

Bolivarian wrath unshackled

Maduro vows 'armed struggle' in case of Trump's attack

Two Venezuelan F-16 fighter jets overfly US warship



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro addresses troops and the nation in a televised speech broadcast on state media on September 5, 2025.

AP

International Desk

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Friday warned that his country would move to a stage of "armed struggle" if attacked, after US President Don-

ald Trump said Venezuelan military aircraft could be shot down if they approached American vessels in the Caribbean. Maduro's warning came as tensions escalated sharply between Caracas and Washington follow-

ing the overflight of two Venezuelan F-16 fighter jets above a US warship deployed to the region. "We are still in the phase of unarmed struggle," Maduro told troops during what he described as the operational activation of the Bolivarian National Militia. "But if there is an attack, the whole people will respond against aggression, whether local, regional or national." The Venezuelan leader said the country had entered an "enlistment and preparation phase," with plans to deploy defensive, training, and retraining capacities across the population. He announced the creation of 5,336 new militia units and the activation of 15,000 defensive installations, with some 8.2 million members of the Bolivarian Militia called up.

His comments followed Trump's stark warning in Washington earlier in the day. "I would say they're going to be in trouble. We'll let them know about that ... if they fly in a dangerous position," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

The Pentagon said the US vessel was part of a broader deployment aimed at combating criminal organizations and what Trump has repeatedly claimed to be "narco-terrorism." In recent weeks, Washington has dispatched seven warships, F-35 fighter jets, and a nuclear-powered submarine to the southern Caribbean.

Maduro sent a formal letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in late August, denouncing what he described as escalating US aggression and

calling for urgent international intervention.

Maduro says Trump seeking regime change

The escalation follows a September 3 US missile strike on a speedboat allegedly carrying drugs from Venezuela, which killed 11 people. Maduro denounced the strike as an "immoral threat," saying Venezuela faced "the greatest threat our continent has seen in 100 years." The Venezuelan leader said Washington was pursuing regime change under the guise of anti-narcotics operations. "I demand that Trump abandon his plan for a violent regime change in Venezuela and throughout Latin America, and respect the sovereignty, the right to peace and the independence of our

countries," he said. Maduro rejected US accusations that his government is tied to drug cartels, insisting Venezuela has "always been willing to talk" with Washington but only on the basis of mutual respect. Differences, he added, do not justify a "military conflict."

Trump, a long-time critic of Maduro, denied accusations of being after regime change in Venezuela. "We're not talking about that," he said when asked, but reiterated claims about a "very strange election" earlier this year in which Maduro secured a third term.

Last month, the US president doubled the reward for information leading to Maduro's arrest to \$50 million, accusing him of being "one of the largest narco-traffickers in the world."

Larijani: Strategic Iran-Iraq cooperation must become more tangible

Senior Iraqi cleric says 12-day war enhanced Iran's power in region

International Desk

Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, met with Iraqi cleric and political figure Ammar al-Hakim on Saturday, calling Iraq a "friendly, like-minded and strong country" in the region.

He called Iran-Iraq cooperation "strategic", stressing that, in today's dynamic circumstances, such cooperation must take on a more tangible form.

Hakim, for his part, pointed to Israel's June war against Iran, saying contrary to the regime's intentions, the conflict strengthened Iran's standing in the region, with Muslims praising Tehran's powerful role.

He added that Israel's "malicious behavior" in pursuit of its so-called "Greater Israel" theory has vindicated Iran's longstanding position in branding the regime a "cancerous tumor," adding that the entire region has now grown sensitive to the regime's adventurism.

Hakim arrived in Tehran late Friday for meetings with senior Iranian officials. Upon arrival, he visited the mausoleum of the late Imam Khomeini to pay his respects to the founder of the Islamic Republic, and also met with Hassan Khomeini, the custodian of the shrine.

He said in the meeting that Shiite



and Sunni Muslims alike express solidarity with Iran, emphasizing that Muslims supported any country that defended itself against Israel.

Hakim described Iran as the frontline bastion of the Islamic world, noting that regional states have recognized that if Iran were weakened in its fight against Israel, the entire region would suffer.

In a separate meeting with Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, Hakim said relations between Iran and Iraq went beyond those of two ordinary neighbors, and offered his assessment of the political and social climate in Iraq.

Ejei underlined the strong ties between Tehran and Baghdad, say-



Senior Iraqi cleric and political figure Ammar al-Hakim (r.) meets with Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, in Tehran on September 6, 2025.

IRNA

ing recent regional developments showed that enemies opposed the empowerment of Muslims.

He stressed Iran's neighbor-first policy, adding that Iraq held a special place given the many commonalities between the two nations. "We do not seek confrontation with any of our neighbors, even those aligned with our enemies—except in cases where they openly act in line with hostile plots against us," he said.

Araghchi raps 'deafening Western silence' over Israel's nuclear arsenal

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Friday accused Western powers of turning a blind eye to Israel's reported expansion of its nuclear arsenal, calling their silence "deafening" and proof of double standards.

"Iran has long warned that Western hysteria over nuclear proliferation in our region is all fluff," Araghchi wrote on X. "It is therefore not a surprise that there is deafening Western silence over the apparent expansion of the only nuclear weapons arsenal in our region—the nukes in the hands of their genocidal ally."

He attached an Associated Press report citing satellite images of Israel's Dimona nuclear site,

which experts said may point to work on a new heavy water reactor or facilities linked to weapons assembly. Israel is widely believed to possess between 90 and 300 nuclear warheads, though the figure has never been officially confirmed. Israel is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its program is not open to international inspections.

By contrast, Western powers have long pressured Iran over its nuclear program, which Tehran insists is purely civilian. In June, Israel and the United States launched a war on Iran, accusing the Islamic Republic of moving toward a nuclear weapon with no concrete evidence, a conflict that derailed ongoing negotiations over Tehran's atomic activities.

Iran to push IAEA resolution

International Desk

Iran plans to present a draft resolution at the upcoming General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), declaring attacks on nuclear facilities unacceptable.

Diplomatic sources said the document is being drafted and will be submitted at the forthcoming session. Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's ambassador and permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, confirmed the move in a post on X on Friday.

According to the announced schedule, the IAEA General Conference will be held in Vienna on September 14 for five days. Iran's nuclear sites

came under attack by Israel and the United States in June. The strikes triggered a 12-day war during ongoing diplomatic negotiations between Tehran and Washington over Iran's nuclear program, effectively halting the talks.

Tehran blames what it calls a biased report by the IAEA Director General—which paved the way for a Board of Governors resolution against Iran just before Israel's attack—as one of the factors behind the conflict. In response, Iran suspended its cooperation with the Agency. The latest round of talks between Iran and the IAEA over a new cooperation framework took place on Friday but yielded no concrete results.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran's military power ...

The Shah, however, refused, saying, "We made the mistake of buying them."

Page 1 > How can we now complain?" Notably, no other country used jumbo jets as refueling tankers, given the prohibitive costs.

Azarbarzin added, "Each 747 cost \$150 million, but the Shah's government paid \$40 million apiece to have them converted. When we asked US advisers for

manuals on how to operate the tankers, they laughed, saying no such manuals existed – because even the US military didn't have such aircraft."

Today, the contrast is stark. Thanks to the knowledge and determination of its young scientists, Iran has made tangible advances in defense, reaching a high level of deterrence. Despite decades of sanctions – particularly targeting the defense sector – Iran has developed

ballistic and cruise missiles, advanced drones, air defense systems, tanks and armored vehicles, and has kept up with the latest global technologies.

Unlike the monarchy, which relied heavily on foreign suppliers, the Islamic Republic is now recognized as a nation that has achieved self-reliance in its defense industry. Its military power no longer depends on outsiders but rests firmly on domestic capabilities.