

# 'Grave' consequences if Israel attacks Lebanon: *Pezeshkian*



Smoke billows from a site targeted by Israeli shelling in the southern Lebanese border village of Tayr Harja on July 24, 2024.

● KAWNAT HAJU/AFP

office said.

The Foreign Ministry said Antonio Tajani spoke with both Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz and Lebanon's Abdallah Bou Habib.

The German government has also called on all parties to the Middle East conflict, in particular Iran, to prevent an escalation.

The UK on Sunday condemned the rocket attack and said it was "deeply concerned about the risk of further escalation and destabilization."

In a statement on X, Foreign Secretary David Lammy also said the UK's new Labour government has been clear that Lebanon's Hezbollah movement "must cease their attacks" on Israel.

## Airlines suspend flights

Meanwhile, several international airlines suspended flights to Lebanon on Monday.

Air France and the German airline group Lufthansa said they were suspending flights to Beirut after Israel threatened reprisals for the deadly strike.

Royal Jordanian also announced the suspension of flights, with at least two of its regular trips to Beirut being cancelled.

The country's only airport in Beirut was packed with travelers on Monday, including families anxiously awaiting delayed flights in the suffocating heat.

## Delegations from 80 countries to partake in Pezeshkian's swearing-in



### National Desk

Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian will be sworn-in as the country's 9th president in parliament today in a ceremony which will be attended by delegations from 80 countries. High-ranking dignitaries from different countries have arrived in the Iranian capital Tehran to take part in Pezeshkian's swearing-in ceremony.

Iranian lawmaker Alaeddin Boroujerdi said delegations from 80 countries, including 11 parliament speakers, four vice presidents, four prime ministers, and two presidents will take part in the ceremony.

Officials from Cuba, Columbia, Mongolia, Malta, Niger, Libya, Gambia, Sudan, Myanmar, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Madagascar had arrived in Tehran until Monday.

The ceremony will be broadcast live on state television and covered by over 600 reporters, photographers and cameramen from domestic and foreign media outlets.

Pezeshkian, Iran's ninth president since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, formally began his four-year mandate on Sunday after the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei endorsed his victory in the second round of the presidential vote on July 5.

During the endorsement ceremony, Pezeshkian vowed to follow "the path of fairness and justice," serve the people and address their problems, adding that these tasks would be "impossible without sticking to the law and unity."

In a speech, Ayatollah Khamenei praised Pezeshkian as a "competent president," saying, "We all have to help him and his government pull off great work."

In a decree, giving his official approval for Pezeshkian, the Leader said the new Iranian president was a "wise, honest, popular, and scholarly" person.

Pezeshkian, a 69-year-old heart surgeon, garnered more than 16 million votes against ex-nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, who secured upwards of 13 million out of over 30 million votes cast, with the voter turnout standing at almost 50 percent.

The election was called early after Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi lost his life in a tragic helicopter crash in May.

### International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian warned that the Israeli regime will suffer "grave" consequences should it make a big mistake by attacking Lebanon.

The new Iranian chief executive issued the warning in a Monday phone conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron.

Fears of an all-out war between Hezbollah and Israel heightened after Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday vowed a "severe response" to a recent deadly rocket attack in the occupied Golan Heights.

Twelve children aged between 10 and 16 were killed on Saturday when a rocket struck a football pitch in the Druze Arab town of Majdal Shams where they were playing.

The Israeli officials have blamed Lebanon's Hezbollah movement for the attack – a claim that was categorically rejected by the resistance group.

Scores of residents of Majdal Shams protested at Netanyahu's visit which came after the last of the victim was buried on Monday, with hundreds of Druze men and women gathering for the funeral. Many residents of Majdal Shams have not accepted Israeli nation-

ality since Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967.

Israel's occupation army and Hezbollah have traded cross-border fire since the beginning of the regime's devastating war on the Gaza Strip in October last year, which has claimed the lives of more than 39,000 Palestinians so far.

Hezbollah says its actions against Israeli forces are in support of Palestinians in Gaza.

The cross-border violence has so far killed at least 529 people in Lebanon, according to an AFP tally, most of them fighters but also including 104 civilians.

On the Israeli side, 24 civilians

and 22 soldiers have been killed, according to the military.

### Diplomatic efforts

Diplomatic efforts are underway to contain soaring tensions between Hezbollah and Israel.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said a flurry of diplomatic activity has sought to contain the anticipated Israeli response, after Defense Minister Yoav Gallant threatened to "hit the enemy hard."

Italy's foreign minister told his Israeli and Lebanese counterparts Monday it was "possible to interrupt the spiral of violence" as he reiterated calls for a ceasefire, his

## Iranian president invited to BRICS summit in Russia

The Kremlin confirmed that Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has been invited to attend a summit of BRICS group of major emerging economies in Russia in October. Pezeshkian has already had an invitation from Moscow to the BRICS summit in Kazan, Kremlin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov told Izvestia newspaper.

Peskov added that Russian President Vladimir Putin is eager to meet



with Iran's new chief executive.

"We hope that the new Iranian president will come to this summit because we will be happy to see him, and Putin is preparing to meet Pezeshkian at the BRICS summit," Peskov said.

Back on July 8, Putin congratulated Pezeshkian on his election victory. During a subsequent phone call, the two leaders expressed their readiness to sign a strategic cooperation agreement between Tehran and Moscow on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit.

The BRICS summit at the level of heads of state will be held on October 22-24. Iran became an official member of BRICS on January 1, 2024.

## Maduro re-elected as Venezuela's leader



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro reacts after his victory in presidential election in Caracas on July 29, 2024.

● JUAN BARRETO/AFP

win to Chávez, who anointed Maduro as his successor shortly before his death in 2013. "Long live Chávez. Chávez is alive!" Maduro shouted.

Addressing supporters in the capital, Caracas, the 61-year-old leader said: "I am Nicolás Maduro Moros – the re-elected president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ... and I will defend our democracy, our law and our people."

"The Venezuelans and the entire world know what happened," González said in his first remarks.

The opposition leader, María Corina Machado – who had thrown her weight behind González's campaign after being banned from running – rejected the result, claiming the opposition had won in every single state.

"We won and everybody knows it," she said. "We haven't just defeated them politically and morally, today we defeated them with votes," Machado told journalists, claiming González should be considered the country's president-elect.

### International Desk

Nicolas Maduro has been declared the winner of Venezuela's presidential election by the country's electoral authority – a result that appeared to dash opposition hopes of ending his socialist rule.

Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) said Maduro won with 51.21% of votes compared with 44.2% for his rival, the former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia.

The council said that with about 80% of votes counted, Maduro had secured more than 5m compared with González's 4.4m.

The result was immediately challenged by rivals and several governments in the region and beyond.

The Venezuelan opposition dismissed the CNE's announcement as fraudulent

and promised to challenge the result.

It said its candidate had won with 70% of the votes and insisted he was the rightful president-elect.

The opposition said vote tallies it had received, as well as quick counts, showed González had a lead of 40 percentage points over the incumbent.

Opposition parties had united behind González in an attempt to unseat President Maduro after 11 years in power. Opinion polls conducted ahead of the election had suggested González would roundly defeat the president.

While China, Iran, and Russia congratulated Maduro on his re-election Washington and other foreign governments from Europe and some South American countries cast doubt on official results. Maduro dedicated his

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