



# Iran turns to global cultural allies after damage to heritage sites in Israel attacks

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has formally accused Israel of endangering its cultural heritage during the recent 12-day war and says it will file an international complaint based on damage assessments currently underway, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri told reporters at a news conference in Tehran.

The minister said Iran had submitted multiple urgent letters to UNESCO at the height of hostilities, warning of possible attacks on its ancient sites. According to Salehi-Amiri, the UN agency passed Iran's concerns on to Israel, but "even UNESCO's warnings were ignored." Israel, along with the United States, withdrew from UNESCO in 2011 and no longer abides by its cultural protections.

The ministry, joined by archaeologists, museum officials, and national heritage NGOs, began transferring historic

artifacts from major institutions — including the National Museum of Iran and the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace — to secure locations just days into the war. Emergency measures included the installation of "blue shields" on museum rooftops, signaling protected cultural sites under international law.

Critics online raised questions over improvised steps, such as wrapping chandeliers in plastic and rushed evacuations. But officials insisted that in the absence of wartime protocols or prior experience, museums had acted quickly under fire. Tehran endured nearly daily Israeli air raids during the conflict.

"The very fact that they moved priceless collections overnight under bombardment is commendable," said one senior preservation official. Authorities now aim to roll out war-specific crisis drills and protective guidelines during the current ceasefire.

Salehi-Amiri confirmed that Iran's government had approved a nationwide

directive requiring ministries to evaluate both direct and indirect wartime damage — including to infrastructure, cultural heritage, and human life — in preparation for a possible international lawsuit against Israel.

Ali Darabi, Iran's deputy minister of cultural heritage, stressed that both Israel and the US "have walked away from all binding UNESCO obligations" and must be held accountable. He called on the global community to enforce protections for heritage in conflict zones and ramp up legal penalties for violators.

Darabi also pointed to broader regional coordination. Iran is working with member states of the Civilizations Forum — launched by Armenia and Greece and including ten countries — to exchange expertise and, where possible, repatriate stolen or displaced cultural objects.

He said Iran's Tehran-based Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage, representing 24 nations, had issued diplomatic



notes during the war. Several member states released statements in support of heritage protection.

Responding to a proposal raised by a local journalist, Darabi said Iran would

push for global rules that bar attacks on cultural sites and punish states that do. "This must be a permanent agenda," he said, "because any advanced nation could face such threats in the future."

## Spanish media praise Iran's 'At the End of the Night' after Valencia festival triumph



### Arts & Culture Desk

Spanish media lauded Iranian drama 'At the End of the Night' following its twin acting wins at the 40th Cinema Jove Festival, which concluded on June 28 in Valencia. Local outlets described the series as "quietly powerful" and "psychologically rich," days after it clinched jury awards for Best Actor and Best Actress, ILNA reported.

Directed by Ida Panahandeh and

produced by Filmnet, the Tehran-set drama stars Parsa Pirouzfar and Hoda Zeinolabedin as a middle-class couple whose marriage unravels under emotional strain.

Critics singled out the show's subdued storytelling and visual restraint, which they say allow it to speak "without noise, yet be heard."

Valencia Plaza highlighted the "deep, internal performances"

by the two leads, calling them a window into "repressed emotions and human fragility." The series was praised for presenting a universally relatable portrait of emotional decay with no need for embellishment.

Europa Press placed the drama among the most resonant entries at this year's event. It described the show as a "precise and layered" exploration of contemporary societal tensions — from

economic anxiety to the erosion of connection — all distilled into one intimate domestic setting.

The Institut Valencià de Cultura, which runs the festival, said the 2025 edition centered on how younger creators interpret a shifting world. The Iranian entry, it said, offered a "real and global" view on human struggle through an unflinching lens.

The Valencia win marks the second international accolade for 'At

the End of the Night,' which also earned Panahandeh a Best Directing prize earlier this year at France's Series Mania.

Spanish commentators praised the work as "committed" and "honest," noting how it bypasses common tropes to depict Iran's social fabric in subtle, human terms. The drama asks, as one reviewer put it, "how we might recover empathy and dialogue in a fractured world."

## Iranian author, illustrator nominated for 2026 Astrid Lindgren Award



### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Children's Book Council has nominated author Arman Arian and illustrator Hoda Haddadi for the 2026 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA), according to a statement released Wednesday in Tehran.

The award, established by the Swedish government in 2002 in memory of the beloved author Astrid Lindgren, is the world's most lucrative prize in children's literature. Valued at 5 million Swedish kronor (roughly \$470,000), it recognizes authors, illustrators, storytell-

ers, and reading promoters whose work upholds humanistic values and literary quality—regardless of nationality or language, ISNA reported.

Arian, nominated in the writers' category, is known for reimagining Iran's ancient myths and cultural narratives for young readers. His storytelling draws from sources like the Avesta, Shahnameh, and Bundahishn, blending classical inspiration with fresh, suspenseful, and psychologically rich plots.

The council praised his "deep and layered character-building" and his cinematic narrative style that fuses

traditional and modern elements. His books don't cast children as passive readers but "thinking agents," the council said, noting that his fiction tackles themes like peace, anti-war values, superstition, women's roles, family, and civic engagement—without ever talking down to his audience.

In the illustrators' category, Haddadi was cited for her "evocative, collage-based visuals" and her ability to create a distinctly feminine and nature-infused world shaped by Persian literary heritage. Her art, often marked by vibrant textures, has earned multiple awards and reflects years of work in education across various age groups.

The ALMA is second in prestige only to the Hans Christian Andersen Award and is given annually to one or more individuals or organizations. In Iran, four bodies hold the right to nominate candidates: the Children's Book Council, the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the Research Institute for the History of Children's Literature, and the Association of Children's Writers.

Winners of the 2026 award will be announced in Stockholm in March.

## Iran wins global IEEE award, showcasing scientific resilience in crisis



### Social Desk

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) named its Iran Section the world's "Outstanding Section" for 2025, recognizing its top-tier performance in research, education, and technology outreach, according to a statement from Iran's ICT Research Institute on Tuesday.

The IEEE Outstanding Section Award is one of the group's highest honors and is granted to national branches that make a "significant impact" in advancing global engineering standards, ISNA reported. Iran's selection comes at a time when the country is still reeling from regional instability and economic headwinds. Yet, its scientists and engineers "rose to the challenge," officials said, showcasing resilience and "unlocking talent" despite mounting external pressure.

The IEEE's selection committee, composed of senior members from around the world—evaluated sections based on rigorous benchmarks. Iran's branch

earned top marks for hosting high-level conferences and technical workshops, supporting cutting-edge research and innovation, and building academic-industry bridges through professional networking.

Officials also praised the branch for engaging in public science campaigns and promoting STEM education. "It's not just about technical work," one IEEE committee member noted, "Iran showed how engineering can serve society." The award, viewed as a badge of credibility and a global endorsement, is expected to boost Iran's visibility across international academic and tech circles. The Iran Section's involvement in regional and global IEEE initiatives also helped tip the scales in its favor.

Iran's recognition in 2025 underscores how scientific advancement can "cut through the noise" of political tension. While sanctions and conflict continue to shape the country's broader narrative, this award signals that Iran's tech community refuses to fall behind.