undermine Western unity. On the other hand, decisive enforcement of sanctions would not only weaken Tehran but also send a clear signal to other authoritarian regimes that international defiance carries costs.

Ultimately, the credibility of global governance is on the line. The choice before Europe and the UN is stark: either to stand firm in defense of international security, or to allow appeasement and delay to empower a radical regime that has openly declared its hostility to the West. History shows that ignoring threats at their weakest point leads to far greater costs later. This is Europe's opportunity—and responsibility—to act decisively, protect its citizens, and safeguard the stability of the international system.