

Senators outraged after deadly attack on US outpost

Iran denies role in Jordan drone strike

International Desk

A series of GOP lawmakers are ramping up the pressure on President Joseph Biden to retaliate against Iran following the strike on the border of Jordan and Syria that killed three US service members and injured at least two dozen others over the weekend.

President Biden and UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron claimed that "Iranian-backed groups," mainly based in Iraq, were accountable for the drone attack on the border of Jordan and Syria on Sunday, which killed at least three American servicemen and wounded 34 others.

Concerns have been raised by US lawmakers and other government leaders that the repeated attacks against US bases and troops signal the risk of the Gaza war escalating into a wider conflict in the Middle East.

In response to the claims, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the regional resistance groups do not take orders from Iran, nor does the Islamic Republic have a role in their decisions to carry out retaliatory operations in defense of the Palestinian people.

"Iran is not involved in the resistance groups' decisions about how to support the Palestinian people, or defend themselves

and the people of their countries in the face of any aggression and occupation," the spokesman said in a statement on Monday.

Also, in a statement published late on Sunday, Iran's mission to the United Nations said Tehran has no links to the attacks as they are related to the conflict between resistance groups and the US military.

The statement said Iran had no link to the attack, adding that the incident was part of the "conflict between the army of the United States of America and resistance groups in the region, which reciprocate retaliatory attacks."

The attack marks the first time that US military personnel were killed since the start of the Israeli onslaught on Gaza on October 7.

In his statement, Biden said the attack took place in northeast Jordan, near the Syrian border. Jordan, however, says it did not occur on its soil, but in Syria.

The US president said efforts are underway to gather the facts of the attack and vowed revenge.

"Have no doubt - we will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner of our choosing," he said.

Meanwhile, the UK prime minister has urged Iran to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East after the drone attack.

"We are concerned and would urge Iran to continue to de-escalate



The photo shows a satellite view of the US military outpost known as Tower 22, in Rukban, Rwaished District, Jordan, on October 12, 2023.

REUTERS

late tensions in the region... We absolutely condemn what has happened over the past couple of days," Sunak said on Monday. Sunak's spokesperson also told reporters that they believe that the attack was carried out by Iran-backed groups operating in Syria and Iraq, in line with the US assessment.

The Iranian spokesman further said that since the beginning of Israel's onslaught on Gaza, Iran has repeatedly warned against the danger of the expansion of

the conflict in the region due to Israel's continued attacks against the Palestinian people and the US's full support for the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in the besieged strip and the occupied West Bank.

He emphasized that the US's insistence and continuous violation of the national sovereignty of Iraq and Syria and bombing attacks against the groups and people of Iraq, Syria and Yemen have intensified the instability in the region.

Since the beginning of Israel's war against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on October 7, there have been around 160 attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria. Most of those have been claimed by regional resistance forces.

Iran has frequently said resistance groups act on their own in response to Israeli crimes in Gaza.

The Hill, Reuters, and Press TV contributed to this report.

Iran, Pakistan to set up consultative mechanism, deploy liaison officers

National Desk

Iran and Pakistan have reached an agreement on establishing a consultative mechanism and deploying liaison officers between the two countries, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Pakistani counterpart Jalil Abbas Jilani announced on Monday, IRNA reported.

At a joint press conference

with Jilani in Islamabad, Amir-Abdollahian said Iran and Pakistan are committed to improving their relations and will never allow terrorists to endanger the security of the two nations.

Meanwhile, Jilani said that the two sides agreed on the necessity of cooperation in combating terrorism, and "it was decided that liaison officers from

both countries would be deployed" between the two countries.

The Pakistani official said that they agreed to establish a consultative mechanism at the level of foreign ministers. This mechanism will be formed regularly with the aim of overseeing the progress of collaborations between the two countries.

Addressing the press

conference, the Iranian foreign minister said the terrorists based along the Iran-Pakistan border are supported by hostile third countries.

Many Iranian and Pakistani forces have lost their lives in recent years in the fight against terrorism, he said.

The top Iranian diplomat emphasized that it is inevitable for the two countries to garner their strength to fight terrorism.

Amir-Abdollahian said Tehran and Islamabad have reached an understanding that efforts should be made to improve the economy, development and welfare of the people living along the common border.

He hailed numerous cultural, historical and religious commonalities between Iran and Pakistan, and said the two neighboring states have never had a dispute over their territorial integrity.

Iran regards Pakistan's security as the security of its own and the entire region, the top Iranian diplomat said, emphasizing, "Both sides strongly respect each other's territorial integrity."

Pointing to the constructive cooperation between



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (L) and his Pakistani counterpart Jalil Abbas Jilani speak at a joint press conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, on January 29, 2024.

IRNA

Tehran and Islamabad in international circles, Amir-Abdollahian commended firm support of the Pakistani government and nation for the oppressed Palestinian people.

He noted that the Pakistani government has officially invited Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to travel to Islamabad, and the two countries' foreign ministers agreed to make the necessary preparations so that the visit would take place in the near future.

Heading a high-ranking political, military and security delegation, Amir-Abdollahian arrived in Islamabad early on Monday for a day-long visit

to hold key talks on ways to improve relations.

The visit took place after an escalation of cross-border tensions over Iran's counter-terrorism operations on January 16, when Iran launched simultaneous drone and missile attacks on two bases of the Jaish al-Adl terrorist group that has conducted several attacks on Iranian soil in recent years.

Also, characterizing it a response to Tehran's operation against terrorist bases inside Pakistan, nine people, including four children, were killed after Islamabad admitted attacking a village in Saravan in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

Israeli raid on outskirts of Damascus kills two

Two people were killed and several wounded on Monday in an Israeli attack on the outskirts of the Syrian capital, with Iran's ambassador to Damascus denying reports the location was an Iranian military post.

An Israeli military spokesman declined to comment on the explosions, Reuters reported.

Tasnim news agency said Israel "attacked an Iranian military advisory center" in Syria, but Iran's envoy to Syria, Hossein Akbari, denied the details on the target and said the casualties were not Iranian.

"Today's attack by the Zionist regime's fighter jets on the southern outskirts of Damascus did not target any advisory center of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and no Iranian citizens or advisors were martyred," he said.

"The indiscriminate attacks of the Zionists will not disrupt the resolve of the Axis of Resistance," Akbari added.

Syrian state media, citing a military source, said Israel had launched an air assault on several locations south of Damascus. It said the attack left both dead and wounded but did not specify any numbers.

In a first version of the story on its site, Syrian news agency SANA said the dead included an unspecified number of "Iranian advisers" - a rare admission of Iranian casualties by Damascus - but the site was updated to remove the reference.

Syrian media said the strikes targeted an area near the Sayeda Zeinab shrine in a southern suburb of Damascus on Monday.

The Syrian Defense Ministry confirmed in a short statement the reports of the Israeli regime's strikes and said, "In the Zionist regime's aggression, some places in the south of Damascus were targeted, which led to the martyrdom and wounding of several civilians."

SANA reported that the airstrike was launched from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and targeted several locations in southern Damascus.

Syrian sources said the Monday attack was a failed attempt by the Israeli regime to assassinate more members of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in that area.

Seyyed Razi Mousavi, who was serving as an IRGC military advisor in Syria, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in the same neighborhood of Damascus last month.

Mousavi was one of the companions of Iran's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of the IRGC, who was assassinated along with his companions in a US drone strike on January 3, 2020.

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Cartoonist

