

Iran committed to good neighborliness, respect for sovereignty: *Pezeshkian*

Envoy says US-Israeli strikes 'blind', clear example of 'war crimes'

International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian underlined Iran's commitment to maintaining friendly relations with regional governments based on good neighborliness and mutual respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a tweet on Saturday, he stressed, however, that this does not negate Iran's inherent right to defend itself against military aggression from the United States and the Israeli regime. "Iran's defensive operations are exclusively directed against targets and facilities that are the source of aggressive actions against the Iranian nation, and we consider them legitimate targets," the official stated. He explained that Iran has not attacked friendly or neighboring countries, but rather has targeted US military bases, installations, and facilities within the region. The message comes amid escalating tensions following a joint military operation by Israel and the United States against Iran on Feb-

ruary 28, in response to which Iran has targeted US bases in neighboring countries. However, reports of strikes on civilian targets have emerged, prompting reactions from some of those nations. Earlier, Pezeshkian had said in a video message that the Leadership Council has explicitly instructed the armed forces not to launch missile strikes against neighboring countries unless an attack is originated from their territories against Iran. Tehran had previously warned of potential "false flag" operations by Israel to damage Iran's relations with its neighbors. Pezeshkian, who became a member of the Leadership Council following the martyrdom of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in an Israeli-American strike emphasized that Iran has no intention of initiating military aggression. "Our neighboring countries are our brothers... I believe that the issue with neighbors should be resolved through diplomacy," Pezeshkian said.



A screenshot shows President Masoud Pezeshkian speaking to the Iranian nation in a video message on March 7, 2026.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also accused American aggressors of using "friendly" Arab states' territories to target innocent children and civilians in Iran, but affirmed that Iran's response would be directed "solely at US bases and facilities". "Iran and our Arab brothers have lived together for centuries in an

atmosphere of friendship, mutual respect, and affection," he wrote in Arabic on his X account. Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesman for the Armed Forces General Staff, later stated that only locations where attacks on Iran originate from would be considered legitimate targets. He stressed that all efforts have

been made to avoid harming "dear and Muslim" neighboring nations and to uphold the principle of good neighborliness. "We remain committed to this principle."

US, Israel deliberately targeting civilians

Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, Amir Saeed Iravani, meanwhile told reporters on Saturday that the strikes by Israel and the United States are "blind" and deliberately target civilians and civilian infrastructure across the country. "These actions constitute a clear example of war crimes and crimes against humanity," he said, rejecting claims of solely targeting military objectives as "baseless and false", since facts on the ground prove otherwise. Iravani reiterated that, according to the latest report from the Iranian Red Crescent Society, at least 1,332 civilians, including women and children, have lost their lives, and thousands more have been injured, with

casualties continuing to rise. He once again called on the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General to condemn the "aggression, war crimes, and crimes against humanity" perpetrated by the United States and Israel against the Iranian people and to compel aggressors to immediately cease all military attacks against Iran and against civilians and civilian infrastructure. He also urged the Council to ensure accountability for these egregious violations of international humanitarian law and war crimes. "We continue to exercise our inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter as long as this aggression and these barbaric attacks continue. Our response is legal, necessary, and proportionate," Iravani stated. He underlined that Iran solely targets military objectives of aggressors and does not target civilians or the interests of neighboring countries. Iravani said Iran is currently investigating reports of attacks on civilian sites but initial assessments suggest that some incidents may have resulted from interception or disruption caused by US defense systems, potentially causing deviations from intended military targets. "Iran does not seek war or to escalate tensions. But it will never relinquish its sovereignty."

Iran destroys US ...

The Iranian Army said its navy, backed by a sweeping drone wave, targeted US bases and Israeli cities. In a separate notice, the Army announced that 13 advanced drones - MQ-9 Reapers, Hermes 900s and Orbiters - had been destroyed by the integrated air-defense network in the past 24 hours. The Iranian Armed Forces spokesman Abolfazl Shekarchi reiterated that any point used for aggression against the Islamic Republic would be hit as a "legitimate target." "All US bases used for the aggression against Iranian soil have been targeted," Shekarchi added, stressing that Iran stayed clear of harming neighboring countries and "would sticks to this principle."

Energy crisis

The conflict has sent oil prices soaring. Brent crude, which traded around \$70 before the war, jumped around 35% to settle at \$94, the biggest weekly surge on record. Qatar's Energy Minister Saad al-Kaabi warned in an interview with the Financial Times that a disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz could push prices to \$150 within weeks and force Persian Gulf exporters to invoke force majeure clauses, with global GDP growth taking a hit. Iran has warned ships and oil tank-

ers to stay away from the strait, through which 20% of the global crude oil passes, deeming it unsafe due to the ongoing war. According to the Iranian media, the country's Armed Forces have hit more than ten "transgressor" tankers; the latest on Saturday was the Prima, targeted by a suicide drone after ignoring repeated IRGC warnings. Some 300 oil and LNG tankers are said to be stranded on both sides of the strait. US President Donald Trump has suggested that the American Navy escort tankers through the waterway. IRGC spokesman Ali Naeini said Iran would "highly welcome" such escorts and was "waiting for their arrival." However, Naeini urging the US to recall its recent attacks on tankers before taking such a decision.

Flights called off

Arab media reported that Dubai International Airport was shut down after several strong explosions, and Emirates airline cancelled all flights to Dubai until further notice. CNN, using data from FlightRadar24, estimated that since the 28 February, nearly 14 000 scheduled flights from major airports in 10 countries have been called off.

Tehran seeks urgent UNESCO shield for heritage sites

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's heritage deputy minister formally requested on March 7 that UNESCO grant "enhanced protection" status to all Iran's World Heritage sites, citing escalating regional hostilities and damage to Tehran's Golestan Palace following coordinated US-Israeli military operations which began on February 28. Ali Darabi, deputy minister for cultural heritage, wrote to UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany invoking Articles 9 and 10 of the 1999 Second Protocol to The Hague Convention, which safeguards cultural property during armed conflict. The letter, dispatched from Tehran, included precise geographic coordinates for technical review, IRNA reported. Qajar-era Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013 in the heart of Tehran, sustained "significant damage" from recent explosions, Darabi said during a site visit. Blast waves shattered traditional Orsi windows (traditional wooden sash windows with colored glass), geometric wood latticework and



Golestan Palace on March 3, 2026, after it was damaged during US and Israeli airstrikes in Tehran, Iran

doors; the 120-year-old Mirror Hall, recently restored, suffered structural compromise. Approximately 80% of the historic sash windows behind Naser al-Din Shah's throne were destroyed, according to Alireza Izadi, director-general for heritage registration. Explosions near Tehran's Sa'dabad Palace complex caused no reported damage to the site, officials confirmed. Iran frames its appeal as a test

of the international community's commitment to preserving "shared human heritage", particularly during crisis. "Protection of these irreplaceable testimonies to ancient history and artistic creativity transcends national boundaries", the letter states, calling urgent safeguarding a "moral and international responsibility". The Islamic Republic stands ready to supply supplementary

documentation and technical cooperation to expedite UNESCO's review. The correspondence was also copied to Iran's permanent UNESCO delegation, the foreign ministry and the national UNESCO commission. UNESCO previously acknowledged monitoring cultural sites across the region and sharing coordinates with conflicting parties to "prevent potential damage".

Iran to file int'l complaint over deadly strike on Minab primary school

Political Desk

Iran's Interior Ministry has begun filing a formal complaint with international legal bodies over a February 28 strike on the Shajarah Tayyebah girls' primary school in Minab, a coastal county in Hormozgan Province overlooking the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran has described the attack, the deadliest reported civilian incident since the start of coordinated US-Israeli military operations against Iran, as a war crime, IRNA reported. According to the ministry, the Inte-

rior Ministry is coordinating with the Education Ministry, while the Foreign Ministry prepares to submit the case to international judicial and human rights institutions. Authorities have compiled evidence, including the identities and photographs of children killed or injured in the strike, and forwarded the documentation for international submission. Iranian officials stated that students were attending classes when the facility came under attack. They emphasized that the strike violated fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and contradicted

Washington's stated commitment to human rights. The assault occurred on February 28, the opening day of what Tehran has denounced as an unprovoked act of aggression. Iran warned that perpetrators should not expect impunity and urged international institutions to act swiftly to bring those responsible to trial. Alongside these legal efforts, Tehran indicated that Iran's armed forces are pursuing measures under the country's "legitimate right of defense" to hold those behind the attack accountable.

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