

# Tehran decries US 'inappropriate behavior' against Iranian migrants

## International Desk

Iran condemned the US government's "inappropriate and humiliating" treatment of immigrants, including Iranian nationals, following its crackdown on undocumented migrants across the United States. The condemnation came after the US sent 119 undocumented migrants from several Asian countries, including Iran, to Panama, in a move signaling an intensification of the US administration's deportation effort. A military plane carrying 119 migrants from countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, China, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Pakistan flew from California to Panama City on Wednesday in what was expected to be the first of three migrant flights to the country. Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei in a statement on Friday called the US move unjustified and a violation of human rights standards.

Baqaei stressed the importance of adhering to international norms, describing the "inhumane actions" of the US government against Iranian nationals as "unacceptable." "Iran is the homeland of all Iranians, and our compatriots can freely return to their homeland," Baqaei stated, reiterating the Foreign Ministry's readiness to facilitate their return and resolve related issues. He emphasized that the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will take all necessary measures to protect the rights of Iranian citizens abroad. In the three weeks since President Donald Trump took office, Americans have witnessed a frenzy of arrests and deportations. More than 14,000 undocumented migrants have been arrested since Trump's inauguration, US Border czar Tom Homan told 77 WABC radio in an interview on Tuesday.



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## Iran confirms receiving messages from new Syrian rulers

### International Desk

Iran said Saturday that it had received messages from the new government in Damascus following the ouster of former president Bashar al-Assad.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is indirectly in contact with Damascus," Tehran's special envoy for Syrian affairs Mohammad Reza Raouf Sheibani was quoted as saying by IRNA.

The diplomat said Iran had "also received messages" from Syria, but did not specify the intermediary country facilitating the communication. Sheibani was responding to a question about recent comments by Syria's de facto foreign minister, Asaad al-Shibani, regarding communications with Iran. The Syrian foreign minister said on Wednesday that his country had received positive messages but wanted further reassurance from Russia and Iran.

"There are positive messages, but we want these positive messages to turn into a clear policy that makes the Syrian people feel reassured," Sheibani said at the World Government Summit 2025 in Dubai.

"Our view of the developments in Syria and the restoration of relations with Damascus is forward-looking," Iranian official said, emphasizing that Iran was "thoughtfully" monitoring the situation there.

Iran, an ally of former government, evacuated its diplomatic mission in Syria in December when militants, led by current interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa, overthrew Assad.

Sharaa said in December that Syria "cannot continue without relations with an important regional country like Iran".

He added that ties between Damascus and Teh-



Mohammad Reza Raouf Sheibani

ran "must be based on respect for the sovereignty of both countries and non-interference in the affairs of both countries".

Sheibani, who previously served as Iran's ambassador to Syria, reiterated Tehran's position that the "future and destiny" of Syria must be determined by Syrians alone.

"Iran's positions concerning the developments in Damascus are clear. Given Syria's special position in the West Asia region, we believe that its future and fate must be decided by its own people with the involvement of all political currents," Sheibani stated.

"The stability and peace of Syria are of particular importance to us, and we are against any foreign interference in the affairs of this country," he said.

Sheibani also noted that he has discussed Syria with the Russian president's special envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin during a recent visit to Moscow.

## Iranian, Lebanese FM's urge settlement of dispute over flights

### International Desk

Iranian and Lebanese foreign ministers discussed a recent dispute over Iranian flights to Lebanon after the Arab country barred two Iranian aircraft from landing in the Lebanese capital on Friday.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Lebanese counterpart Youssef Rajji in a phone conversation on Saturday called for the settlement of issue and expressed their readiness for "constructive talks in good faith."

On Thursday, Lebanon's Directorate General of Civil Aviation said it had "temporarily rescheduled" some flights including from Iran until February 18 as it was implementing "additional security measures."

Iran's Ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, on Friday said that Tehran is trying to restore flights between the two countries, adding that the Lebanese government had requested that another plane replace the Iranian plane to evacuate Lebanese stranded in Iran.

Saeed Chalandari, CEO of Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport, said on Friday that Iran had rejected the proposal.

"Naturally, we do not agree to their request, because if there is to be a flight between the two countries, it must be a two-way flight," Chalandari said.

Lebanon dispatched two planes on Friday from its own national airliner Middle East Airlines to bring the stranded Lebanese home from Iran, but Iran refused to allow the Lebanese aircraft to land on its territory.

Lebanon's decision sparked a protest by Lebanese people who blocked the Beirut airport road and burned tires to protest the decision. The developments coincided with Israel's



Youssef Rajji

Abbas Araghchi

threats against Iranian planes landing in Lebanon.

Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee had warned the army was prepared "to thwart" any attempts to transfer funds or weapons to Hezbollah resistance group in Lebanon.

Adraee has claimed that Iran and Hezbollah "have been exploiting... the Beirut international airport through civilian flights, to smuggle funds dedicated to arming" the group.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei in a statement accused Israel of disrupting flights from Tehran to Beirut.

"The threat by the Zionist regime to a passenger plane carrying Lebanese citizens has disrupted normal flights to Beirut airport," he said.

Baqaei condemned the Israeli threat as a violation of international law. He also called for the International Civil Aviation Organization and other world bodies "to stop Israel's dangerous behavior against the safety and security of civil aviation."

## Pezeshkian orders probe ...

On Wednesday, 19-year-old business administration student Amir Mohammad Khaleghi was stabbed by two motorcycle-riding muggers who stole his backpack in front of his dorm. Khaleghi later succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. Hossein Simaei Sarraf, who was on a visit to Saudi Arabia, cut short his visit to the Arab country and returned to Iran to follow up the issue.

Authorities have vowed to pursue the case to calm the protesters who are unhappy over the lack of security around the university premises, despite past complaints.

Tehran's public prosecutor Ali Salehi said on Saturday that several suspects have been arrested in this regard so far. However, he said authorities are



working to apprehend "the perpetrator of this crime as quickly as possible and bring him to justice".

Simaei Sarraf said on Saturday that the head of Tehran University's dormitory management had resigned in the wake of the killing.

The minister also denied reports that students had been arrested following

the protests.

Government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani, addressing the matter, said on Friday on X, "The security of students and the peace of families is a duty and priority for the government. We invite everyone to keep the path of dialogue open by maintaining peace."

State news agency IRNA reported that Tehran University caretaker head, Hossein Hosseini, expressed sympathy with the university students by attending their gathering on Friday night.

"Right now, we are all in an emotional atmosphere, but starting tomorrow, we must carefully address the demands in an expert atmosphere and with the presence of student representatives," he was quoted as saying.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

