

Iran Nuclear Agreement: Implementation

On July 14, 2015, the United States and its international negotiating partners reached an agreement with Iran on its nuclear program: the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#) or the Iran nuclear deal. The agreement, which was formally adopted on October 18 of the same year, would only go into effect after Iran completed a number of initial steps.

Implementation Day

On January 16th, 2016 (known as “Implementation Day”) the deal was implemented after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that Iran had made the necessary reductions to its nuclear program and granted the IAEA the access necessary to verify the agreement. In exchange, the United States and other world powers agreed to waive nuclear-related sanctions.

[Iran’s Obligations](#)

Before Implementation Day, the IAEA certified that Iran:

- **Eliminated** 98% of its uranium stockpile.
- **Removed and destroyed** the core from its Arak reactor, blocking the production of weapons-grade plutonium.
- **Ripped out** over 13,000 centrifuges (two-thirds of total). Those removed in the process must be placed under continuous IAEA monitoring.
- **Halted** all uranium enrichment activities at the underground Fordow site.
- **Allowed** the IAEA to implement the safeguards necessary to monitor Iran’s nuclear program and implemented transparency measures, such as the [Additional Protocol](#), to permit greater access to inspectors.
- **Gave** the IAEA the information it needed to assess the possible military dimensions of Iran’s nuclear past.

Going forward, Iran must:

- Possess **no more than 300 kg of uranium** enriched up to 3.67%
- Operate **no more than 6,104 centrifuges**
- **Cease uranium enrichment** at the Fordow facility
- **Ship out all spent fuel** from reactors
- Allow the IAEA **continuous monitoring and inspections** its key nuclear facilities
- **Abide by limits** on centrifuges research and development

The P5+1's role

In return, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations lifted some sanctions related to Iran's nuclear program. As a result of the sanctions relief, Iran was allowed access to around [\\$56 billion](#) of its frozen assets and the opportunity to conduct business with much of the world. The sanctions infrastructure has remained in place in case Iran violates the agreement and the re-imposition of sanctions is required.

In addition, the United States will still maintain key sanctions, including a prohibition that prevents Iran from using the U.S. commercial markets and banking system. The United States will also maintain sanctions targeting Iran's support for terrorism, its human rights abuses, and its missile program.

Verification since Implementation Day

Since Implementation Day, the IAEA has consistently monitored Iran's nuclear activities and has released its findings in quarterly [reports](#). The IAEA raised concerns on [two occasions](#) that Iran had slightly exceeded the cap on heavy water, a material used in some nuclear reactors. On each occasion, Iran quickly returned to compliance by shipping some of its heavy water out of the country. The IAEA's most recent [report](#), released in June 2017, indicated that Iran was not in violation of the agreement. Shortly after, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson also [certified](#) that Iran was in compliance with the agreement.

The Bottom Line

Two years after its signing, the JCPOA is working and it has cut off all Iran's possible paths to a nuclear bomb. As with all agreements, compliance must be rigorously enforced, but to date, this deal has made the world safer.