

An image-grab from a video taken early on April 14, 2024, shows rocket trails in the sky above the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Al-Quds after an attack by Iran against Israel.

● AFP



International Desk

Iran "concluded" a massive missile and drone strike on Israel to retaliate the regime's April 1 attack on its consulate in the Syrian capital Damascus. The attack, launched by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Saturday night, targeted an Israeli intelligence center and an air base in the occupied territories. The chief of staff of the

Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, said on Sunday that Iran concluded its retaliatory strikes on Israel and there was "no intention to continue this operation". Baqeri said the attack has "achieved all its objectives". He said that Iran's strikes targeted an intelligence center and the air base from which the Israeli F-35 jets took off to strike Iran's consulate, which claimed the lives of seven members

of the IRGC, including two generals. "Both these centers were significantly destroyed," he said. Baqeri downplayed the extent of the operation compared to what Iran is capable of, saying that it was merely a punishment and the country's response to any further military action by the Israeli regime "will be much greater." "The reason for this operation was the crossing of

Iran launches retaliatory strike on Israel

[Iran's] red line by the Zionist regime, which cannot be tolerated in any way for us," he asserted.

The chief commander of the IRGC also warned the Israeli regime that Iran's reaction will be "certainly much harsher" if the regime responds to Iran's operation.

"The Zionist regime must stop its past behavior and learn from this [attack]. If the Zionist regime shows any response, our reaction will certainly be much harsher based on this new experience we have gained from their capabilities," Major General Hossein Salami said on Sunday.

"From now on, if the Zionist regime attacks our interests, assets, figures, and citizens at any point, it will face counterattack from within the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi hailed the operation, saying the hybrid operation taught the occupying regime an unforgettable lesson.

Raisi also warned Israel and its allies against any "reckless" actions after Tehran's attack, which marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel.

Decisive response

"If the Zionist regime or its supporters demonstrate reckless behavior, they will receive a decisive and much stronger response," Raisi said in a statement. Over the last two weeks, the Iranian authorities had repeatedly vowed to "punish" Israel after the death of seven IRGC members in Syria. Iran has blamed Isra-

el for the attack.

During a speech in Tehran on Wednesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the Israeli regime "must be punished and will be punished" for the deadly strike on the Iranian diplomatic premises.

Iran defends operation

Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations defends the country's operation. "Iran's military action was based on Article 51 of the United Nations Charter concerning legitimate defense in response to the Zionist regime's aggression against our diplomatic premises in Damascus," the mission said in a statement on Saturday.

"The matter can be considered as concluded," it added.

The mission, however, warned that if the Israeli regime perpetrated another mistake, Iran's subsequent response could be "remarkably more intense." The statement concluded that the conflict was one between Iran and the rogue regime, "of which the United States should stay away."

UN failure

Iran's Ambassador to the UN Amir-Saeid Iravani in a letter to the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the president of the UN Security Council Vanessa Frazier denounced the Security Council's inaction over Israel's actions. "Regrettably, the United Nations Security Council has failed in its duty to maintain international peace and security, allow-

ing the Israeli regime to transgress red lines and violate the fundamental principles of international law. Such violations have exacerbated tensions in the region and threatened regional and international peace and security."

Israeli Army on Sunday claimed that it and its allies thwarted 99% of the more than 300 drones and missiles launched toward Israel.

Israel said Iran launched 170 drones, more than 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman, claimed that none of the drones and cruise missiles reached Israel and that only a few of the ballistic missiles got through. He said that of the cruise missiles, 25 were shot down by the Israeli air force.

Hagari said minor damage was caused to an Israeli airbase, but he said it was still functioning.

In Washington, Biden said US forces helped Israel down the drones and missiles and pledged to convene allies to develop a unified response. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Britain's air force was also involved, shooting down a number of Iranian drones.

World's reaction

Global powers Russia, China, France and Germany as well as Arab states Egypt, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates urged restraint. Many countries, especially the western ones, condemned Iran's operation. Speaking to foreign ambassadors in Tehran, Iran's

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, said how is it that countries do not urge the Israeli regime to show restraint but wants Iran to do so.

Amir-Abdollahian said Iran had informed neighboring countries of its planned retaliatory attack "72 hours before the operation".

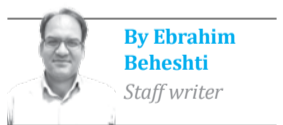
"We announced to our brothers and friends in the region, including the countries hosting American military bases, that our objective was only to punish the Israeli regime," he said.

"We are not seeking to target the American people or American bases in the region," he said, but warned that Iran could target US military positions involved in "defending and supporting" Israel.

Iran also summoned the French, British and German ambassadors to Tehran over reactions to Iran's attack.

"The British, French and German ambassadors to Tehran were summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs following the irresponsible positions of certain officials of these countries regarding Iran's response to the actions of the Zionist regime against the nationals and interests of our country," IRNA said. Iran and Israel have for years been engaged in a shadow war marked by incidents like the Damascus strike. But Sunday's assault, which set off air raid sirens across Israel, was the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Repercussions of crossing Iran's red lines



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

In the early hours of April 14, when the sirens sound echoed in occupied territories, it became evident to everyone that the Islamic

Republic's promise of retaliation and punishment was not merely a political bluff. On April 1, when Israel's terrorist act in Damascus and the attack on Iran's consulate led to the martyrdom of several high-ranking military advisors, the Israeli regime and Prime Minister

Netanyahu's hawkish cabinet not only violated international norms and laws but also crossed Iran's red lines. This is how the desire and promise of "punishing the criminals" resonated in Iran. Negotiations, recommendations, and various threats to dissuade Tehran remained

futile as the passive stance against Israel's warmongering tendencies only fueled it further and heightened its greed for repeating such crimes.

Iran's complex and combined military operation, utilizing a considerable number of drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles, has now turned into the largest military operation of its kind. According to many political and military analysts, the mystique or taboo of an attack by a state on Israel and the presumed invulnerability of this regime have been shattered.

According to senior Iranian military officials, what Iran demonstrated in response was only a part of Tehran's defensive capabilities. The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami, stated that this attack could have been "a widespread operation," but its scope was limited to the areas Israel had used to attack Iran's consulate in Damascus. The chief of staff of the Ira-

nian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, also stated, "In this operation, a major intelligence center supplying necessary information to the Zionists on Mount Hermon was targeted, as well as the Nevatim Airbase from which the attack on the Iranian consulate was launched. Both targets were significantly damaged and rendered inoperable."

With this description, Iran's objective of the April 14 operation was not to engage in war with the Israeli regime but merely to respond to its terrorist attack in a legitimate and deterrent defensive manner. Additionally, Tehran, unlike the Israeli regime, had no intention of targeting non-military sites in its strikes. Iran's mission in Geneva emphasized that Iran's operations against Israel were the exercise of its inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and in response to Israel's repeated aggressions, especially the attack on diplomatic premises in Damascus

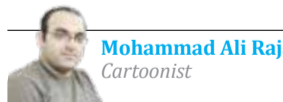
on April 1.

Regardless of the narratives surrounding this operation and its repercussions, what imposes itself as a reality on every analyst and diplomat is that the Islamic Republic of Iran takes its interests and red lines seriously. Tehran has had sufficient legal and defensive confidence to overtly target objectives within occupied territories. Netanyahu and some members of his cabinet had previously threatened both defensive and offensive positions against Iran's actions. Some media and experts predicted Iran's response would lead to another Israeli aggression, but Major General Baqeri emphasized that we consider this operation successful. Major General Salami, commander of the IRGC, also stated that this operation was "more than expected".

In practice, reports indicate that Tehran has achieved its deterrent goal. According to CNN, Biden urged Netanyahu not to retaliate against Iran. Additionally, accord-

ing to a US government official, the US president informed the Israeli Prime Minister that he would not participate in any offensive operations against Iran. The New York Times also reported, citing two Israeli officials, that the option of an Israeli military response to Iran had been set aside after Biden's call. Since the Israeli regime relies on military and political support from the US and several European countries, it seems unlikely that it would have the audacity to attack Iran without this support.

From Tehran's perspective, the matter is concluded unless Israel seeks to challenge Iran once again. As emphasized by the chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, we have no intention of continuing attacks, but if the Zionist regime acts against us, whether on our soil or in our facilities in Syria or in another country, our next operation will be harsher. Now, Iran's red lines and the repercussions of crossing them have been reiterated to all.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

