

Cruz calls for US to invoke ‘snapback’ on Iran arms embargo after failed UN vote, hits European ‘fecklessness’

The UN Security Council rejected a US resolution to extend the arms embargo.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, is calling for the Trump administration to use the snapback mechanism in the Iran nuclear deal that would allow the U.S. to force the reimposition of sanctions on Tehran — after the U.N. Security Council failed to extend a soon-to-expire arms embargo.

“The fecklessness of our European allies has left the United States with one option, and one option only, to prevent an expiration of the arms embargo,” Cruz said in a blistering statement on Monday. “It’s time for the United States to finally and irreversibly end what remains of the disastrous deal and the benefits that Iran gets from it by invoking the snapback mechanism described in the deal’s United Nations resolution.”

UN SECURITY COUNCIL REJECTS US RESOLUTION TO EXTEND IRAN ARMS EMBARGO

The U.N. Security Council on Friday rejected a U.S. resolution to extend the arms embargo on Iran that is due to expire on Oct. 18 as part of the Iran nuclear deal. The expiration of the embargo would allow Iran to buy fighter jets, attack helicopters, tanks, submarines, and missiles with a range of up to 300 km. The U.S. has warned it could result in Iran selling arms to countries like Venezuela and Syria.

The short resolution, which would have extended the embargo “until the Security Council decides otherwise,” mustered only two votes in the chamber — the U.S. and the Dominican Republic. It needed nine to pass.

Russia and China voted no but did not need to deploy a veto, while the remaining members of the Council, including Britain, Germany, and France, abstained.

Acting U.K. Ambassador Jonathan Allen said in a statement that while the U.K. had set out its concerns of Iran's destabilizing behavior in the region, the U.K. abstained, "because it was clear that it would not attract the support of the Council and would not represent a basis for achieving consensus" and would therefore not contribute to regional stability.

"Nevertheless, we stand ready to work with council members and [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] participants to seek a path forward that could secure the support of the council," he said.

The U.S. has said in no uncertain terms that it intends to use other means to extend the arms embargo, and could do so as early as next week. U.N. Ambassador Kelly Craft had said that the U.S. will "use every tool in our toolbox."

US TO ACT 'IN THE COMING DAYS' ON IRAN ARMS EMBARGO AFTER UN SECURITY COUNCIL REJECTS EXTENSION

The U.N. resolution that enshrined the deal, includes a "snapback" mechanism that allows an individual nation to reimpose expiring sanctions on Iran — including the arms embargo — by filing a complaint to a Security Council panel. Although the U.S. left the Iran deal, it claims to still retain rights under the resolution and officials will likely seek to use that power.

Diplomats from countries supportive of the deal and opponents of the U.S. have argued that because the United States left the deal in 2018, it now can no longer use mechanisms within the Iran deal.

"Having withdrawn from the JCPOA, the U.S. is no longer a JCPOA participant and therefore ineligible to demand the Security Council invoke a snapback," Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun said in a statement after the vote.

The administration, and Cruz, argue against that, saying the U.S. retains rights under the resolution.

"UNSCR 2231 reserves the right of any original participants of the Iran deal to invoke the snapback mechanism, which it explicitly defines as including the United States," Cruz wrote in an op-ed for Newsweek referring to the U.N. resolution. "How could it not? The entire point of the snapback was to protect the U.S. if Iran exploited the deal to endanger Americans."

“Having exhausted every other measure to stop Iran from receiving billions of dollars of weapons starting in October, the Trump administration is going back to the UN to put an end to the benefits Iran is receiving from the Iran deal,” he argues. “We can go there tomorrow to begin the process, we should do so and, very soon, we will do so.”

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Russian President Vladimir Putin has called for a meeting of leaders of the five permanent Security Council members, along with Germany and Iran, in what the Kremlin has described as an effort to avoid escalation.

While the U.S. has expressed an openness to talks, officials have indicated that it could invoke the snapback mechanism as early as this week.

Fox News' Ben Evansky and Rich Edson contributed to this report.

Adam Shaw is a reporter covering U.S. and European politics for Fox News. He can be reached here.

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