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# Gantz: Iran 'Weeks Away' From Having Enough Material for a Nuke

**HERZLIYA** (Hamodia/Reuters) — Tehran is just weeks away from being able to produce sufficient fissile material for a nuclear weapon, Defense Minister Benny Gantz warned yesterday.

Addressing the "A New Global Order" conference at Reichman University in Herzliya, Gantz said Iran's nuclear program is making significant progress both qualitatively and quantitatively.

"Iran continues to accumulate irre-

versible knowledge and experience in the development, research, production and operation of advanced centrifuges. It stands just a few weeks away from accumulating fissile material that will be sufficient for a first bomb, holds 60 kilograms [132 pounds] of enriched material at 60%, produces metallic uranium at the enrichment level of 20% and prevents the IAEA from accessing its facilities.

"Iran is making an effort to complete the manufacturing and installation of 1,000 additional advanced IR6 centrifuges in its nuclear facilities, including new facilities being built at underground sites abutting Natanz."

Gantz confirmed a statement from U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi last month that Iran had set up a new underground Natanz workshop for making centrifuge

parts, an apparent precaution against attacks.

In his remarks, Gantz alluded to Israel's long-standing threat to take military action if it deems diplomacy is at a dead end to deny its archenemy the means to make nuclear weapons.

"The cost of such a future war, which we hope will not happen, can be prevented or reduced" with tougher negotiations by world powers, he said.