



Policy Brief

## Iran at the G8

June 11, 2010

G8 Research Group

Canada will push its G8 counterparts to take a hard line on Iran when they meet at the G8 Muskoka Summit on June 25-26, 2010.

In February, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, host of this year's G8 and G20 summits, said, "Canada will continue to work with our allies to find strong and viable solutions, including sanctions, to hold Iran to account." He added that Canada would "use its G8 presidency to continue to focus international attention and action on the Iranian regime."

In a speech to the G8 foreign ministers at their meeting in Gatineau, Quebec, in March, Harper urged "a heightened focus, and stronger coordinated action, including sanctions if necessary, on the Iranian regime." He said that "Tehran must halt its nuclear activities and engage in peaceful dialogue. There is much at stake. If nuclear proliferation leads to the use of nuclear weapons, whether by states or non-state actors, then no matter where the bombs are set off, the catastrophe will be felt around the world."

Iran's nuclear program has been high on the G8 agenda since 2003. The G8 has consistently urged Iran to accept the security and monitoring protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has supported the IAEA's examination of Iran's nuclear program. In 2004, the G8 called on all states to implement United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540 to address the proliferation challenges in North Korea, Iran and Libya.

The disputed election, protests and post-election violence in Iran in 2009 added a new dimension to the challenge of dealing with the country. At the 2009 L'Aquila Summit G8 leaders reiterated their "full respect for the sovereignty of Iran." They also deplored the "post-electoral violence, which led to the loss of lives of Iranian civilians. Interference with media, unjustified detentions of journalists and recent arrests of foreign nationals are unacceptable." The leaders declared their commitment to a diplomatic solution to the nuclear security issue.

On June 9, Canada, along with other G8 countries, welcomed the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1929, which imposes additional sanctions on Iran for its nuclear program. Harper said that Canada would use its G8 presidency to maintain international attention on Iran, pushing the G8 to stand ready to support more sanctions against the country if it continues to refuse to comply with its international obligations. Some G8 members would prefer to continue to pursue diplomatic solutions to the Iranian nuclear issue. However, if Iran does not make a major effort to comply with international standards before the G8 Muskoka Summit, the G8 will consider further action.

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