

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Trump's Blockade Forged in the Ashes of Strategic Failure

The US military blockade on all traffic entering and leaving Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz is now in effect, following Washington's military and political failures to force Iran to succumb to its demands



A billboard with a graphic design about the Strait of Hormuz on a building in Tehran, Iran, April 13, 2026.

## Spain's break with the West: How Sánchez turned Madrid into a voice against the war on Iran

By Maedeh Zaman Fashami

TEHRAN - The joint war the United States and Israel launched against Iran can be seen as one of the most complex and consequential geopolitical crises of the past decade. It not only reshaped the security landscape of the Middle East but also strained divisions within the Western bloc, challenged the future of the transatlantic alliance, and even placed the concept of the international order under significant pressure. Within this context, Spain's position under Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez stood out as one of the most distinctive and at times controversial responses among Western countries. Unlike several of its European and American allies, ▶ Page 3

## Trump's brazen 'Antichrist' complex meets torrent of condemnation and Pope's defiance

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — In the quiet, heavy hours following Orthodox Easter Sunday, the world glimpsed something far more unsettling than mere political theater. U.S. President Donald Trump, fresh from waging a campaign of aggression against Iran and issuing apocalyptic ultimatums against the Iranian people, turned his digital fury toward Pope Leo XIV. ▶ Page 5

## Iran war & petrodollar's perfect storm

TEHRAN- As tensions escalate in the Persian Gulf, a new analysis from Deutsche Bank warns that the ongoing conflict with Iran may inadvertently trigger a seismic shift in global oil markets.

The report, which has been circulating among financial circles, argues that the Iran war represents a "perfect storm" for the petrodollar—the primary currency in which oil has historically been bought and sold.

According to the bank's findings, several converging factors are now threatening the dollar's decades-long dominance.

First and foremost is the deepening U.S. military entanglement in the Persian Gulf. As American naval forces become increasingly tied down securing strategic waterways, the perception of U.S. stability—long the bedrock of the dollar's reserve status—is being called into question.

Simultaneously, the weaponization of the Strait of Hormuz by Iranian forces has disrupted tanker traffic and forced buyers to seek alternative, more reliable trading mechanisms. ▶ Page 4

## Top diplomats from Russia, Egypt, and Oman discuss latest developments with their Iranian counterpart

TEHRAN- Iran has intensified a flurry of diplomatic engagements with regional and global powers as efforts continue to contain escalating tensions following weeks of conflict and inconclusive negotiations with the United States.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a series of phone calls in recent days with counterparts from Oman, Egypt, and Russia, focusing on the latest regional developments and the future of indirect talks between Tehran and Washington.

In a conversation on Tuesday, Araghchi and Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi reviewed developments across the region, including Pakistan-mediated negotiations between Iran and the United States held earlier this week in Islamabad.

Parallel discussions were also held with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, with both sides exchanging views on regional and international developments.

## From Tehran to the Vatican: Iran stands tall with Pope Leo in face of US pressure

TEHRAN- Iran's president and senior political figures have voiced strong support for Pope Leo XIV following sharp criticism from US President Donald Trump, framing the dispute as a broader issue of respect for religious authority and the pursuit of peace.

The Pope has criticized US President Donald Trump's policies towards Iran and his warmongering.

President Masoud Pezeshkian, in a message addressed to the head of the Catholic Church, condemned what he described as "disrespect" toward both the pope and Jesus, whom he referred to as a prophet of peace and brotherhood. "Desecration of such sacred figures is unacceptable to any freedom-seeking person," he wrote, adding that he spoke on behalf of the Iranian nation in denouncing the remarks and extending his well wishes to the pontiff.

The statement came amid an escalating rhetorical clash after Trump publicly criticized Pope Leo's stance on the war involving Iran. Writing on his social media platform and later speaking to reporters,

## Iran's position in New York; Condemnation of US naval blockade and demand for compensation

TEHRAN- Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, has lodged two separate but related diplomatic positions, condemning a US-imposed maritime blockade as a "grave violation" of Iran's sovereignty while simultaneously demanding full compensation from five regional countries for their role in the ongoing war against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In a letter addressed to the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council president on Monday, Iravani said that the blockade of all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports – publicly declared by the US Central Command (CENTCOM) on 12 April 2026 – constitutes a flagrant breach of the prohibition on the threat or use of force enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

"The imposition of a maritime blockade amounts to a clear act of aggression under international law," Iravani wrote. He added that the measure unlawfully interferes with Iran's sovereign rights and infringes upon the lawful maritime commerce of third states.

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## The map of damage tells its own story

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN- In the span of just over a month, from February 28 to April 8, a total of 132 cultural sites, museums, and historical monuments across Iran were damaged or destroyed, largely as a result of the massive shockwaves caused by airstrikes.

At first glance, the number may seem plain. But it is only when placed against the depth, density, and distribution of Iran's cultural landscape that its full meaning begins to emerge.

Iran is not merely a country with historical monuments; it is one of the world's longest continuous centers of civilization. From the prehistoric layers of human settlement to the imperial legacies of the Elamite kingdom, ▶ Page 6



## Artists gather in Tehran to create epic works on resistance

TEHRAN- The "Urban Arts of War" workshop has been launched at the Art Tent in Tehran's Haft-e Tir Square, bringing together diverse artistic groups to create epic and defensive-themed content.

The event focuses on producing artworks that embody the spirit of heroism, sacrifice, and the culture of resistance. Participants are engaged in various creative mediums to showcase the nation's enduring resilience. This cultural initiative aims to integrate revolutionary values into the urban landscape, fostering a deeper connection between contemporary art and the nation's resistance against the recent imposed war by the US and Israel on Iran.

## Iranian psychology body calls for an assessment of Trump's mental health

TEHRAN – The National Psychology and Counseling Organization of Iran, in an open letter to psychologists in the United States, has called for an assessment of the mental health of US political leaders, particularly Donald Trump, in the interest of world peace.

The letter, which includes the scientific and humanitarian concerns of the Iranian psychological community and counselors, criticizes the destructive and antisocial behaviors of American leaders and their direct impact on creating psychological disorders, violating world peace, and creating trauma among nations, IRNA reported.

Referring to the recent US military aggression against Iran, the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, ▶ Page 7

## TEHRAN PAPERS

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

## Why didn't Iran close the Strait of Hormuz years ago?

Hamshahri examined why Iran did not close the Strait of Hormuz in previous years. The paper argues that closing the strait would have required military action within the waterway, and Iran's policy has never been to initiate war. A preemptive move would have undermined Iran's legal legitimacy and created an international consensus against it. For the Islamic Republic, public opinion and international legitimacy have always mattered, and the logic of the Iranian Revolution is also exported through this same framework. Therefore, this option always remained at the level of a threat. But today, if such an action has occurred, it has taken place within the framework of legitimate defense — and naturally, under these circumstances, Iran will not relinquish what it has gained. The paper adds that Trump's foolishness opened this path for Iran in the first place.

## Ettelaat: Agreement or war?!

Ettelaat, in an analysis, examined the lack of agreement in the negotiations between Iran and the United States. According to the paper, the 21-hour talks ended without reaching a final deal. One of the main challenges of the meeting was the ambiguity surrounding the scope of the ceasefire: the US and Iran disagreed on whether the ceasefire should include other areas, such as Lebanon. Iran insisted that all fronts of conflict be covered, while the United States emphasized specific limitations. The future of the ceasefire and the negotiations is closely tied to the political will of both sides, the role of mediators, and the support of the international community. If Tehran and Washington fail to rebuild trust, the likelihood of renewed hostilities will increase. Conversely, if the talks continue in more specialized rounds, the temporary ceasefire could potentially evolve into a more durable agreement — a decision that would affect not only the two countries but the entire region and global energy markets.

## Siasat-e-Rooz: We will not abandon the Strait of Hormuz

Siasat-e-Rooz, in its editorial, emphasized the importance of maintaining control over the Strait of Hormuz. The editorial argues that Iran has extensive experience with US unreliability — from negotiations that led nowhere to agreements that were later dismantled by Washington. Therefore, Iran will not relinquish the Strait of Hormuz. The chokepoint of the region is now in Iran's hands; the strategic and sensitive waterway of Hormuz is under the control of Iran's armed forces, and every ship must pass through with Iran's permission. This waterway cannot be opened through war; any military attack aimed at forcing it open would only make the strait narrower. American

officials, military generals, and experts are well aware of this. However, if war against Iran breaks out again, the enemy must understand that this time will be very different from previous rounds — the attacks will be heavier, more destructive, and comprehensive.

## Etemad: The assassination of diplomacy

Etemad, in a commentary, discussed Israel's objective in assassinating senior Iranian policymakers. It wrote that in the complex conditions of the military confrontation involving the US and Israel against Iran, assassination is not merely the physical elimination of a rival — it is 'the destruction of a pathway.' If diplomacy is understood as the mediating language that prevents a final clash, then the simultaneous assassination of Ali Larijani (Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council) and Seyyed Kamal Kharrazi (Head of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations) would amount to cutting off the language of dialogue and shutting the windows of diplomatic rationality within the Islamic Republic's structure. This hypothetical event must be analyzed within the broader design shaped by the combination of Netanyahu, Washington hardliners, and Trump's doctrine of elimination. Removing these two figures would mean eliminating diplomatic strategists. Through such an act, Israel would in effect be targeting the 'intellectual reservoir' of any potential negotiations.

## Arman-e-Emrooz: The gradual erosion of pressure tools

According to Arman-e-Emrooz, the United States — especially during Donald Trump's presidency — pursued a strategy toward Iran based on maximum pressure. This policy was designed to force fundamental behavioral change in Iran, but in practice, it not only failed to achieve the stated goals but also produced a kind of strategic erosion for Washington. The US withdrawal from the JCPOA, which was supposed to serve as a pressure lever for extracting more concessions, instead reduced monitoring mechanisms and deepened mistrust. Internationally, the rift between the US and its allies widened, and the credibility of Washington's commitments came under question. In this context, the idea of negotiations in Islamabad cannot be viewed merely as a diplomatic initiative; rather, it should be understood as an attempt to buy time and recalibrate strategy. Pakistan, as an actor with relatively balanced relations, provides a low-cost environment for informal engagement — a place where new pathways can be tested without media or political pressure.

## Aref to Vance: US has suffered 'structural humiliation' over Israel briefings



TEHRAN - Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref took a jab at US Vice President JD Vance, accusing Washington of "structural humiliation" following Pakistani-mediated negotiations between Iran and the United States in Islamabad over the weekend.

In a post on X on Tuesday, Aref pointed to comments by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said, "Vance reported to me on his way back from Islamabad, as he does every day."

Aref wrote, "For the first time in history, a senior official of a government is providing daily

briefings to the head of another state. The issue is not us; it is a matter of structural humiliation."

He continued, "Do the American people realize that the White House has effectively turned into a reporting branch for another regime?"

The talks in Islamabad ended without an agreement. Iranian officials said the negotiations broke down over excessive US demands. The discussions followed a two-week ceasefire after 40 days of joint US and Israeli military strikes against Iran that began on February 28.

## From Tehran to the Vatican: Iran stands tall with Pope Leo in face of US pressure

From page 1 ▶ Trump accused the pope of "weakness in the face of crime" and suggested that his views were detrimental to US foreign policy, adding that he was "not a fan."

Pope Leo, however, appeared to strike a measured tone. Speaking to journalists aboard a flight to Algeria, he said he had no intention of engaging in a public dispute with Trump but reaffirmed his commitment to advocating for peace. "I have no fear," he said, reiterating his opposition to the war and calling recent threats against Iran "unacceptable." The pope has been among the most vocal religious critics of the conflict, urging world leaders to find a path toward de-escalation.

In Tehran, expressions of support extended beyond the presidency.



Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of Iran's Parliament, praised the pope's stance in a post on X, calling his message an inspiration for those who "refuse to stay silent

on the killing of innocents."

Lawmakers representing Iran's Assyrian, Chaldean and Armenian Christian communities also issued

a joint statement condemning the criticism of the pope as "an assault on humanity." They emphasized that religious leaders and sacred figures serve as symbols of peace and unity, and that insults directed at them undermine those values.

The incident highlights the long-standing convergence of positions between Iranian officials and followers of other religions, especially Christianity, which enjoys special respect in the Muslim beliefs. While tensions between Tehran and Washington remain high, the pope's intervention, and the reaction it has provoked, highlights the growing role of moral and religious voices in shaping the narrative around the conflict.

## Iran's position in New York; Condemnation of US naval blockade and demand for compensation

From page 1 ▶ The Iranian envoy rejected and condemned the US action "in the strongest possible terms" and affirmed that Iran would exercise its inherent right to take all necessary and proportionate measures under international law to safeguard its sovereignty and national interests. He called on the Security Council to unequivocally condemn the blockade and urge the United States to immediately end its "internationally wrongful acts."

## Demand for compensation

In a separate letter on the same day, Iravani demanded full reparation from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan for material and moral damage sustained by Iran during the war imposed by

the United States and the Israeli regime.

Citing documented evidence based on monitoring by Iran's Armed Forces, Iravani said those five states had breached their international obligations by allowing their territories to be used by aggressors — and in some instances, directly participating in unlawful armed attacks targeting civilian objects inside Iran.

"The conduct of those states in allowing their territories to be used by the aggressors against the Islamic Republic of Iran qualifies as an act of aggression," the letter stated. Iravani emphasized that the five countries cannot lawfully invoke Article 51 of the UN Charter (self-defence) against Iran, which is the victim of aggression.



He called on the five nations to cease their internationally wrongful acts immediately and make full reparation, including compensation for all material and moral damage. The letters have been circulated as official documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

## A flag in the heart of the night: When "home" enters the square for compensation

## By By Kurosh Alyani

TEHRAN - In the midst of the most terrifying nights of terror carried out by Israel and the United States against the defenseless civilian population of Iran—nights in which cold military calculations anticipated social collapse and a rupture between the state and the people—the city squares were overtaken by a different kind of life, one whose center was not chaos but a "large family." At the heart of these squares, flags spin through the air, holding the pulse of this nighttime life in their hands; pieces of cloth in the radiant colors of green, white, and red that have become the central pole of a popular resistance.

Here in the square, everything is interwoven: the resonance of prayer dissolves into the chants, anthems merge with elegies and then with the sobs of grief, and immediately afterward a burst of collective laughter—sparked by a joke about the cowardice of the enemy—springs to life. This scene is not a rigid political gathering but a "life" in motion; people drinking tea together, melting the cold terror of the enemy in the warmth of one another's affection. People who hear the very near impact of missiles

and, with unwavering resolve and astonishing calm, shout "Allahu Akbar—God is the greatest."

But the driving force of this life is the presence of women who have found their agency not in opposition to men but in reclaiming the foundational power of society. While men are busy with speeches atop podiums or engaged in maintaining security with weapons, women are the ones advancing the "serious work" in the heart of the square. With a smile, they provide psychological safety for their fellow citizens, and with anger, they shout against the enemy. From maintaining household cohesion to the precise management of the square's logistics—cooking food, brewing tea, packaging fruit and sweets—everything rests on the shoulders of women who have chosen to devote their power not to futile gender battles but to the "betterment of the whole society."

This "most feminine movement of resistance" has transformed the square from a military space into a human one. It is a power that women have reclaimed through agency—one that has turned strangers into brothers and sisters, and made the facilitation of life for others



the defining ethic of the street. The flag spinning in these women's hands is not merely the emblem of a country; it is the sign of a life that has not bent under terror and that, with kindness and a smile, has neutralized the harshest blows of the enemy. Here, power lies not in clenched fists but in the unbreakable bond of hearts that, under the shade of a single flag, rediscover the meaning of life.

Sometimes, in peripheral spaces—alleys or quiet streets, far from the main gatherings—other scenes appear: groups of five to fifteen demonstrators, mostly women and children, shouting their slogans against the enemy with determination and spinning their flags through the air. This image is,

in a way, even formidable; an insistence that feminine presence and agency see themselves as far more serious than something confined to large public squares.

This spread of life—this feminizing and humanizing of existence—is unfolding in a country that, under enemy attacks, is experiencing the most feminine social movement of the contemporary world. It is the beginning of a cautious yet passionate experiment in a new way of life, one that may become a proposal from a nation to the world: a country that stands calm and joyful at the height of turmoil, facing a world filled with doubt, contraction, anger, wounds, and resentment.

## Iran estimates US-Israeli war damages at \$270 billion: Spox

TEHRAN - The spokeswoman for the Iranian administration has estimated that the damages caused by the recent US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran amount to approximately \$270 billion. "These are preliminary and very rough figures, but the damage so far stands at \$270 billion," Fatemeh Mohajerani said.

She noted that the administration's economic authorities will determine more precise figures through a multi-stage process.

The first stage will assess damage to buildings, she explained. The second will analyze budget revenue losses and the impact of industrial

shutdowns.

War reparations were among the issues the Iranian negotiating team pursued during the Islamabad talks, she said, adding that such damages usually need to be examined in several layers. "We will certainly defend our people's rights through legal means, including compensation for the bloodshed of our loved ones at the Minab school," Mohajerani added, referring to the horrific US-Israeli military strike on an elementary school in Iran's southern city of Minab on February 28, which claimed around 170 lives.

## Top diplomats from Russia, Egypt, and Oman discuss latest developments with their Iranian counterpart

From page 1 ▶ The two diplomats addressed ongoing tensions in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, as well as the continuing conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon. They also discussed the stalled negotiations with Washington, emphasizing the need for a diplomatic resolution.

Meanwhile, Russia signaled its readiness to play a more active role. In a separate call, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reiterated Moscow's willingness to help resolve the crisis, stressing that there is "no military solution" to the con-

flict. According to Russia's Foreign Ministry, Lavrov underscored the importance of preventing a return to full-scale hostilities and pointed to a proposed regional security framework for the Persian Gulf that would involve both regional and external stakeholders.

Araghchi, for his part, briefed Lavrov on the details of the April 11 negotiations in Islamabad, where Iran and US delegations held more than 20 hours of intensive discussions under Pakistani mediation.

# Trump's blockade forged in the ashes of strategic failure

The US military blockade on all traffic entering and leaving Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz is now in effect, following Washington's military and political failures to force Iran to succumb to its demands

TEHRAN - President Donald Trump's decision to impose a naval blockade on Iranian ports in an effort to force Tehran to reopen the strategic Strait of Hormuz has drawn fierce criticism at home and abroad, with many warning it risks igniting a broader regional crisis and destabilizing the global economy.

The blockade began at 14:00 GMT on Monday, and the US military announced it had initiated operations targeting all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports. Trump warned that any ships attempting to break the blockade would be "immediately eliminated."

The move followed weekend talks in Islamabad between Iran and the United States, which ended without an agreement in the wake of a two-week ceasefire mediated by Pakistan. That ceasefire, announced on April 8, halted the joint US-Israeli war on Iran that began on February 28. Iran also stopped retaliatory operations against Israel and American bases in the Persian Gulf region.

Shortly after the war began, Iran effectively asserted control over the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints. Prior to the conflict, nearly 20 percent of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies transited through the strait.

After the Pakistan-brokered ceasefire took effect, Tehran confirmed it would allow shipping to pass through the waterway during the two-week truce, helping ease market panic that had sent oil and gas prices soaring.

## 'Illegal act of aggression'

Iran has denounced the US move to blockade the country's ports. Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saied Iravani, condemned the blockade as a flagrant violation of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling it an illegal act of aggression that threatens regional and international peace.

In an official letter addressed to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the President of the Se-



curity Council, Iravani described the naval blockade as "a gross violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian warned that any threat to the security of the Strait of Hormuz would have large-scale consequences for global trade. In a phone call with French President Emmanuel Macron, Pezeshkian cautioned that US attempts to block maritime access to Iranian ports would jeopardize not only regional stability but also international commerce.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei sharply criticized Washington's move in a post on X, asking: "Can an illegal 'war of choice' be won through a 'revenge of choice' against the global economy? Is it ever worthwhile to cut off one's nose to spite one's face?"

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who led the Islamabad talks, also reacted forcefully. "If they fight, we will fight; if they come with logic, we will deal with logic," he wrote.

Qalibaf posted a map of Washington-area gasoline prices on social media with the comment: "Enjoy the current pump figures. With the so-called 'blockade'. Soon you'll be nostalgic for \$4-\$5 gas."

## No transit for enemy vessels

In a statement issued Monday, Iran's military warned that any threat to its ports would trigger a broader regional response, declar-

ing that no port in the Persian Gulf or the Sea of Oman would remain secure if Iranian facilities were targeted.

Spokesman for the Armed Forces Lieutenant Colonel Ebrahim Zolfagari said security in the two strategic waterways must apply to all or to none. He emphasized that defending national rights, including sovereignty over territorial waters, is a lawful obligation.

"Enemy-affiliated vessels do not and will not have the right to pass through the Strait of Hormuz," he said, adding that other vessels would be allowed to transit in accordance with Iranian regulations.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) warned earlier that any military vessel attempting to transit the strait would be considered in violation of the ceasefire and would receive a firm and decisive response.

Prior to the ceasefire, Iran had announced that vessels affiliated to the US, Israel and countries involved in the war on Iran would not be permitted to transit through the Strait of Hormuz. But it allowed ships operated by other nations to transit through coordination with Iran.

## International alarm mounts

China voiced opposition to the US naval blockade, warning that it would intensify tensions and undermine an already fragile ceasefire. At a regular press briefing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said expanding mili-

tary deployments and carrying out blockade operations would escalate contradictions rather than resolve them.

Russia also expressed concern, with officials cautioning that interference with free navigation in international waterways could have unpredictable consequences for global stability.

European diplomatic sources indicated unease as well, stressing the importance of maintaining maritime security and preventing further escalation in a region vital to global energy supplies.

Energy analysts warn that insurance premiums for tankers operating in the area are likely to surge, making global banks increasingly cautious. The tanker market could fragment into separate risk tiers, further complicating energy flows and increasing costs for consumers worldwide.

## A risky gamble

Trump's blockade decision appears to follow mounting strategic setbacks. The 40-day war failed to achieve its declared objectives of compelling Iran to capitulate or fundamentally altering its regional posture. Instead, Tehran demonstrated its capacity to influence one of the world's most sensitive maritime chokepoints.

The failure of the Islamabad talks further exposed Washington's inability to translate military pressure into diplomatic gains. Having failed to secure concessions on the battlefield or at the negotiating table, the United States now appears to be escalating economic and maritime pressure in an attempt to regain leverage.

However, such actions risk undermining the already fragile ceasefire and further jeopardizing freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. By targeting a corridor through which a fifth of global energy supplies pass, Washington is effectively weaponizing the global economy — a move critics describe as dangerous and irresponsible.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## LATEST NEWS

### ■ Nearly 1,000 homes destroyed in Tehran during recent war

Tehran Municipality data show that 984 residential units were destroyed during the recent conflict and require full reconstruction, while an additional 32,643 homes sustained partial damage.

### ■ Envoy says China supplied no weapons to Iran, dismisses US blockade

Iran's ambassador to China, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, said Beijing has not provided any weapons to Tehran, adding that a US maritime blockade of the Strait of Hormuz would ultimately fail.

### ■ Chinese tanker transits Hormuz despite US blockade threat

A Chinese oil tanker passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, defying President Donald Trump's proposed blockade. Beijing reaffirmed its energy cooperation with Iran, while China's defense minister warned Washington against interference.

### ■ Iranian lawmaker warns US to recognize Tehran's rights or face war

Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesman for Iran's Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, warned that the United States must recognize Iran's rights—including its authority over the Strait of Hormuz—or risk renewed conflict.

### ■ Iran condemns Israeli settlers' incursion into Al-Aqsa Mosque

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei strongly condemned Israeli settlers' entry into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, calling on the international community and Muslim nations to take effective action against what he described as ongoing provocations.

### ■ Iran spokesman describes homeland as "ancient civilizational legacy"

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said the concept of homeland for Iranians extends beyond geography, describing it as a lega-

cy rooted in thousands of years of civilization. He also praised a young soldier severely wounded in the war, saying such sacrifices reflect a spirit that has forced aggressors to regret their actions.

### ■ Pezeshkian says attacks on schools aim to halt Iran's development

President Masoud Pezeshkian said strikes on educational institutions during the recent war were intended to hinder Iran's progress, stressing that the country will continue advancing through knowledge and self-reliance.

### ■ Russian envoy says US still misreads Iran after war

Russia's ambassador to Iran, Alexey Dedov, said Washington has yet to learn that the use of force is ineffective against Iran, citing both the recent war and diplomatic developments in Islamabad.

### ■ IRGC warns of undisclosed capabilities if conflict continues

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) spokesperson General Hossein Mohebbi warned that further escalation would prompt Iran to unveil military capabilities that adversaries neither anticipate nor can counter.

### ■ Pezeshkian warns threats to Hormuz could disrupt global trade

In a phone call with French President Emmanuel Macron, President Masoud Pezeshkian warned that any threat to the Strait of Hormuz would have serious consequences for global commerce, while reaffirming Iran's commitment to diplomacy within legal frameworks.

### ■ Qatar denies reports of attacks on its oil tankers

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said there have been no confirmed reports of attacks on Qatari oil tankers in recent days.

### ■ Pakistan army chief seeks US-Iran compromise

Pakistan's army chief is working to mediate between Washington and Tehran over uranium

enrichment proposals, a Pakistani source told the Financial Times.

### ■ Mossad chief says campaign against Iran continues

The head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency said efforts to topple Iran's government remain ongoing, adding that no immediate collapse was expected following the end of active hostilities.

### ■ Iran orders border provinces to ease imports of essential goods

Iran's interior minister has instructed authorities in border regions to facilitate the import of essential goods to mitigate the impact of potential blockades.

### ■ IMF warns Middle East war threatens emerging markets

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that the ongoing Middle East conflict increases the risk of a deeper economic downturn in emerging markets.

### ■ Rosatom says personnel remain inside Bushehr nuclear plant

The head of Russia's state nuclear corporation Rosatom said that 20 individuals, including engineers, remain inside Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant.

### ■ Iran envoy to Pakistan calls naval blockade 'illegal and provocative'

Iran's ambassador to Pakistan described a potential naval blockade as illegal and provocative, calling it a reckless attempt at face-saving.

### ■ IMF predicts slowest global growth since early pandemic

The IMF said the Middle East conflict could push global economic growth to its lowest level since the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ■ US official says deal framework ready, but no final agreement yet

A Trump administration official told Fox News that while all elements of a potential agreement are in place, a final deal has yet to be reached.

## Spain's break with the West: How Sánchez turned Madrid into a voice against the war on Iran

By Maedeh Zaman Fashami

TEHRAN - The joint war the United States and Israel launched against Iran can be seen as one of the most complex and consequential geopolitical crises of the past decade. It not only reshaped the security landscape of the Middle East but also strained divisions within the Western bloc, challenged the future of the transatlantic alliance, and even placed the concept of the international order under significant pressure. Within this context, Spain's position under Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez stood out as one of the most distinctive and at times controversial responses among Western countries. Unlike several of its European and American allies, Spain not only withheld support for the military operations but also repeatedly described them as illegal, unnecessary, and contrary to the principles of international law, eventually escalating to a level of diplomatic tension with both Washington and Tel Aviv.

This stance cannot be understood as a merely situational reaction to an unfolding crisis; rather, it must be analyzed within the broader evolution of Spain's foreign policy in recent years. Under Sánchez's government, Spanish foreign policy has gradually shifted away from the traditional model of full alignment with the United States and toward a form of active multilateralism, a stronger emphasis on international law, and a greater pursuit of strategic autonomy within the European framework. In this approach, the use of force is only considered legitimate when grounded in international legal authority, and any unilateral military action especially outside the framework of the United Nations is met with serious scrutiny and opposition. It was precisely this intellectual and strategic framework that shaped Spain's distinct response to the war.

At the outset of the crisis, the Spanish government clearly articulated its position with the phrase "No a la guerra" (No to war). This expression, repeatedly used by Sánchez in official speeches, was not merely a political slogan but rather a concise summary of a multi-layered stance: moral opposition to violence against civilians, legal opposition to violations of international law, and political opposition to military-centric approaches to conflict resolution. In this context, Sánchez stressed that "one cannot respond to an illegal act with another illegal act," repeatedly warning that the repetition of past war patterns particularly the legacy of the Iraq War could have devastating consequences for global stability.

One of the most significant aspects of this policy was the translation of rhetoric into concrete action. Spain took the unusual step, particularly for a NATO member, of refusing to allow the United States to use its military bases in Rota and Morón for operations related to the Iran conflict. Reports also suggested that restrictions were imposed on the use of Spanish airspace for military-related movements. These measures demonstrated that Spain's position was not confined to discourse alone but had evolved into a form of operational independence in foreign policy, an approach that inevitably increased tensions with the United States.

These tensions escalated further when then-US President Donald Trump threatened to restrict or completely sever trade relations with Spain in response to its refusal. In contrast, Sánchez consistently defended his position in public addresses, framing Spain's stance not merely as a political choice but as a moral and legal obligation. He also emphasized in international meetings that the world must not return to a war-driven model of conflict resolution and should instead learn from past interventions in the Middle East.

Alongside tensions with Washington, Spain's relationship with Israel deteriorated significantly. From the outset, the Spanish government characterized Israeli military actions alongside US operations as illegal, gradually adopting an increasingly forceful tone. The most striking moment came during Sánchez's press conference in Beijing, following his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, when he directly accused the Israeli government of fundamentally violating international law. He stated: "International

law is today fundamentally being violated by one country, which is the government of Israel." This remark represented one of the most explicit and forceful official statements Spain had made during the war, signaling a new phase of overt diplomatic confrontation.

These statements are consistent with the broader trajectory through which Spain has evolved from a cautious critic into a more assertive actor in challenging the prevailing international order. Sánchez reiterated that Spain had from the very beginning considered the US- and Israeli-led war a "mistake" and "illegal," maintaining this position consistently over time. This continuity reflects a notable coherence in Spain's foreign policy discourse, grounded in the defense of an international legal order rather than purely geopolitical calculations.

In parallel with its political positioning, Spain has also sought to play an active diplomatic role in managing the crisis. One of the most important steps in this regard was the reopening of the Spanish embassy in Tehran following the ceasefire between the United States and Iran. This decision, taken under the direction of Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares, reflected Madrid's intention to preserve diplomatic channels with Tehran and potentially contribute to de-escalation efforts. The return of Spanish diplomats to Tehran carried not only practical significance but also an important political message: Spain intended to remain an active participant in crisis management rather than a passive observer.

Domestically, these policies are deeply rooted in Spain's political and social structure. Sánchez's government is based on a coalition of left-leaning parties that have historically opposed military interventions and emphasized diplomacy and human rights. Moreover, Spanish public opinion remains highly sensitive to foreign military engagements. The memory of the 2003 Iraq War, which triggered widespread protests and contributed to a change in government still plays a central role in the country's political consciousness and acts as a deterrent against involvement in similar conflicts. Sánchez himself has explicitly referenced this experience as a historical warning for contemporary policymaking.

Economically, the Iran war also created significant challenges for Spain. Rising energy prices, global market instability, and disruptions to trade routes prompted the Spanish government to approve multi-billion-euro support packages to mitigate the impact of the crisis. This demonstrates that Spain's foreign policy is shaped not only by political principles but also by economic considerations and constraints.

At the European level, Spain's position contributed to highlighting divisions within the European Union. While countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy adopted more cautious and US-aligned approaches, Spain emerged as one of the most vocal critics. These differences reignited debates over "European strategic autonomy" and underscored the lack of full consensus within the EU when confronted with major international crises.

Overall, Spain's approach to the US-Israeli war against Iran can be understood as a combination of legal idealism, political realism, and domestic calculation. Through its explicit opposition to the war, refusal to participate militarily, restriction of logistical cooperation, intensified criticism of both Israel and the United States, and simultaneous maintenance of diplomatic channels such as the reopening of its embassy in Tehran, Spain has sought to define a more independent and differentiated foreign policy path. Although this approach has involved both external pressure and internal challenges, it may, in the long term, strengthen Spain's position as a more autonomous, critical, and potentially mediating actor in the international system. This crisis ultimately illustrates that in today's world, foreign policy is more than ever shaped at the intersection of international law, domestic politics, and geopolitical competition and that states capable of balancing these dimensions effectively are likely to play a more influential role in shaping the future global order.

## Government support packages for war-damaged businesses to be implemented

TEHRAN- The Deputy for Economic Policy at Iran's Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance has announced the implementation of a series of government support measures for enterprises and households damaged by the war, stating that planning to support businesses began in the very first weeks of the conflict.

According to IRNA's report from the Ministry of Economy, Morteza Zamanian, referring to government actions to reduce pressure on economic actors, stated: "In the first two to three weeks of the war, certain amendments were made to some economic regulations and procedures to prevent serious disruption to business activities."

Zamanian emphasized that many of the problems facing enterprises are administrative in nature, saying: "A significant portion of the support is not necessarily financial and relates more to resolving customs, banking, insurance, tax, and licensing issues." For this purpose, the government's economic authorities were delegated to an agile task force to enable faster decision-making under wartime conditions.

He added that at the beginning of the war, some customs and foreign exchange procedures were reformed, and certain corporate obligations such as letters of guarantee and settlements were temporarily postponed to reduce pressure on producers.

### Launch of a direct communication channel with entrepreneurs

The Deputy Economy Minister also announced the launch of a user account named "Hamrah-e-Kasbkar" (Business Companion) on the Bale messenger app, explaining that this system is designed to register the problems of entrepreneurs, particularly non-financial issues.

According to him, more than 10,000 requests have been registered on this platform so far, many of which have been answered or referred to relevant authorities for follow-up. Additionally, to prevent administrative problems, licenses that expired during this period have been automatically extended for several months.

### Facilities to preserve employment in SMEs

Zamanian pointed to the government's financial support programs, stating: "One of the most important goals of the government in the post-war period is preserving employment."

Accordingly, under the facilities of Article 15 of the Budget Law, support has been considered for small and medium enterprises with 2 to 50 insured employees that have been damaged by the war.

He explained that these enterprises can receive six-month facilities with a two-month grace period, equivalent to twice the minimum wage per worker, to retain their workforce. If the enterprises maintain 80 to 100 percent of their workforce after this period, the facilities will be repaid under normal terms.

### Implementation of "Iranian Universal Credit" scheme to support households

The Deputy for Economic Policy at the Ministry of Economy then referred to support for households and very small businesses, stating that these individuals will be supported under the "Iranian Universal Credit" scheme.

According to him, under this scheme, credit for purchases is considered for households that have faced reduced income, especially those without fixed earnings. It is projected that a four-member household will receive credit at low interest rates with six-month repayment terms, which can be used to purchase consumer and durable goods at designated stores.

Zamanian stated that the goal of this scheme, in addition to supporting household livelihoods, is to increase demand for manufactured goods and help with the cash flow of enterprises.

He added that the target population for this scheme is approximately 20 million people, and the executive details will be announced soon.

Meanwhile, on April 11, the head of the Iran Chamber of Industries and Mines stated that issues related to paying facilities, compensat-



ing damages, and supporting industrial units are on the government's serious agenda.

Abdolvahab Sahlabadi told IRNA that over the past 40 days, the government has provided necessary support to damaged industrial and production units, and they have been corresponding, meeting, and following up daily so that industrial units can return to the production cycle as soon as possible.

He added that from the first days of the damages, the process of identifying damaged industrial, trade, and residential units across the country began swiftly.

The head of the Iran Chamber of Industries and Mines continued that many units have personally reported their damages, and these cases have been registered in the offices of industry, mining, and trade in the provinces and immediately referred to the official experts of the judiciary. Experts have visited the damage sites, and "evidence preservation" has been carried out; thus, the amount of damage to each unit has been officially determined.

Referring to numerous meetings between the chamber and the Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade, he stated that industrial organizations, including the Iran Chamber of Industries and Mines, are continuously pursuing the extent of damage to affected units.

Sahlabadi said that proposals and points raised by the organizations have been conveyed to officials, and it is expected that the results of the negotiations and follow-ups will lead to effective compensation.

The head of the Iran Chamber of Industries and Mines emphasized that the country's production must return to a dynamic and sustainable path without interruption, stating that as private sector trustees, they are seriously following this path.

He noted that the Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade, along with his deputies, have visited damaged industrial and production units and issued necessary orders for the swiftest possible return of industries to the production line, which he hopes will be followed up quickly.

Sahlabadi, while condemning the American-Zionist attacks on industrial and production units, said that UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) must be held accountable for this situation.

He stated that attacks on civilian production and industrial units are a clear violation of the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law, and the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and this must be pursued at the international level.

### Minister visits damaged factories, vows support for rebuilding infrastructure

On March 25, the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, emphasizing the importance of sustaining production in wartime conditions, stressed the government and ministry's support for rebuilding infrastructure, providing facilities, and facilitating the necessary processes to restore the full capacity of damaged production units.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Seyed Mohammad Atabak, during his seventh field visit to units damaged in the Ramadan War, visited two manufacturing plants in the west of Tehran Province on March 25.

In the first part of this program, the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade visited a factory where part of its production lines had been taken out of operation due to being hit by enemy missiles; however, other sections of the facility continued operating without interruption.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# Iran war & petrodollar's perfect storm

TEHRAN- As tensions escalate in the Persian Gulf, a new analysis from Deutsche Bank warns that the ongoing conflict with Iran may inadvertently trigger a seismic shift in global oil markets.

The report, which has been circulating among financial circles, argues that the Iran war represents a "perfect storm" for the petrodollar—the primary currency in which oil has historically been bought and sold.

According to the bank's findings, several converging factors are now threatening the dollar's decades-long dominance.

First and foremost is the deepening U.S. military entanglement in the Persian Gulf. As American naval forces become increasingly tied down securing strategic waterways, the perception of U.S. stability—long the bedrock of the dollar's reserve status—is being called into question.

Simultaneously, the weapon-



ization of the Strait of Hormuz by Iranian forces has disrupted tanker traffic and forced buyers to seek alternative, more reliable trading mechanisms.

Yet the most striking development, according to the report, is mounting evidence that Tehran is granting passage through the strait in exchange for yuan-denominated payments. This quiet pro quo arrangement, if verified, establishes a direct financial in-

centive for oil buyers to sidestep the dollar entirely.

Taken together, these three elements—military overextension, a strategic chokepoint turned into a bargaining tool, and China's yuan stepping into the void—amount to what Deutsche Bank calls a "historic blow" to dollar dominance.

For decades, the petrodollar system has given the United

States unique leverage, forcing nations to hold dollar reserves simply to purchase energy. A shift away from that model would not only weaken U.S. financial influence but also empower rival powers like China and Russia.

While the White House has yet to comment on the report, energy analysts note that any sustained move away from the dollar would have profound consequences.

Oil-importing nations might face higher transaction costs and currency volatility, while the U.S. could lose its ability to effectively impose financial sanctions.

Whether this perfect storm will indeed materialize remains uncertain.

What is clear, however, is that the Iran war has opened a door that Washington may find difficult to close—one where the world's most traded commodity no longer requires the world's most dominant currency.

## Iran ends intermediary oil sales, returns to state-controlled export model

TEHRAN- Following the outbreak of war between the United States and Israel against Iran, escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, and the resulting volatility in the global oil market, Iran has restructured its oil sales system.

The country has moved away from a previously decentralized model—developed under U.S. sanctions and operated through a network of intermediaries—and has reinstated a centralized, official sales framework under the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Previously, Iranian oil was marketed through a network of intermediaries known as "trustees," who played a key role in circumventing sanctions. However, since the onset of the war and amid rising demand for Iranian crude starting in March, oil sales have reverted to a more conventional pre-sanctions model, now exclusively managed by NIOC.

During the conflict, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent also announced temporary waivers allowing certain countries to pur-

chase Iranian oil in an effort to stabilize global energy markets, which have experienced unprecedented strain due to geopolitical tensions and the conflict involving Iran.

At present, the sole authority responsible for Iran's oil sales is NIOC, which operates through its two main arms—the International Affairs Directorate and the Naftiran Intertrade Company (NICO)—to market both light and heavy crude.

## Butterfly effect of energy crisis stronger than forecasts: energy expert

TEHRAN- An energy market expert stated that the butterfly effect of the energy crisis in the Persian Gulf was far more widespread than experts had predicted, demonstrating just how high the world's dependence on West Asian energy truly is.

Mehrad Ebad, in an interview with IRNA explaining the consequences of the recent global energy war, declared: "This conflict was without a doubt one of the most impactful events in the energy sector in recent weeks. After the war began and the ability to transport various cargoes, especially oil, decreased due to operational insecurity in the Persian Gulf, prices began to rise."

He explained: "Simultaneously with the restriction of ship traffic and disruptions in fuel transpor-

tation, production in the region was also damaged."

Ebad added: "Many production units, even if not directly damaged, reduced their output due to a lack of storage capacity. Although some efforts were made for limited transportation via pipelines, the volume was negligible and could not compensate for the energy shortage."

According to this analyst, the reduction in global supply caused almost all countries to face rising energy carrier prices.

He noted: "We witnessed energy price increases on every continent, and even the United States was not spared from this inflationary wave. Tapping into strategic reserves and diplomatic efforts to control the market have

also yielded no tangible results."

Ebad, referring to the daily increase in prices of various energy carriers, continued: "Natural gas, petrochemical products, fertilizers, and transportation costs have all seen significant growth, and this has had a cascading effect on the prices of most goods passing through the region. The butterfly effect of this crisis was far more extensive than experts predicted and showed just how high the world's dependence on West Asian energy is."

Stating that some countries have taken measures to manage the situation, he added: "Sanctions on Russia were lifted, and the country was again able to sell oil. Iran also continued to export oil during this period and even reduced its discounts, offering it

at higher prices. As a result, due to the global shortage, Iran was among the few countries able to increase its exports."

Ebad outlined two main scenarios for the future of the global energy market as follows: "The first is the resumption of hostilities, in which case the prices of all types of energy and related goods in the region and the world will increase, and oil reaching \$200 per barrel would not be unlikely."

According to him, "The second scenario is the continuation of negotiations. In this scenario, there is a possibility of a slight decrease and relative stability in the market, but a sharp drop in prices is not expected. If an agreement is reached, the market may return to pre-war price levels over a period of several months."

## Over 2.8m tons of various essential goods imported during war

TEHRAN- Iran's Customs Administration announced in a statement that during the 39 days of the imposed American-Zionist war against the country, customs clearance procedures for 2,874,000 tons of essential goods were completed at the country's customs offices and dispatched.

According to an IRNA report from Iran's Customs Administration, the statement reads: "Accordingly, customs clearance and the exit of more than 112,000 trucks carrying essential goods were carried out at the country's customs offices during the 39 days of the war, from February 28, 2026 to April 7, 2026."

In total, during the aforementioned period, 2,874,000 tons of essential goods were loaded and brought into the country through the national transport fleet.

The statement emphasized: "The country's customs offices are ready to carry out customs procedures and 24-hour clearance of essential goods needed by the people, as well as raw materials for production units, and this process continues with the cooperation and solidarity of traders, adjacent organizations, and the national transport network."

Additionally, the support package offering customs facilities to economic actors in emergency situations remains in place at the country's customs offices.

Meanwhile, on April 11, the head of Iran's Customs Administration, referring to the directives and instructions issued during the war, emphasized the continued provision of special customs facilities to economic actors in emergency situations.

According to IRNA from Iran's Customs Administration, Foroud Asgari, while appreciating the relentless efforts of customs personnel as the country's economic border guards during the third imposed war, added: "During the third imposed war, the dedicated and hardworking customs staff, just as in the 12-day war, stood alongside the people in the field of service. With round-the-clock efforts throughout this period, they were present in the arena of service and defense of the homeland. These relentless efforts and hardships deserve appreciation and gratitude."

He stated: "Despite repeated threats at zero border points and ports across the country, bringing satisfaction and contentment to the people, especially economic actors, was the best reward during these difficult days. Customs personnel, as the economic border guards of the country, once again distinguished themselves with honor and pride by maintaining their presence at customs offices and carrying out customs procedures for essential goods and basic necessities around the clock, in defense of the homeland."

The head of Iran's Customs Administration added: "In the current circumstances, it is essential to maintain the level of preparedness and vigilance in the coming days within the framework of the directives and instructions issued during the war, and within this same framework, special customs facilities during emergencies should continue to be provided to the entrepreneurs."

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), in order to facilitate transit

under the current circumstances, has delegated the authority to change the exit border or destination customs office for goods in transit to the directors of executive customs offices.

According to a report by Mehr News Agency on March 6, Iran's Customs Administration, considering the current situation and with the aim of expediting the exit of transit goods, has increased the authority of executive customs directors in the area of domestic and foreign transit.

Based on the instruction communicated by the Transit Office to supervisors and directors of executive customs offices, the authority to change the exit customs office or destination for goods in transit has been delegated to customs directors.

This instruction states that due to the congestion of truck traffic at some exit borders and with the goal of facilitating the exit of transit goods and maximizing the use of domestic customs capacity, if international transport companies request a change of exit border, the matter covered in Note 2 of Article 95 of the Executive Regulations of the Customs Affairs Law can be carried out in coordination with the Director General or deputies of the Transit Office or the Director General of the exit customs office.

Accordingly, if the new border is open and confirmed by the supervisors or directors of the relevant customs offices, customs can accept the request to change the exit border and follow up on the receipt of the goods.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# Hezbollah's fierce resistance as Lebanese authorities entering talks with Israel

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hezbollah puts up heavy resistance against invading Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, while authorities enter direct talks with the occupation regime.

The resistance movement has executed a series of operations with drones and missiles against gatherings of Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) and the regime's military vehicles in Bint Jbeil and its outskirts, directly striking them.

Hezbollah has vowed to continue resisting, underlining that "defending Lebanon and its people, responding to the regime's breaches of the ceasefire agreement and repeated attacks on southern villages, and after the Lebanese resistance upheld the ceasefire while the regime did not."

In its latest operations, Hezbollah targeted a gathering of IOF soldiers near the Martyr Salah Ghandour Hospital in Bint Jbeil with a swarm of dive drones, scoring direct hits. Hezbollah fighters targeted gatherings of IOF vehicles and soldiers near Al-Ishraq School, also in Bint Jbeil and the Liberation Triangle, with successive rocket barrages.

Furthermore, Hezbollah announced that it targeted an IOF command position between Aynata and Bint Jbeil with a drone swarm, inflicting direct hits.

Resistance fighters also targeted gatherings of the regime's soldiers and vehicles with rocket barrages and loitering munitions at the Al-Malikiyah.

The IOF announced that eleven of its troops have sustained injuries as a result of combat with Hezbollah in Bint Jbeil.

Hezbollah fighters targeted an IOF gathering in Taybeh with a drone swarm, achieving direct hits. They struck an IOF gathering on the Lebanese border area of Shamaa with a drone swarm. Hezbollah fighters also targeted an IOF gathering in Al-Bayyada with a drone swarm.

In response to the regime's assaults, resistance forces also targeted an IOF Merkava tank near the Mis al-Jabal hospital with a drone, directly hitting it. Furthermore, Hezbollah attacked an IOF military vehicle carrying a command crew in Taybeh with a drone, followed by targeting the Kiryat Shmona settlement with a drone swarm.

## Naval blockade: A desperate, erratic and hasty decision

TEHRAN – Just hours after the talks between Iran and the U.S. in Islamabad ended on Sunday morning with a breakthrough, President Donald Trump declared a naval blockade of Iran.

Trump did not wait even until the end of the two-week ceasefire mediated by Pakistan.

The U.S. naval blockade that targets ships to and from Iran's ports, went into force on Monday. Simply, it is a violation of Iran's sovereignty.

Trump enforced the blockade despite the fact that the world has warned that this will worsen the situation and have more effects on the global economy, especially as Iran has warned that "free navigation for all or for nobody".

Trump made this decision even though he told reporters late on Sunday (U.S. time) that the ceasefire is "holding well".

This means the U.S. has somehow resumed the war before the ceasefire expires.

This also took place while neither Iran's nor the United States' chief negotiators have not completely closed the door to diplomacy and there is still room for



Further rocket salvos hit IOF gathering points at the Hanita site and the villages of Al-Bayyada, Ain Ebel, and Rashaf.

In response to the regime's aggression, Hezbollah attacked the settlements of Hanita, Shlomi, Nahariya, and Al-Malikiyah with intense, successive rocket barrages. Rocket attacks also targeted IOF infrastructure in the Ma'a lot Tarshiha and Karmiel settlements.

This comes as the occupation regime continues to violate the ceasefire agreement between Iran and the United States, a key clause of which was to include Lebanon, as confirmed by Iran and the Pakistani announcement of the agreement. However, Washington and the occupation regime have reneged on their commitments, as the regime continues its aggression against southern villages.

Earlier, a salvo of specialized Hezbollah rockets targeted Israel's Teven base east of Acre.

Resistance fighters carried out an attack using a swarm of loitering munitions on the Sharaga base (the administrative headquarters of the Golani Brigade) north of Acre, and targeted the Ma'ale Golani barracks with another swarm of drones.

Also on Tuesday, the Lebanese resistance movement announced more operations targeting the IOF in Lebanese territory and military sites in northern occupied Palestine. These operations targeted military gathering points, vehicles, control rooms, and military barracks.

In more statements, Hezbollah confirmed that it hit a fire control room near the Kafr Jaladi area and IOF barracks at Leiman, located north of Nahariya, using two precision-guided drones. Hezbollah fighters also launched missiles at the Miskaf Am settlement.

diplomacy and extending the ceasefire plan.

Talking to reporters before the war on Iran, Trump dismissed the widely perceived view that he is personally impatient. But he is. He must not be that much naïve not to understand that a finding a durable solution to the nuclear dispute between Tehran and Washington, that was triggered again with his withdrawal from the Obama era nuclear deal in his first administration, can be achieved in a short time or in one session.

The 2015 nuclear deal was the result of two years of intensive talks and 11 years of intermittent negotiations, starting 2003.

Trump and his close aides must know that the issue has become much more complicated following the U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran at the end of February that Iran in retaliation closed the Strait of Hormuz in the first days of the war, although it loosened the closure later, and now it is open under the fragile ceasefire agreement.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who had tacitly approved of the war on Iran, is quite right that that he had low expecta-

In further operations, Hezbollah continued to confront the IOF in the south and attack its positions and settlements in the north, affirming that "this response will continue until the Israeli-American aggression on our country and people stops."

The IOF has named yet another soldier killed during combat in southern Lebanon. Three others sustained serious injuries and have been taken to hospital, the IOF acknowledged.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department has confirmed that the U.S. Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, was among those taking part in talks between the Zionist regime and Lebanese officials in Washington on Tuesday.

Yechiel Leiter, the regime's ambassador to the U.S., and Nada Hamadeh, the Lebanese ambassador to the U.S., attended the meeting. A State Department official said: "The Israeli and Lebanese governments are engaging in open, direct, high-level diplomatic talks."

It is the first time in decades that envoys from Lebanon and the Zionist regime, which do not have diplomatic relations, meet face-to-face in direct talks.

Wafiq Safa, a high-ranking member of Hezbollah's political council, told the Associated Press, "As for the outcomes of this negotiation between Lebanon and the Israeli regime, we are not interested in or concerned with them at all."

Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem firmly rejected negotiations, stating that such talks are futile and would require a national consensus.

On Monday, Naim Qassem said the Lebanese resistance movement "absolutely rejects" the talks, saying they amount to "submission, surrender, and stripping Lebanon of its

strength".

In a televised speech, Qassem indicated that this approach is part of a series of free concessions made by the Lebanese authorities, which have practically proven to be losing concessions that humiliate Lebanon, both its government and its people. He questioned: "You say you want a ceasefire, but what does the other side want, and what leverage do you hold?"

The Secretary-General further argued that the aggression respects no humanitarian or moral considerations and is outright occupation. He highlighted the resilience of the resistance fighters, the people, and Lebanon, leading up to the state signing an indirect ceasefire agreement with the regime in November 2024.

He added the ceasefire agreement stipulated a complete halt to the aggression, the release of prisoners, and the start of reconstruction. However, he pointed out that the occupation regime did not implement any of its clauses for over 15 months, despite hundreds of martyrs and wounded, with no diplomatic progress.

He noted that Hezbollah's response came at the right time, exposing a major Zionist regime's plan prepared for Lebanon, thwarting its surprises and preventing major losses.

Qassem clarified that the regime's goals are clear: to destroy Lebanon's strength in preparation for what it calls "Greater Israel." He affirmed that all of Lebanon is targeted, as occupying the south means occupying Lebanon, and targeting multiple areas means the entire country is under attack.

He stressed that the Lebanese state should confront the aggression and task its army with doing so. While weakness might excuse a lack of confrontation, he argued, the state being a tool for the regime, by applying pressure and making decisions that weaken the internal situation, is inexcusable.

Qassem noted that the Israeli regime and the U.S. have clearly declared their desire for the Lebanese army to disarm Hezbollah, confront it, abolish Hezbollah's institutions, and eliminate the resistance and its people. He stated they want an army that fights its own people, which he said will not happen.



tions for the Islamabad talks.

"I wasn't surprised by the decision to break off the talks in Islamabad. From the outset, I didn't get the impression that (the talks) were particularly well-prepared," Merz said in remarks in Berlin on Monday morning. Merz also said that a diplomatic solution will not be a quick process.

It is quite understandable that in any negotiations Iran will not easily give up its control of the vital Strait of Hormuz without receiving guarantees that it will not be attacked again and a final solution is not found for the decades-long conflict between

Tehran and Washington.

Iranians must not live under a constant fear of war by the U.S. and Israel. The June 2025 Israeli-U.S. war on Iran, that lasted 12 days, ended with just a ceasefire and not a deal. Again, they started the current war during the Iran-U.S. talks in Geneva. There must be an end to such a situation.

Senator Tim Kaine has cited reasons why Iran should not trust the Trump administration and insist on its credible concerns.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Trump's brazen 'Antichrist' complex meets torrent of condemnation and Pope's defiance

### Inside the Faustian bargain of an elite trading away their moral heritage for the gospel of force



By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — In the quiet, heavy hours following Orthodox Easter Sunday, the world glimpsed something far more unsettling than mere political theater. U.S. President Donald Trump, fresh from waging a campaign of aggression against Iran and issuing apocalyptic ultimatums against the Iranian people, turned his digital fury toward Pope Leo XIV.

By branding the first American-born pontiff as "WEAK on crime" and "terrible for Foreign Policy," Trump signaled an unrepentant departure from the moral constraints of the West.

This assault was followed by a social media post that remains seared into the global consciousness: an AI-generated image of Trump as a robed, messianic healer.

Yet, beneath the golden light, the iconography told a darker story. A halo of B-21 Raider stealth bombers framed his head, while a horned, Baal-like silhouette loomed in the upper shadows above a burning skyline.

Though the administration attempted a shameful whitewash, the mask had already slipped.

**The chorus of global revulsion**

The backlash to this sacrilege has been swift and visceral, uniting disparate voices in a rare moment of consensus.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, usually a staunch ally of the American right, delivered a stinging rebuke, calling the president's words about the Pope "unacceptable."

Rome's mayor, Roberto Gualtieri, noted that the attack wounded the "sensitivities and consciences" of millions.

Across Europe and Latin America, the headlines have been unforgiving, with major outlets labeling the spectacle as "pathological megalomania."

Even within the United States, the fracture is deep. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops expressed deep dismay, while prominent conservative voices have begun to use the word "Antichrist" with noteworthy sincerity.

Inside the MAGA base, the cognitive dissonance is reaching a breaking point. Former Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene characterized the imagery as carrying an "Antichrist spirit," while conservative influencers like Clint Russell admitted that the president's trajectory increasingly mirrors that of a dark biblical figure.

On X, users have voiced their condemnations alongside testimonies from Christian writers who view the fusion of military jets and messianic robes as outrageous blasphemy.

The Vatican has remained steadfast, with Pope Leo XIV asserting that he has "no fear" of the White House.

This is a collision between the Gospel of Peace and a theology of brute force, and for many Catholics, the choice has become an existential one.

**Icons of ruin and the shadows of a dark theology**

If we take the record of the U.S. and its current figurehead Trump into account, the deleted "Anti-Christ" post looks like a disclosure of a psychological and philosophical abyss.

The image featured Trump healing a patient, yet the presence of the Baal-like figure

at the top and the stealth bombers forming a halo suggests a Faustian bargain where power is granted only through the worship of destruction.

This imagery perfectly encapsulates the current American rulers: a leadership that uses the language of divinity to justify the mechanics of war crimes.

The attempt to hide the post after fourteen hours was a failed effort to retreat from the "Antichrist" accusations that began appearing even in pro-Trump forums.

This self-deification is fueled by an inner circle dominated by extremist Zionists and Christian Zionists who view the Middle East as a stage for an apocalyptic script.

To these factions, Middle Eastern nations are prophetic targets to be liquidated. They find the Catholic Church, with its insistence on universal human dignity and "just-war" restraints, to be a stubborn obstacle.

Pope Leo XIV, building on the legacy of Pope Francis and his nightly calls to the besieged Christians in Gaza, has refused to stay silent while Iranian and Palestinian lives are treated as collateral for American and Israeli hegemony.

**The blood of the innocent and the final harvest of a Faustian deal**

The rhetoric of "oblivion" issued days prior to the brazen attack against the Pope was a credible threat against a civilization that has endured for millennia.

This is the same regime responsible for the Minab school massacre on February 28, where U.S. military strikes murdered 168 children and their teachers.

With thousands of Iranians killed in the U.S.-Israeli war on the Islamic Republic and the systemic erasure of life in Gaza and south Lebanon continuing with Washington's funding and blessing, Trump's attack on the Pope's call for peace is a confession of guilt.

It is a rejection of any authority that dares to suggest there is a law higher than the hegemonic American-Israeli will.

Furthermore, the dark record of the man himself cannot be ignored. The highly-redacted Epstein files, showing Trump's name over 6,000 times and detailing horrific allegations of the rape of a 13-year-old girl, suggest a soul long ago hollowed out by predation.

The American elite, the corporations, the lobbyists, and the political class, have made their own deal with this devil, overlooking genocide, mass murder, rape, and corruption in exchange for tax cuts and power.

Trump is the dually elected avatar of this rot. He is the mirror reflecting an empire that has traded its claim to "liberty" for a crown of fighter jets and the service of dark forces.

As the world watches the U.S. President who was supposed to represent American Christians mock the Vicar of Christ, the true Antichrist is no longer a figure of prophecy.

The real revelation is the profound spiritual and moral void at the center of the American empire. Trump has become the face of an empire that has officially declared war on the soul of humanity.

## Minister pledges 'scientific restoration' for war-torn heritage sites

TEHRAN - Iran's minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts said 132 historical sites across 20 provinces were damaged during the recent war, pledging that restoration will be carried out using scientific methods and international standards.

Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri made the remarks during a joint meeting with members of parliament's cultural commission and senior ministry officials at the Saadabad Cultural-Historical Complex, IRNA reported.

He said preliminary estimates put damage to historical sites at more than 75 trillion rials, equivalent to roughly \$48 million at the prevailing free-market exchange rate of about 1.57 million rials per dollar.

Salehi-Amiri also reported damage to parts of the country's tourism infrastructure, adding that "reconstruction and revival of these capacities are on the agenda with a scientific, specialized approach based on international standards."

Referring to the broader context of the conflict, Salehi-Amiri described the war as a symbol of national cohesion and said it contributed to strengthening social capital and Iran's position domestically and internationally.

"The Iranian nation, in this historical period, presented a clear picture of solidarity, resilience and hope for the future," he said, adding that public participation demonstrated reliance on cultural, historical and religious resources in responding to threats.

He said the period also saw the formation



and strengthening of a discourse of resistance and national unity, which he said boosted public morale and opened "new horizons of trust and hope" for society.

Salehi-Amiri said the developments reflected "social maturity, national responsibility and the deep connection of the people with their historical and cultural identity."

He added that coordination among various government bodies ensured the stable provision of essential goods and services, reflecting what he described as effective governance during a period of crisis.

The minister also pointed to shifts in travel patterns and population movements, saying these were managed in a way that allowed service delivery to continue with minimal disruption while maintaining public security.

At the end of the meeting, members of parliament's cultural commission visited sections of the Saadabad historical complex that sustained damage.

## Iran to resume domestic flights at select airports soon, minister says

TEHRAN - Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh on Monday said domestic flights will soon resume at some airports where conditions allow, as authorities move to restore aviation services following recent conflict.

Sadegh made the remarks during a visit to the Iran Airport and Air Navigation Company, where she reviewed measures taken to maintain the country's aviation and airport operations during the "third imposed war," Miras Aria reported.

She stressed the need to quickly reinstate domestic flights in airports prepared for operations. "It is necessary that domestic flights in some airports where conditions are ready resume in the shortest possible time," she said, adding that restoring flights would help return calm to society.

Sadegh praised aviation specialists for maintaining operations under difficult conditions and said the continuous presence of managers and staff had supported both colleagues and the public. She also thanked aviation personnel for their "sacrifice and commitment" during the crisis.

During a separate visit to the Civil Aviation Organization, the minister called for rebuilding the aviation sector with an approach that goes beyond compensation for damages. She said the government aims to upgrade the industry and strengthen infrastructure while safeguarding national assets.

"The aviation sector was on the front line of confrontation with the war," Sadegh said, adding that round-the-clock efforts ensured services continued even in the most difficult conditions.

She also highlighted the importance of documenting the experience of the crisis, describing it as a management asset for future decision-making.

Abuzar Shiroudi, head of the Civil Aviation Organization, for his part, said the crisis directly affected the aviation sector, including damage to aircraft fleets, radar systems and other infrastructure. He said recovery efforts have begun, focusing on fleet modernization and technical upgrades.

Mohammad Amirani, chief executive of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company, said some airport infrastructure had been damaged but pledged to rebuild it using domestic capabilities. "Although damage to some airport infrastructure built over years under sanctions is regrettable, we will rebuild these sections better and more resilient than before," he said.

Amirani added that assessments to resume flights began immediately after a temporary ceasefire was announced and that services would restart with priority given to public demand and safety considerations.

He said airport capacity would return to full operation soon, assuring the public that aviation services are being restored under safe conditions.

## World heritage sites: Sewell Mining Town

Sewell Mining Town, located more than 2,200 m above sea level, clammers up the barren slopes of central Chile's Los Andes Cordillera above the world's largest underground copper mine, El Teniente. The first copper company town in Chile (the main producer of this metal in the world), the now-uninhabited Sewell is an outstanding example of the global phenomenon of company towns in which settlements were established in remote parts of the world to extract and process natural resources - in this case, high-value copper. These company towns were typically created through a fusion of local labour with external capital and resources. Sewell Mining Town is particularly notable for its contribution to the global spread of large-scale mining technology.

Sewell's origins go back to 1905, when the Chilean government authorized American mining engineer William Braden to exploit

the copper mine. In an epic commercial endeavour, Braden built roads, a concentrator plant, camps and a railway that connected this remote place to the city of Rancagua 60 km away. El Teniente and the town of Sewell were owned by American companies until 1971, when the copper industry was nationalized and became the property of the State, which, by the end of 1960, had already become the major stockholder. Sewell had gradually expanded to accommodate 15,000 people in 175,000 square metres by the time of its maximum development in 1968. The town then slowly lost population when the company resolved that it was more efficient to move its workers to Rancagua. A process of demolition ended in the 1990s when a policy oriented toward the protection and conservation of the site was implemented.

(Source: UNESCO)

# The map of damage tells its own story

By Afshin Majlesi

In the span of just over a month, from February 28 to April 8, a total of 132 cultural sites, museums, and historical monuments across Iran were damaged or destroyed, largely as a result of the massive shockwaves caused by airstrikes.

At first glance, the number may seem plain. But it is only when placed against the depth, density, and distribution of Iran's cultural landscape that its full meaning begins to emerge.

Iran is not merely a country with historical monuments; it is one of the world's longest continuous centers of civilization. From the prehistoric layers of human settlement to the imperial legacies of the Elamite kingdom, Achaemenid Empire, Parthian Empire, and Sasanian Empire, and through centuries of Islamic culture, the country's terrain is saturated with the material traces of history. Archaeological sites number in the hundreds of thousands, while historic cities, monuments, and museum collections form a dense and interconnected cultural fabric.

It is within this context that the recent wave of destruction must be understood, not as isolated incidents, but as damage inflicted upon a layered civilizational archive.

The international importance of this heritage has long been recognized, with 29 Iranian properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Sites such as Golestan Palace and Naqsh-e Jahan Square are not only national landmarks but also part of a shared global legacy. Yet both are among the damaged.

In recent weeks, concern has been voiced by organizations including UNESCO and International Council on Monuments and Sites, which warned of the "risk of irreversible loss" and the broader implications for cultural continuity. Such statements, while cautious in tone, underscore a growing recognition that what is being lost extends beyond physical structures.

An emerging inventory com-



An airstrike hits a UNESCO World Heritage site in Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan.

pleted by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage reveals not only the scale but also the striking geography of the damage. It spans 17 provinces and 26 cities, yet it is far from evenly distributed. Nearly half of all recorded damage, 61 sites, has been concentrated in Tehran alone.

Within the capital, the list reads less like a random catalogue of incidents and more like a cross-section of the city's historical identity: the historic Arg complex, the Grand Bazaar, the Marble Palace, the Sepahsalar Mosque, and the Farahabad Palace Museum. These are not peripheral or obscure locations; they are central nodes in Tehran's historical and institutional landscape.

A similar pattern emerges in Isfahan, long regarded as one of the jewels of Persian urbanism. There, damage has been reported at key components of the Safavid-era urban ensemble, including Naqsh-e Jahan Square, the Chehel Sotoun Palace, and the Masjed-e Imam aka Abbasi Friday Mosque.

Taken together, Tehran and Isfahan account for more than 64 percent of all documented cases. When provinces such as Khuz-

estan and Kordestan are added, the concentration rises to over 80 percent. The clustering is difficult to ignore: the damage appears focused on areas where historical density is greatest, where monuments, museums, and historic urban fabrics converge.

The largest group of damage properties consists of historical houses and residential mansions, which is 33 in total. They are structures that often form the backbone of historic neighborhoods. Civic and institutional buildings follow, along with mosques, palaces, bathhouses, mills, and fortifications.

The chronological range is just as telling. Among the damaged are sites such as Kuh-e Khawaja, with layers reaching back to the Parthian and Sasanian periods, and Siraf, a once-thriving port city of late antiquity. The reported damage also extends to the tomb of Baba Taher in Hamedan, linking the destruction to Iran's literary as well as architectural heritage.

What emerges, then, is a portrait of loss unfolding across multiple scales—temporal, spatial, and typological.

There are also sites that fall outside conventional definitions of heritage. The bombing of the cultural heritage office in Khorramabad, alongside strikes affecting infrastructure such as the unfinished high bridge in Karaj and major academic institutions, complicates any interpretation that the damage is incidental.

When cultural institutions themselves—those tasked with preservation, documentation, and research—become targets, the line between collateral damage and deliberate impact begins to blur.

As a fragile ceasefire holds and diplomatic efforts falter, this moment offers a pause—not only to assess what has been lost, but to consider how such loss is distributed. The emerging evidence does not point to a random scattering of damage. Instead, it suggests a pattern—one that intersects with the geography of Iran's most historically dense and symbolically significant spaces.

And in that pattern lies a deeper question: whether what is being witnessed is not simply the byproduct of conflict, but the erosion of cultural memory itself.

## US-bombed high bridge considered for national registration



Eight people were killed when the B1 bridge in Karaj was bombed by US warplanes

TEHRAN - The B1 Bridge in Karaj, a major engineering project located about 45 kilometers west of Tehran, is being considered for a possible registration as a national "event site" following its partial destruction in a US airstrike during the recent conflict involving the United States and Israel, which began on Feb. 28.

The bridge, one of the tallest and most complex infrastructure projects in the region, sustained significant damage when it was struck in early April, causing casualties and structural collapse.

Authorities say the proposed designation aims to recognize the site's contemporary historical significance, linking it to recent wartime events while underscoring its role as a symbol of modern engineering in Iran.

Shahbaz Mahmoudi, the deputy director of cultural heritage for the province, announced that the preparation of the official dossier for registering the bridge as a national event site has been initiated, Mehr reported on Monday.

The B1 Bridge, which sustained extensive damage during airstrikes on April 2, 2026, was considered an architectural and engineering masterpiece of its time, reflecting both technical innovation and contemporary design.

Mahmoudi underlined the importance of preserving the site: "The B1 Bridge is a symbol of the integration of engineering knowledge and architectural creativity in modern times. It has been a crucial focal point in specialized studies on infrastructure

and urbanism, particularly in West Asia. The destruction of this bridge marks a significant loss in our technical and urban identity."

The bridge, part of the Northern Karaj Freeway project, was a cable-stayed structure spanning the Karaj River, strategically located near the beginning of the Karaj-Chalous Road. Its destruction comes at a high human cost, with the attack resulting in eight fatalities and 95 injuries, further underscoring the severity of the event. The bridge's collapse has triggered an outpouring of public grief and concern, with many seeing it as a loss not only of life but of a key piece of the region's modern heritage.

"While the damage is severe, registering the site as a national event location can help preserve the memory of this tragedy," Mahmoudi continued. "Such registration would ensure that future generations understand its significance, both as an engineering achievement and as a poignant reminder of the tumultuous events of 2026."

In addition to its architectural importance, the bridge also played a key role in the broader economic and social dynamics of Alborz province, facilitating smoother transportation between central, western, and northern Iran. With its loss, local authorities have expressed concerns about the potential long-term disruptions to travel and trade.

Mahmoudi explained that the recognition of such infrastruc-

ture as cultural heritage reflects a broader shift in the definition of heritage in Iran. "In recent years, heritage has moved beyond ancient monuments to include industrial, infrastructural, and even contemporary events," he noted. "This reflects a more comprehensive understanding of what constitutes our cultural identity."

The Alborz department of cultural heritage has already compiled technical documents, images, expert reports, and related narratives about the bridge. Mahmoudi revealed that the initial phase of gathering the necessary materials for submission to the national heritage registration council is now complete. The department aims to expedite the registration process to safeguard the memory of the bridge and its role in the region's history.

"By officially registering the site, we hope to spark greater awareness and attention to the protection of contemporary heritage," Mahmoudi concluded. "This could also lead to a broader recognition of the need to preserve the infrastructure that forms the backbone of our cities and communities."

Provincial authorities are hopeful that, with the cooperation of relevant bodies, the registration will be completed as swiftly as possible, ensuring that the tragic event is not only remembered but also analyzed as part of the ongoing evolution of Iran's modern history.

# Attracting 320,000 intl. students by 2028 on agenda

TEHRAN – According to the Seventh National Development Plan (2023-2028), the country is projected to increase the number of international students to 320,000 from currently around 60,000.

To this end, the higher education system needs to adopt some institutional and developmental approaches in organizations associated with foreign students, Mehr news agency reported.

In this regard, the parliament research center has evaluated Iran's situation in attracting international students and measures that need to be taken into account.

According to the report, the number of foreign students in the country has grown from 13,767 in Iranian year 1394 (2015 – 2016) to 68,563 in 1403 (2024 – 2025). The number of educational institutions that are allowed to accept foreign students has noticeably increased from 45 to 206 over the past decade.

The report also shows that 13 acts, such as providing short-time sabbaticals, granting visas, establishing a center for foreign student graduates, and holding remedial courses, have been developed and officially accepted by the parliament as part of educational charter for foreign students; however, they have not been implemented in time.

Also major organizations and institutions of the country have no participation in planning cultural programs for foreign students.

A lack of strategic comprehensive marketing skills, and bureaucratic and time-consuming correspondence were among other recognized problems.

The parliament research center has put forward some proposals to help attract more international students. The most important one highlights adopting an approach that focuses on generating income, soft cultural power, and expanding science.



The other suggestion emphasizes the importance of boosting south-south international relations, that is developing political and economic interactions with highly populated countries like Pakistan, India, Egypt and some countries in Central Asia.

Ongoing evaluation of other countries' policies in attracting students, developing software and hardware infrastructures, stable and secure network, as well as increasing the number of scholarships are among other suggested solutions.

Before the US-Israeli war against Iran, nearly 60,000 foreign students from 101 countries, mainly from Afghanistan, India, Iraq, and Pakistan, were studying in Iran.

The Ministry of Science has announced that educational programs for foreign university students present in the country will continue despite the unfavorable conditions caused by the imposed war.

All universities have been asked to ensure that all international students benefit from the educational facilities and capacities of the universities by adopting innovative measures, including preparing offline educational packages, developing intensive summer training courses, and anticipating the possibility of completing practical courses in the coming years, in addition to continuing online education, IRNA reported.

These measures and plans should be implemented in a way that ensures that international students do not suffer academic, training, or even financial losses due to the conditions resulting from the imposed war.

Science Minister Hossein Si-maei-Sarraf has said over 30 Iranian universities had been directly attacked by the United States and Israel since the war began in late February.

Five university professors and more than 60 students had been killed in the strikes, added Si-maei-Sarraf, describing attacks on Iranian infrastructure as "crimes against humanity."

"The main reason the enemy targeted this sensitive infrastructure was that they did not want us to gain access to this technology," he said, adding that many Iranians abroad have contacted the university, offering to help fund its restoration.

Since the beginning of the attacks, a series of extensive assaults on Iranian scientific and academic centers including the Iran University of Science and Technology, ShahidBeheshti University, the Iranian Space Research Institute, Abbaspour University, and the Pasteur Institute of Tehran, have drawn global attention.

These attacks go beyond conventional military operations and carry broad strategic, cultural, and scientific implications.

Analyzing these strikes highlights both the fear of foreign powers toward Iran's scientific progress and the necessity of emphasizing the resilience of local science and knowledge in the face of violence and bombing.

Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure on such a scale can, according to credible legal sources, constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law. Under the Geneva Conventions and customary international humanitarian law, civilian locations, including schools and universities, are generally protected from attacks.

The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (WUR) 2026 has placed 101 Iranian universities among the top universities in the world in 11 subject areas, compared to 81 universities in 10 subject areas in 2025.

These ten subject rankings include arts and humanities; business and economics; clinical and health; computer science; education; engineering; life sciences; physical sciences; psychology; social sciences, and Law.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings by Subject 2026 evaluated 1,165 universities from 84 countries and territories, using 18 performance indicators categorized under five core pillars, including Teaching (evaluates teaching reputation, student-to-staff ratio, doctorate-to-bachelor's ratio, doctorate-to-staff ratio and institutional income), Research Environment (focuses on research reputation, income, and productivity), Research Quality (includes citation impact, research strength, research excellence, and influence, Industry (measures income from industry partnerships and patents), and International Outlook (accounts for international students, staff and co-authorship).

## Some 1,000 people rescued from under rubble in Tehran during war



TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has said it successfully rescued 960 people alive from under the rubble in Tehran during the 40-day US-Israeli airstrikes.

The rescuers had carried out a total of 1,711 technical rescue and evacuation operations at the locations targeted by the US and Israel since the beginning of the imposed war on February 28.

The report noted that 125,630 non-military units, including 100,000 residential units and some 24,000 commercial units, have been damaged across the country due to the terrorist attacks, Press TV reported.

A number of these units have been destroyed completely and some others have sustained serious damage, it said.

The IRCS added that supporting documentation has been collected and being completed to be presented to international bodies to precisely record and follow up on different aspects of the US-Israeli crimes.

It further noted that 339 medical centers, including hospitals, pharmacies, laboratories, health centers, and emergency units, have been targeted during the war. Some were temporarily taken out of service, while others resumed operations immediately.

Head of Iran's Emergency Organization Majid Miadfar said in a statement on Sunday that at least 258 women and 221 under the age of 18 have been martyred in US-Israeli assaults during their war of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

He added that a total of 18 children under the age of five have also been killed in the bloody onslaught.

The United States and Israel initiated an unprovoked military campaign against Iran on February 28, assassinating Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several high-ranking military commanders despite indirect Tehran-Washington negotiations on Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

On April 11, the IRCS and the National Committee for Humanitarian Law (NCHL) issued a joint statement, condemning the US-Israeli attacks on the country's civilian infrastructure.

The IRCS and the NCHL warned about the Israeli

attacks on civilian critical infrastructure carried out with the support of the United States, calling for the unconditional observance of the principles of international humanitarian law.

"At least eight railways and 59 airports, as well as public facilities, connecting roads, bridges, and transportation networks, have been targeted in the recent attacks," noted the statement.

"Furthermore, power substations, nuclear power plants, and petrochemical facilities have also been targeted, causing serious disruption to the supply of energy, vital services, and the basic needs of the population, and resulting in widespread and longterm consequences for the lives, health, and security of civilians.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society and the National Committee for Humanitarian Law emphasize that according to the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, especially the principle of distinction, any attack on civilian property and infrastructure is prohibited, and those responsible are accountable for serious violations of international obligations.

Targeting infrastructure that serves a predominantly civilian function constitutes a clear breach of these principles.

The IRCS and the NCHL call on international institutions such as the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to conduct prompt, and independent investigations and documentation of the attacks, strengthen oversight of compliance with international humanitarian law, use all legal and diplomatic avenues to halt these attacks, and provide the necessary grounds for accountability and prosecution of those responsible for these violations."

The statement also emphasized that ensuring safe and rapid access to humanitarian assistance and protecting vital infrastructure constitute fundamental responsibilities of the international community, and that any disruption in this regard will have irreparable humanitarian consequences.

It stressed the necessity of safeguarding the lives, dignity, and security of civilians under all circumstances and underscored that violations of these principles must not go unanswered.

## US, Israel should be prosecuted in international courts for ecocide: DOE

TEHRAN – The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, has said that the environmental degradation caused by the US-Israel coalition during the 40-day imposed war should be prosecuted in international courts.

Buildings and equipment of the DOE in 20 provinces and 113 protected areas in seven provinces of the country have been destroyed during the war. Once documented with the help of the Ministry of Justice, the environmental war crimes can be prosecuted in international courts, IRNA quoted Ansari as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with Justice Minister Amin-Hossein Rahimi on Monday.

Ansari also highlighted that prior to the outbreak of the war on February 28, the DOE had corresponded with its counterparts in the region, the international organizations, and the United Nations Environment Program, warning on the consequences. "Unfortunately, they failed to issue, even a neutral statement in response."

For his part, Rahimi said despite all international laws that require armies involved in conflicts to protect environment during wartime, the aggressors caused widespread damage to the environment and natural resources of the country, their measures are clear examples of war crimes.

"We will document these destructions and seek reparation in international arenas, the same as President Masoud Pezeshkian has ordered," Rahimi added.

Moreover, Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, in an official letter to the executive secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, has elaborated on the detrimental impacts of the war on the biodiversity, and irreparable damage to ecosystems.

The letter has confirmed clear violations of the articles of the convention, considerations of human rights, and the goals of Kunming Montreal global biodiversity framework, calling on the executive secretary to take a more active role in protecting biodiversity, and release a formal statement to censure this war and its environmental impacts during the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which will be held in

October in Yerevan, Armenia.

Iran has already launched a comprehensive legal and technical inquiry into the extensive environmental degradation caused by the recent American-Israeli campaign of aggression, characterizing the strikes as a calculated assault on the nation's ecological health and natural heritage.

On March 28, the DOE head said that the war has left a lasting scar on the country's protected lands and industrial heartlands, describing the damage as a core component of the enemy's hostile agenda.

Ansari provided a grim inventory of the structural damage sustained by the country's administrative and personnel networks.

She noted that several provincial and county-level offices were either damaged or completely destroyed since the US and the Zionist regime of Israel began their campaign of aggression on February 28.

Beyond administrative infrastructure, the aggression has damaged the country's natural reserves and protected areas, which are strictly managed to preserve unique biodiversity.

Ansari highlighted the Sefidkouh protected area in western Lorestan province and the HaftadGholleh protected area in central Markazi province as regions that sustained "significant damage to natural arenas and biodiversity."

Recent U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran also targeted oil depots and critical infrastructure, causing serious environmental and human consequences. These actions not only violate international humanitarian law but, by striking civilian infrastructure, constitute clear examples of environmental crimes (ecocide).

An initial research analysis by Queen Mary University of London, in collaboration with the Climate and Community Institute London and Lancaster University, found that in just the first 14 days of the war, approximately 5-5.6 million tons of CO2 equivalent were released into the atmosphere, roughly equal to Iceland's total annual emissions or the output of 1.1 million gasoline cars.

The aggression violates both the Geneva Protocols and the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environ-



mental Modification Techniques (ENMOD). Long-term consequences include air pollution, acid rain, public health threats, and regional crises affecting water and electricity supplies.

ENMOD, adopted in 1976, bans the use of environmental modification techniques as a tool of warfare and prohibits any action that could cause "widespread, long-lasting, or severe damage to the natural environment," emphasizing state responsibility.

Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions, an amendment to the original conventions, includes Articles 35 and 55, which obligate countries to protect the environment during armed conflicts. Additionally, the First and Second Additional Protocols of the 1977 Geneva Conventions emphasize environmental protection and civilian safety during war.

Article 55 of the First Protocol specifically prohibits actions that could lead to "widespread, long-term, and severe damage to the natural environment." These protocols provide an initial legal framework for assessing environmental damage in wartime, though enforcement has always been challenging.

Moreover, international humanitarian law and human rights law recognize the protection of a healthy environment as a human necessity. International organizations have repeatedly stressed that environmental protection should hold the same political importance as human rights, since a healthy environment underpins peace and the fulfillment of human rights.

This perspective frames environmental protection not merely as a technical issue but as a legal and humanitarian obligation during conflict.

## Iranian psychology body calls for an assessment of Trump's mental health

TEHRAN – The National Psychology and Counseling Organization of Iran, in an open letter to psychologists in the United States, has called for an assessment of the mental health of US political leaders, particularly Donald Trump, in the interest of world peace.

The letter, which includes the scientific and humanitarian concerns of the Iranian psychological community and counselors, criticizes the destructive and antisocial behaviors of American leaders and their direct impact on creating psychological disorders, violating world peace, and creating trauma among nations, IRNA reported.

Referring to the recent US military aggression against Iran, the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and the killing of elementary school children, the letter emphasizes the clear conflict of these actions with global mental health standards.

The American scientific community has also been asked what the mechanism is for assessing the mental health of their political leaders in response to impulsive and psychopathic decisions that are leading the world into the abyss of fire.

As Trump threatens to wipe out Iran and attacks the pope, even some former allies and advisers are questioning whether he has grown increasingly unbalanced, describing him as "lunatic" and "clear-

ly insane."

Democrats who have long challenged Trump's psychological fitness have issued a fresh chorus of calls to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove the president from power for disability, The New York Times reported.

The same can be heard now among retired generals, diplomats and foreign officials. And most strikingly, it can be heard now on the political right among onetime allies of the president.

Former Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Georgia Republican who recently broke with Trump, advocated using the 25th Amendment, telling CNN that threatening to destroy Iran's civilization was "not tough rhetoric, it's insanity."

Some of the questions about Trump's soundness come from people who once worked with him and have since become critics. Even before the civilization post, Ty Cobb, a White House lawyer in Trump's first term, told the journalist Jim Acosta that the president is "a man who is clearly insane" and that his recent string of belligerent, middle-of-the-night social media posts "highlights the level of his insanity."

Stephanie Grisham, a former White House press secretary for Trump, wrote online last week that "he's clearly not well."



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APRIL 15, 2026

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Whoever warns you against sins and vices is like the one who gives you good tidings.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:04 Evening: 18:56 Dawn: 4:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:31 (tomorrow)

## Tehran's Shokoufeh Cinema severely damaged during American-Zionist aggression against Iran

TEHRAN – Shokoufeh Cinema in Tehran suffered severe damage during the recent US-Israeli attacks, and it is expected that relevant officials would assist the reconstruction process, Ali Sartipi, the manager of the cinema said.

Located in Shohada Square, Shokoufeh Cinema is one of the capital's oldest cinemas. Built in the early 1960s on an area of two thousand square meters with 1100 seats, it was one of the largest cinemas in the country, ISNA reported.

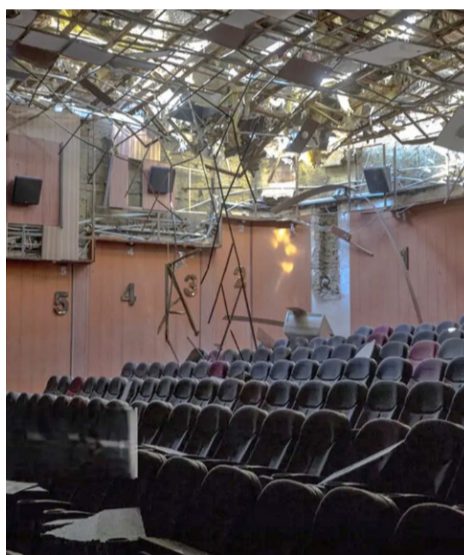
In 2009, the cinema was purchased by Filmiran Company, managed by Ali Sartipi. After renovation and the addition of three screening halls, it reopened as one of the most equipped cinemas in southeast Tehran.

"When we purchased the cinema, considering its location and space, which holds many memories for people, we strived to transform it into one of the best cinema halls in the area. Fortunately, over the years, it became the highest-grossing cinema in this region," he added.

However, Shokoufeh Cinema suffered damage on the morning of March 2, the third day of the US-Israel war against Iran, leading to its closure. There is currently no news regarding its reopening or activity.

Sartipi stated that the cinema was hit twice during the recent war. Shrapnel marks are visible throughout the complex. The main hall, with a capacity of approximately 550 people, along with the projection room, the management office on the second floor, the screen, audio-visual equipment, the engine room, restrooms, and parts of the second hall, sustained significant damage.

"Perhaps we will need about 8 months for reconstruction. Our initial estimate is currently over 20 billion Toman (about \$130,000). I hope the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Tehran Municipality, and all relevant and interested organizations will cooperate so that this complex can return to screening films."



The US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28 and for 40 days martyred over 3,000 people including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, several officials, and military commanders as well as numerous civilians, including women and children.

Besides some military targets, the US and Israel launched organized attacks against civilian infrastructure, including residential homes, hospitals, refineries, power plants, schools, universities, art and cultural spaces, bookstores, museums, and ancient sites in several cities, causing total or partial damages and injuring innocent people.

The attacks prompted a swift response from the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), with missile and drone launches targeting Israel and several U.S. bases in the region, which were gradually intensified.

Iran, the US, and Israel agreed to a two-week ceasefire on April 8, during which they intend to hold negotiations to end the war.

## Cartoon of Day



Strait of Hormuz  
**Cartoonist:** Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

# Iran's culture minister warns of Trump's arrogance following insult to Pope

TEHRAN- Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Seyyed Abbas Salehi, has issued a critique of US President Donald Trump's escalating rhetoric and self-deifying social media presence, characterizing the American leader's behavior as a modern manifestation of the "Pharaoh complex" that historically signals the imminent downfall of tyrants.

In a post shared on his X (formerly Twitter) account on Monday, Salehi highlighted what he described as an alarming and delusional progression in Trump's public persona. The minister's remarks were prompted by a series of provocative social media posts by the US President following his recent verbal assault on the leader of the Catholic Church.

"Trump posted this image after attacking the Pope!" Salehi wrote, referring to a controversial visual shared by Trump. "President Trump became King Trump, and now he sees himself as Christ Trump. It seems he is not far from claiming divinity! And this is the end of the road for Pharaohs."

The Culture Minister's reference to "Pharaohs" draws upon a profound historical and Quranic metaphor. In Islamic thought, the figure of the Pharaoh represents the pinnacle of human arrogance—a ruler who, blinded by absolute power, eventually declares himself a god, only to be met with total destruction. By invoking this image, Salehi suggested that Trump's shift from a political figure to a self-styled Messiah reflects a dangerous detachment from reality often seen in the final, desperate stages of despotic regimes.

Pope Leo XIV recently issued a stern moral condemnation of the ongoing US-led and Israeli-backed military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Pontiff, in a widely circulated message, described the threats to "wipe out Iranian civilization" as "truly un-



acceptable" and a violation of the most basic tenets of international law and human morality.

In a characteristic display of defiance, Trump lashed out at the spiritual leader of 1.3 billion Catholics. During a televised address and subsequent social media flurry, Trump asserted that he was "not a fan" of the Pope, labeling him as "weak" and "out of touch" with the realities of modern security. The confrontation reached a new level of controversy when Trump shared an AI-generated image of himself depicted in biblical robes, performing what appeared to be miraculous acts of healing, effectively positioning himself as Jesus Christ.

By attempting to co-opt the image of Jesus Christ, who is revered in Islam as a great prophet and a symbol of peace, Trump has offended a global audience that spans multiple faiths.

Earlier, President Masoud Pezeshkian also voiced his strong disapproval, stating that the desecration of religious symbols and the insult to the Pope are affronts to all "free-thinking people" regardless of their creed. The Presi-

dent noted that such behavior only serves to further isolate the United States on the global stage, alienating even its traditional allies in the Christian world.

As the US continues its aggressive posture against Iran, the rhetoric from Washington has increasingly taken on a messianic and apocalyptic tone. Analysts warn that when a political leader begins to demand not just political loyalty but spiritual veneration, the mechanisms of rational diplomacy begin to fail.

Minister Salehi's warning that this path represents "the end of the road" serves as a reminder that throughout history, the more a ruler attempts to elevate himself above the human condition, the more certain his eventual collapse becomes. For now, the international community watches with growing unease as the gap between the White House's "divine" self-image and its geopolitical reality continues to widen.

Following the coordinated US-Israeli attack on February 28, which targeted key national facilities in Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, was martyred. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has since been appointed as the new Leader by the Assembly of Experts.

The tragedy extended beyond political leadership to civilian infrastructure. In one of the most devastating attacks, Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan Province, was struck, resulting in the martyrdom of 168 children and 95 injuries. These strikes destroyed numerous homes while directly targeting cultural and educational centers.

These attacks caused irreparable damage to residential and cultural areas across Iran. Many schools, theaters, libraries, and cultural institutions were either completely destroyed or heavily damaged. Iranian families in cities like Minab, Tehran, Isfahan, Hamedan, Tabriz and other regions have faced the devastation of home destruction and the loss of loved ones. Despite this, the spirit of resistance and resilience among the Iranian people has been strengthened. The ongoing efforts to rebuild and preserve the country's cultural heritage continue.

## Iranian documentary "Iran in the Hermitage" to make world premiere at Cal Film Festival

TEHRAN- Iranian documentary "Iran in the Hermitage," directed by Behrouz Sebt Rasoul, has been selected for the official competition of the Cal Film Festival in California, the US.

Marking its world premiere, the documentary will go on screen at the spring edition of the Los Angeles-based festival, which will be held on June 6.

"Iran in the Hermitage" offers a poetic and scholarly voyage through the ancient Iranian history. The narrative arc begins in the Paleolithic era and unfolds through the centuries, concluding with the grandeur of the Safavid period. A silent and contemplative work, the documentary distinguishes itself through intricate visual storytelling, weaving historical milestones with the vast collection of Persian artifacts at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. Without the use of dialogue, it invites viewers to experience the echoes of Iran's past as they emerge naturally among the museum's masterpieces.



Sebt Rasoul's previous feature film, "Melody," was Tajikistan's official entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 2025 Academy Awards. "Iran in the Hermitage" serves as a thematic extension of his latest research-driven project, the documentary series "A Journey to the Hermitage," produced by Iranian universal TV network Sahar.

In this latest documentary, Sebt Rasoul continues his exploration of Iranian identity and its global footprint. Through breathtaking cinematography and historical rigor, the film invites

viewers to rediscover the treasures of the Persian Empire through the lens of a foreign institution, highlighting the universal value of Iran's civilizational contributions.

The Cal Film Festival is an international platform dedicated to short films and scripts across all genres, including both fiction and non-fiction, known for its rigorous selection process and its history of honoring industry luminaries. The festival maintains an inclusive approach, welcoming non-English speaking projects, low-budget productions, and works from countries traditionally underrepresented in the global film industry.

With a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion, the festival boasts a prestigious list of past winners. This includes Academy Award nominee Paul Raci, BAFTA nominee Bella Ramsey and Logan Marshall-Green, and Emmy nominees Brendan Scannell and Bret Green, alongside industry veterans such as Academy member Arthur Roberts.

## Iran Public Libraries Foundation requests IFLA to condemn US-Israeli attacks on cultural sites

TEHRAN – Following the recent military attacks by the United States and the Zionist regime on Iran's cultural and public infrastructure, Azadeh Nazarboland, Secretary-General of Iran Public Libraries Foundation, has sent a formal letter to Leslie Weir, President of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), expressing the strong protest of the Iranian librarians' community and calling for a decisive reaction from this international body.

The letter, presenting documented statistics of damages up to April 7, points to the damage incurred by 62 public libraries, two of which in Zanjan and Dehloran have been completely destroyed, ILNA reported.

Nazarboland further described these attacks as a clear violation of the principles of international hu-

manitarian law and global commitments, particularly the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

She emphasized that public libraries, as "fundamental cultural, educational, and social infrastructures," play a vital role in the development of societies, and attacking them is "not merely the destruction of a physical space but also an assault on a part of the cultural heritage and knowledge capacities of the community."

In another part of the letter, specific requests were made to the IFLA. Iran Public Libraries Foundation urged IFLA to go beyond general statements, "explicitly condemn" the US-Israeli military attacks, and demonstrate a "fitting and responsible" reaction within its

international responsibilities.

Iran also expects IFLA, leveraging its position, to call upon the international community and international organizations to uphold their commitments to protecting cultural and educational centers under all circumstances.

The letter, while emphasizing a strong determination to continue providing services and promptly reconstruct the damaged libraries with the reliance on the capacity of the country's cultural community and librarians, requests IFLA to be a strong voice for Iran's damaged libraries on the international stage.

On February 28, the US and Israel initiated a major, unjustified assault on Iran, resulting in the martyrdom of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali

Khamenei and numerous senior officials and commanders, along with many civilians, including women and children.

For 40 days, the Zionist enemy, in continuation of its criminal actions, targeted completely civilian centers of the country, including libraries, schools, art and cultural spaces, bookstores, museums, and ancient sites in several cities, causing total or partial damages.

The attacks prompted a swift response from the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), with missile and drone launches targeting Israel and several U.S. bases in the region.

Iran, the US, and Israel agreed to a two-week ceasefire on April 8, during which they intend to hold negotiations to end the war.