

US Hits Iran with Fresh Sanctions That Target Petrochemicals

Tensions are high between the US and Iran as the US has stepped up military cooperation with Israel

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The US on Thursday hit Iran with fresh sanctions that targeted companies accused of facilitating the sale of Iranian petroleum and petrochemicals to Asia.

The US Treasury Department [said that the sanctions targeted](#) "six Iran-based petrochemical manufacturers or their subsidiaries, and three firms in Malaysia and Singapore involved in facilitating the sale and shipment of petroleum and petrochemicals."

The US has been increasing sanctions on Iran throughout the Biden administration, but more so since indirect talks to revive the nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, have been stalled. In November, President Biden was [caught on camera](#) saying the JCPOA is "dead" but that he couldn't announce it.

Besides the sanctions, the US has also expressed support for protesters inside Iran and is stepping up military cooperation with Israel. Last month, the US and Israel [held their largest-ever joint military exercises](#) that involved massive live-fire drills meant to send a message to Iran.

The joint exercises also sent a message to the region that the US backs the controversial new Israeli government under Benjamin Netanyahu, which has [vowed to expand settlements](#) in the West Bank and eventually annex the territory.

Following the exercises, Israel [launched a drone attack](#) against a military facility in the Iranian city of Isfahan. US officials told *The Wall Street Journal* that Israel was responsible for the attack and said it came at a time when the US and Israel were [discussing ways to contain Tehran's military capabilities](#).

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