

## Army commander: Air defenses fire at 'suspicious objects' over Iran's airspace



TASNIM

### International Desk

Iranian army chief commander said the country's air defense systems targeted several "suspicious flying objects" in the central city of Isfahan amid conflicting reports of Israel's attack.

Comments by Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi came after the sound of explosions were heard near the Isfahan Province and the northwestern city of Tabriz in the East Azarbaijan Province about 4 a.m. local time.

Mousavi said the explosions in Isfahan were due to anti-aircraft defense systems shooting down a suspicious object in the sky and that no damage was caused.

Officials said important facilities in the Isfahan Province, especially nucle-

ar facilities, are completely safe and no incidents have been reported.

The Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company said normal operations have resumed for flights at Iranian airports including Imam Khomeini International Airport and Mehrabad International Airport in Tehran after temporary delays.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced in a Friday post on X that Iran's nuclear facilities were safe.

Ahmad Haqatab, who heads the nuclear protection and security corps, said on Thursday, "If the fake Zionist regime intends to resort to the threat of attacking our nuclear facilities as a means to put pressure on Iran, reviewing the current doctrine and nuclear policies of

the Islamic Republic and distancing from past considerations is possible and conceivable," Haqatab was quoted as saying IRNA.

Israel had said for days it was planning to retaliate against Iran for Saturday's missile and drone strikes, the first direct attack on Israel by Iran in decades, which was carried out in response to the regime's April 1 attack on Iran's consulate in Syria's capital, Damascus.

Israel's attack on Iran's consulate claimed the lives of seven members of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, including two generals.

Israel said nothing about the Friday's incident. However, Israel's far-right national security minister, Itamar Ben Gvir, hinting that Israel carried out a strike against Iran. He

posted a single word on X after Friday's strikes: "Feeble".

### Calls for calm

World leaders appealed for calm Friday after reported Israeli retaliation against Iran.

"In light of reports of strikes on April 19th, we urge all parties to work to prevent further escalation," foreign ministers of the Group of Seven industrialized democracies said in a joint statement at the end of a three-day meeting in Italy.

"It is absolutely necessary that the region remains stable and that all sides restrain from further action," European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday called for an end to "the

dangerous cycle of retaliation", his spokesman said. On Thursday, Guterres told the Security Council that spiraling tensions could devolve into a "full-scale regional conflict".

China, Iran's largest trade partner, said Friday it will "continue to play a constructive role to de-escalate" Middle East tensions. Russia said it made clear to Israel that Iran, Moscow's ally, "does not want escalation".

Germany also pleaded for restraint. "De-escalation must be the advice of the hour," said government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit, adding: "We must prevent a conflagration at all costs, and this appeal goes to all sides".

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said he wants to see "calm heads prevail" in the

Middle East.

"Significant escalation is not in anyone's interest," he said during questions after delivering an unrelated speech, adding: "What we want to see is calm heads prevail across the region."

Oman "condemns the Israeli attack this morning on Isfahan... it also condemns and denounces Israel's repeated military attacks in the region", said a foreign ministry statement released on X, formerly Twitter.

Iran had warned Israel before Friday's strike that Tehran would deliver a severe response to any attack on its territory.

Iran told the United Nations Security Council on Thursday that Israel "must be compelled to stop any further military adventurism against our interests".

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Iran underlines necessity of retaliation against Israel



#### International Desk

Iranian foreign minister underlined the necessity of Iran's retaliatory attack on April 14 against Israel during a meeting with his Jordanian counterpart in New York on Thursday.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian told the Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi that Iran's attack against Israel was carried out within the framework of legitimate defense after a regime's deadly attack on Iran's diplomatic facilities in the Syrian capital on April 1. Underlining that Iran's military action against Israel was "very precise and calculated," the Iranian foreign minister said, "Iran's military response to Israel's attack was only a limited and minimal operation, and in case of any further adventurism by the Israeli regime, Iran's response will be decisive, immediate and maximum."

The meeting came after Jordan intercepted Iranian drones and missiles aimed at Israel and summoned Iranian ambassador after the attack.

"The army will respond to anything that will jeopardize the security and safety of the kingdom and the sanctity of its airspace and territory in the face of any danger from any party with all the available means," Jordan's Prime Minister Bisher Khasawneh said.

## US vetoes Palestinian request for full UN membership

### Palestinian president condemns 'unjustified' US move

The US vetoed a Palestinian request to the United Nations security council for full UN membership, blocking the world body's recognition of a Palestinian state. The vote in the 15-member security council was 12 in favor, the US opposed and two abstentions, the

UK and Switzerland, The Guardian reported.

Before the vote, diplomats said the US mission had been trying to convince one or two other council members to abstain, to mitigate Washington's isolation on the issue, but American officials said they were re-

signed to having to wield the US veto once more in support of Israel.

Washington's position is that the emergence of a Palestinian state had to be the outcome of negotiations on all aspects of a Middle East peace settlement.

"The United States con-

tinues to strongly support a two-state solution. This vote does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood, but instead is an acknowledgment that it will only come from direct negotiations between the parties," deputy US ambassador to the UN, Robert Wood, told the council.

The decision to veto the request drew rebukes from across the region. The Palestinian president condemned the US veto as "unfair, unethical and unjustified", while the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said it regretted the inability of the security council to enable full Palestinian membership.

The Palestinian envoy to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, had described the bid for full-member status as an effort "to take our rightful place among the community of nations." After the vote, Mansour delivered a passionate address asserting the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

"Our right to self-determi-



AFP

nation is a natural right – a historical right – to live in our homeland Palestine as an independent state that is free and that is sovereign," he said.

The Hamas resistance group said in a statement that it condemns "in the strongest terms the American position biased towards the occupation", as it called on the international community "to exert pressure to go beyond the American will and support the struggle of our Palestinian people and their legitimate right to self-determination". Explaining the UK abstention, the British envoy to

the UN, Barbara Woodward, said: "We believe that such recognition of Palestinian statehood should not come at the start of a new process, but it doesn't have to be at the very end of the process."

Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said he commended the US for casting the veto. Palestinians currently have non-member observer status, granted by the UN General Assembly in 2012. An application to become a full member with voting rights would have to be approved by the Security Council and two-thirds of the general assembly.

#### French police detain intruder at Iranian consulate

French authorities Friday detained a man suspected of entering the Iranian consulate in Paris and claiming to be carrying explosives, police and prosecutors said. No explosives or arms were found on the man or the premises after he surrendered to police after the incident, according to AFP.

Police arrested the suspect, born in 1963 in Iran, when he exited of his own accord after appearing to have "threatened violent action" inside, the Paris prosecutor's office said.

But "no explosive materials have been observed at this stage," either on him, in his car or in the building, it said. French broadcaster BFM TV, citing a source close to the investigation, reported that the same man was due to appear in court on Monday over a fire at the consulate in September 2023.

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