

Third Leader vows vengeance for blood of martyrs

Regional countries should close US bases: **Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei**



Iran's third Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei releases his first message on March 12, 2026.
IRNA

International Desk

Iran's third Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei said in his first message on Thursday that Iran would not forgo taking vengeance for the blood of those killed in the recent US-Israeli aggression.

He said the vengeance will not solely be related to the martyrdom of the former Leader, but every member of the nation martyred in the war, particularly children, his official website reported. The US and Israel initiated a joint aggression on Iran on February 28, that has so far taken the lives hundreds of Iranians, including the former leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Ayatollah Khamenei also assured that Iran will either extract compensation from its enemies for

the damage they have caused, or it will destroy the enemies' assets to an equivalent degree.

Referring to the importance of the people's position, Ayatollah Khamenei called for maintaining unity and the nation's effective presence on the scene, both in streets gatherings and in social, political, educational, cultural, and security arenas.

Ayatollah Khamenei also extend his heartfelt gratitude to the fighters of the Resistance Front in the region. He said that Iran considers the countries of the Resistance Front as its best friends and an inseparable part of the values of the Islamic Revolution.

American pledge of security nothing but lie

Ayatollah Khamenei also ad-

ressed the leaders of regional countries, stressing that Iran has consistently maintained constructive relations with all of them, but adversaries have gradually established military and financial bases in some of these states to secure their dominance over the region.

He noted that during the recent aggression, some of these military bases were used against Iran.

"We have not committed aggression against those countries themselves; rather, we have specifically targeted those bases," he said, adding that Iran will inevitably continue this course of action. The new Leader urged those countries to clearly state their position regarding the aggression on Iran and close those bases as soon as possible, as they should

now realize that "America's claim of establishing security and peace was nothing but a lie."

Ayatollah Khamenei later expressed gratitude to the country's Armed Forces for their defense against the aggressive front in the current war, highlighting that the nation expects a continued effective and strong response.

He stressed that the option of blocking the Strait of Hormuz should definitely remain on the table, noting that studies have been conducted on the possibility of opening other fronts where the enemy has little experience and would be particularly vulnerable.

He added that in line with preserving national interests, these fronts could be activated if the state of war continues.

New wave of Iran's strikes targets Israel, American positions in region

Resistance forces down US refueling aircraft in Iraq

International Desk

Iran's Armed Forces on Friday launched fresh strikes on the American and Israeli positions on the 14th day of the joint aggression against Iran, targeting their important military sites. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said in separate statements it launched at least two rounds of missile and drone attacks on the US bases in the regional countries as well as the Israel's military sites in the occupied territories.

missiles and drones struck Israeli military positions in Tel Aviv, Eilat, and West Al-Quds as well as the US targets in Bahrain and the city of Erbil in Iraq's Kurdistan region.

Iran's Army also said in a statement on Friday that it targeted the headquarters of Israel's defense forces in the occupied territories with suicide drones.

US refueling aircraft crash

Meanwhile, a US Boeing KC-130 refueling aircraft crashed after it was targeted by the resistance forces

aircraft crashed in western Iraq while the second one landed safely in Israel. Iran's attacks come as the two allies continued their aggression against Iran on Friday, targeting several cities across the country.

Attacks on non-military sites

Iran's Red Crescent Society on Friday published its latest report on attacks on non-military sites across the country.

The head of the organization Pirhossein Kolivand said that more than 24,500 civilian sites, including 19,755 residential buildings, have been damaged since the beginning of the aggression.

The US and Israeli armed forces began their aggression against Iran on February 28 by attacking 30 targets across the capital Tehran, killing several senior Iranian officials including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Since then, Iranian Armed Forces have decisively retaliated against the strikes by launching barrages of missile and drones against the Israeli-occupied territories as well as US bases in region.

The aggression against Iran has caused a sharp increase in oil and gas prices with the economists and global banks warning that the issue could exert further inflationary pressure on the global economy and change the predictions for the global economic growth, The Guardian reported.

in Iraq. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed the crash, saying that its four crew members were killed in the incident.

Earlier, CENTCOM had announced in a statement that it is aware of the loss of a US KC-135 refueling aircraft.

"The incident occurred in friendly airspace during Operation Epic Fury, and rescue efforts are ongoing," it said.

It said that two aircraft were involved in the incident. One of the



TASNIM

The attacks were carried out during the 43rd and 44th waves of the True Promise 4 Operation. During the 44th wave of the operation, the IRGC forces pounded the Israeli positions in the northern occupied territories, including Kiryat Shmona, Haifa, and Hadera. The US Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain and several other US bases in the region were also targeted by the IRGC missiles and drones. The operation followed the 43rd phase, when Kheibar Shekan

Iran seeks no regional instability, responds to attacks: Pezeshkian

Strait of Hormuz tensions direct result of US destabilizing actions: **UN Envoy**



Narendra Modi

Masoud Pezeshkian

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran does not seek to create instability in the region despite recent attacks on its infrastructure.

In a phone call with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he affirmed that Iran has responded to attacks by targeting US bases in regional countries, asserting this action is based on the right to self-defense, president.ir reported. "Iran has not initiated the conflict and has no desire to continue it," he said.

Modi expressed deep concern over the escalating tensions in the Middle East, emphasizing that New Delhi will exert maximum effort to play a role in diplomacy. He stressed that escalation benefits no party.

The exchange comes as tensions in the region have sharply increased following a joint opera-

tion by the United States and Israel against Iran, which began on February 28. Iran has retaliated by striking targets in Israel and at US bases in regional countries, maintaining that these strikes are not directed at the host nations but rather at facilities linked to the United States.

No safe passage for hostile countries' vessels

The conflict has significantly impacted regional stability, particularly affecting oil prices and trade, as well as transit through the Strait of Hormuz.

Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi confirmed in an interview with AFP that Iran has allowed some ships to transit the Strait of Hormuz but that countries participating in attacks against Iran should not expect safe passage.

Takht Ravanchi also denied claims by US President Donald

Trump regarding Iran's alleged mining of the Strait of Hormuz. "We want to ensure that war is not imposed on us again," Takht Ravanchi added.

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeed Iravani, also emphasized Iran's commitment to the principle of freedom of navigation, but stated that the ongoing tensions in the region, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, are a direct result of the destabilizing actions of the United States, not Iran's lawful exercise of its right of self-defense.

Meanwhile, Mohsen Milani, a professor at South Florida University, said in a tweet that Iran is at least twice older that many western states and will withstand such adversities. "Iran will endure - an ancient and vibrant civilization that has repeatedly survived devastating foreign attacks and risen again," he stressed.

Looming cyber warfare

Another example is the evolution of ransomware, which is now conducted through sophisticated phishing and network penetration aided by AI. For instance, the WannaCry virus in 2017 utilized a Windows security vulnerability to spread globally, affecting over 200 countries.

4. Security challenges in ACW

This new era of conflict faces serious security hurdles: Stealth tactics: Modern attacks often use AI and big data to remain hidden, making detection extremely difficult.

Attack velocity: Cyberattacks can occur in seconds, leaving defense systems with no time to react.

Anonymous enemy: Many attacks are launched by unknown groups or state actors, making attribution difficult.

Lack of global coordination: While cyber warfare is global, there are no strong, mandatory international regulations to govern it.

ACW is no longer a science fiction concept; it is a reality taking shape in the invisible shadows of the digital world. Built upon AI, machine learning, and IoT, it threatens not

only information systems but also economic, social, and national security. In this battlefield, digital adversaries range from hacking groups to state organizations and even autonomous entities. This reality proves that cybersecurity is no longer just the responsibility of technical teams, but a multidimensional challenge requiring cooperation between the public, private, and civil sectors. To counter this, a dynamic new approach to digital security must be adopted. Using AI for cyber defense, creating self-healing systems, and increasing public

awareness are top priorities. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for international laws to prevent cross-border cyberattacks.

Ultimately, ACW demonstrates that the digital world is becoming a battlefield. However, this challenge presents not only a threat but also an opportunity for technological evolution, enhancing security, and building a smart, resilient society. The future of digital security lies in human hands. If acted with intelligence and cooperation, this challenge could be turned into an opportunity for progress.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

