

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY: INTERNATIONAL RELATION

NEWS: IAEA pulls inspectors from Iran as standoff over access drags on

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The IAEA has withdrawn all inspectors from Iran after Tehran suspended cooperation following military strikes by the US and Israel, leaving Iran's nuclear activities unmonitored. This development raises serious concerns about nuclear proliferation and regional instability in West Asia.

Context and Immediate Trigger

- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** has withdrawn all remaining inspectors from **Iran** as of July 2025.
- This follows military **strikes by Israel and the United States** targeting Iranian nuclear facilities.
- Iran responded by **passing legislation** suspending cooperation with the IAEA, effectively cutting off access to international nuclear inspections.

About the IAEA

- Established in **1957**, the IAEA is an **autonomous international organization** within the **United Nations system**, headquartered in **Vienna, Austria**.
- Its core mandate is to **promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy** while **preventing nuclear proliferation**, especially for military or weapons purposes.
- The IAEA is also responsible for **inspections and verification** of civilian nuclear programs in countries that are signatories to the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**.

Iran and the IAEA Relationship: Timeline and Background

- **Iran is a signatory to the NPT**, which subjects its nuclear program to **IAEA safeguards and inspections**.
- In **2015**, Iran signed the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** with the P5+1 (U.S., UK, France, China, Russia + Germany), agreeing to limit its nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief.
- The **IAEA was tasked with monitoring compliance** under JCPOA and had regular access to Iranian nuclear sites.
- In **2018**, the **U.S. unilaterally withdrew** from the JCPOA, leading Iran to gradually **reduce its commitments** and restrict IAEA access.

Current Crisis (2025)

- After the **escalation of hostilities**, with **Israel and the U.S. striking Iran's nuclear infrastructure**, Iran passed a **parliamentary law** suspending cooperation with the IAEA.

- As a result, **IAEA inspections have ceased**, and **all inspectors have been withdrawn**.
- Iran's **stockpile of enriched uranium**, believed to be near **weapons-grade levels**, is now **unmonitored and unverified**.
- The IAEA Director General warned that this lack of transparency "**gravely undermines global non-proliferation efforts**."

Strategic and Security Implications

- The end of inspections **reduces international oversight**, increasing the **risk of nuclear weaponization** by Iran.
- This may **trigger a regional arms race in West Asia (Middle East)**, with other countries possibly seeking nuclear deterrents.
- The situation **violates the spirit of the NPT**, weakening the **global nuclear governance regime**.
- **Energy markets and oil prices** may be affected due to rising geopolitical tensions and **Iran's strategic role in the global energy supply chain**.
- There's a growing danger of **international isolation of Iran**, further reducing diplomatic channels and increasing conflict risks.

Broader Concerns

- **IAEA's credibility and authority** are at stake if it is unable to re-establish inspections.
- The crisis reflects a **broadier collapse of the JCPOA framework** and a failure of **multilateral diplomacy**.
- It highlights the **increasing use of unilateral military action** over negotiated disarmament or containment.
- The **international community** remains divided over how to respond, with **calls for a diplomatic reset** amid fears of full-scale conflict.

Conclusion

- The withdrawal of IAEA inspectors from Iran marks a **dangerous turning point** in the region's nuclear future.
- Unless a **diplomatic solution is urgently pursued**, the absence of verification mechanisms **jeopardizes both regional peace and global non-proliferation architecture**.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/un-pulls-nuclear-inspectors-out-of-iran-for-safety-reasons-10106412/>