



Analysis of the IAEA's Iran NPT Safeguards Report - August 2024¹

By David Albright and Andrea Stricker²

September 5, 2024

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on August 29, 2024, released its latest assessment on Iran's compliance with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) safeguards. Below is key new information from the report, as well as findings and recommendations.

New Information

- The IAEA in its latest assessment on Iran's compliance with NPT safeguards, notes that "outstanding safeguards issues" pertaining to the agency's multi-year investigation of Iran's possible nuclear weapons work "remain unresolved 21 months after the Board of Governors decided that it was 'essential and urgent in order to ensure verification of the non-diversion of nuclear material.'" The director general also underscores that Iran has failed to comply with the demands of the most recent June 2024 board resolution.³ The director general expresses "hope" that an initial exchange with Iran's new president will result in an "early" IAEA visit to Iran "and the establishment of a fluid, constructive dialogue that swiftly leads to concrete results."
- As in several past reports, the IAEA has not changed its assessment regarding the presence of undeclared nuclear material and/or activities at four sites – Lavan-Shian, Varamin, Marivan, and Turqez-Abad. The IAEA concluding that a nuclear declaration is incomplete means Iran has violated its safeguards agreement. The IAEA is still seeking clarifications from Iran in relation to two undeclared locations – Varamin and Turqez-Abad. The IAEA again repeats its statement, "the outstanding safeguards issues stem

¹ Since so little has changed since the previous IAEA Iran report with regard to Iran's safeguards situation, this report is shorter than previous assessments of quarterly IAEA safeguards reports. For background on the facilities and activities discussed in this shortened report, see: "Analysis of the IAEA's Iran NPT Safeguards Report - May 2024," by David Albright, Sarah Burkhard, and Andrea Stricker, Institute for Science and International Security, May 31, 2024, <https://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/analysis-of-the-iaeas-iran-npt-safeguards-report-may-2024/8>

² Andrea Stricker is deputy director of the Nonproliferation and Biodefense Program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) and an FDD research fellow.

³ IAEA Board of Governors, "NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran: Resolution adopted on 5 June 2024 during the 1723rd session," GOV/2024/39, June 5, 2024, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/documents/gov2024-39.pdf>

from Iran's obligations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement and need to be resolved for the Agency to be in a position to provide assurance that Iran's nuclear [program] is entirely peaceful."

- During the previous reporting period, Iran admitted that it had misstated quantities of uranium at the Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF) at Esfahan and filed a new uranium material declaration, but that resolution led to another discrepancy. The IAEA found additional nuclear material unaccounted for, which could not be explained by accountancy measurement errors, at Jaber Ibn Hayan Multipurpose Laboratory (JHL). On August 13, 2024, the IAEA shared with Iran "the final results of its evaluation of the verification results" at the UCF, informing Iran, "the amount of nuclear material unaccounted for...was greater than had been previously communicated to Iran." Therefore, more uranium was missing from the UCF related to past experiments than the IAEA previously estimated. The IAEA is seeking a new technical meeting with Iran to discuss the findings.
- The report once again expresses the IAEA's condemnation of Iran's de-designation of several of its key enrichment inspectors and failure to reinstate them. Iran informed the IAEA that "after careful and in-depth consideration," Iran's position "is unchanged and this position will remain as it is."
- The IAEA reports again on Iran's refusal to declare new nuclear facility construction and provide key information as required under Modified Code 3.1 of the subsidiary arrangements to its comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA). The IAEA notes, "Iran remains the only State with significant nuclear activities in which the Agency is implementing a [CSA] but which is not implementing" this code.
- The IAEA reports no new technical meetings or engagements with Iran regarding implementation of the March 2023 IAEA/Iran Joint Statement, reflecting the fundamental stalemate between the IAEA and Iran regarding improving Iran's transparency and resolving the NPT compliance investigation. The IAEA notes "there has been no progress in the past 15 months towards implementing the Joint Statement." The director general "calls upon Iran to implement the Joint Statement through serious engagement with the Agency's concrete proposals."

Findings and Recommendations

- Although the Board of Governors took steps in June 2024 to provide more support to the IAEA in the form of a new censure resolution, it has still refrained from providing a deadline for Iranian compliance, after which it would immediately refer Iran's case to the UN Security Council. The board should vote for this referral at its meeting from September 9-13. Such a referral should also be accompanied by the re-imposition of UN Iran sanctions via the snapback procedure included in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

- However, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on August 29 that the United States and its European partners will decline to pursue a follow-on censure or authorize the IAEA to issue a comprehensive report on Iran's safeguards non-compliance at the IAEA meeting.⁴ The board's planned failure to follow-up on the June resolution's demands, with which Iran has completely failed to comply, will allow Iran to continue progressing its nuclear program, particularly its ability to rapidly make large quantities of weapon-grade uranium. Iran will also continue reducing international monitoring and avoid disclosing information about past and possibly ongoing nuclear weapons activities. Doing nothing is equivalent to granting Iran more time to continue its non-compliance and undermine the IAEA.
- If the board fails to act, the best-case scenario is that Iran will succeed in maintaining secrecy over past and potentially ongoing nuclear weapons activities indefinitely, weakening the IAEA in the process. At worst, Iran will succeed in building a nuclear weapon more quickly than Western powers could detect and stop. This will cause regional nuclear proliferation and irreparable damage to the IAEA and the NPT.

⁴ Laurence Norman, "U.N. Agency Issues Fresh Warning Over Iranian Nuclear Activities," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-n-agency-issues-fresh-warning-over-iranian-nuclear-activities-509ba50f>