

French president says Iran nuclear deal must be saved



Paris, May 10 (RHC)-- France insists that the multilateral nuclear deal between Iran and major world powers, which has been severely targeted by the United States, must be saved and Tehran's continued participation in it ensured.

President Emmanuel Macron made the remarks to reporters in the central Romanian city of Sibiu before a scheduled European Union summit there. The French president lauded the historical 2015 deal as "a good agreement," noting that "Iran must remain in this agreement and we must do everything we can to ensure that it stays in."

Macron also urged the signatories to the nuclear deal with Iran -- officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- not to "get caught up in any escalation" and to "jointly watch over our collective security."

U.S. President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the agreement last year, calling it "the worst deal ever negotiated." He then reinstated the sanctions that had been lifted under the agreement.

The other signatories to the deal -- the UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany -- however, condemned both the decisions and vowed to sustain their participation. London, Paris and Berlin even announced a financial mechanism in January to circumvent the

reintroduced U.S. sanctions.

The Islamic Republic, however, has complained to Europe for its long-delayed introduction of the mechanism as well as its failure to bring it into force.

On Wednesday, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani announced a decision made by the country's top security body, the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), that it was suspending the implementation of part of its commitments under the JCPOA. The decision saw Iran refusing to sell its excess low-enriched uranium and heavy water as it is contractually obliged.

Rouhani said the Islamic Republic would be taking further steps in 60 days if the other signatories failed again to ensure that it still benefited from staying in the nuclear accord despite the U.S.'s withdrawal. All the parties remaining in the accord have hailed it as a pillar of regional and international peace and security.

Rouhani likewise reminded Europe of Iran's crucial role in ensuring security in the region, from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean and from the Caspian to the Red Sea. Iran, he added, helped stop the spread of terrorism to Europe and contained the influx of refugees into the continent. And he warned that the

cooperation leading to the security will cease to exist if the situation continues as it is.

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