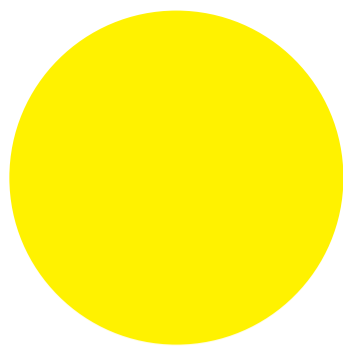


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Bringing war to Iran means bringing crisis back to Washington

By Masoud Dashti Derakhshan
International affairs analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Two weeks into the full-scale confrontation with Iran, expectations of a swift and controlled military campaign have given way to a far more complicated reality. What was initially presented as a limited operation has evolved into a broader strategic crisis, producing consequences that extend well beyond the battlefield and into the heart of global politics and economics. Rather than weakening Tehran, the conflict appears to have reinforced domestic cohesion. At the same time, the political costs for the governments behind the escalation are rising. Civilian casualties and the human toll of the conflict have increasingly become a moral and diplomatic burden, fueling outrage both inside Iran and across the wider region. The economic consequences have been equally severe. Disruptions to supply chains, rising transportation costs, and growing pressure on critical commodity markets have sent shockwaves through the international system, exposing the vulnerability of the world economy and raised new questions about the West's ability to manage crises of its own making. Iran has also demonstrated an ability to convert battlefield developments into diplomatic leverage. The use of captured combatants and other forms of strategic pressure underscores Tehran's broader message: military confrontation does not guarantee political control. On the contrary, wars that are launched to weaken an adversary can quickly entangle those who initiate them. In that sense, taking war to Iran has also meant exporting instability back to Washington and its allies.

Strait of Hormuz as strategic leverage
A central element of Tehran's

response has been its emphasis on the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian leaders have framed this waterway not simply as a geographic passage, but as a decisive instrument of deterrence, diplomacy, and national defense.

Recent statements from Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei have signaled that Iran is prepared to use its geographic and economic position as leverage if damages are not addressed and responsibility for the aggression is not acknowledged. In this view, any seizure or neutralization of hostile assets would be presented not as escalation for its own sake, but as a proportionate response rooted in deterrence and sovereignty. For Tehran, the Strait of Hormuz is no longer just a shipping corridor; it is an economic pressure point capable of reshaping regional and global calculations.

Retaliation felt beyond region

Iran's retaliatory actions have been marked less by indiscriminate escalation than by targeted signaling. Operations linked to the Strait of Hormuz have showcased both operational capability and calibrated intent. Iranian forces moved to restrict the transit of oil tankers that did not comply with Tehran's security framework, effectively introducing a form of conditional passage through one of the world's most critical energy corridors. The effects were immediate. Within days, Brent crude prices rose sharply, while West Texas Intermediate also posted significant gains, triggering concern across global financial markets. The wider consequences quickly became evident. China's reported suspension of fuel exports reflected just how deeply the conflict had begun to affect the infrastructure of international trade.

In this context, Iran appears to have shifted the contest from conventional military power to strategic endurance.

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Washington plotting false flag ops against Americans, Larijani says **2** >



A tanker vessel is damaged following unidentified attacks targeting two foreign tankers near Basra, Iraq, on March 12, 2026, while another ship sails in the distance amid ongoing US-Israeli aggression on Iran. **REUTERS**



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Araghchi: Strait of Hormuz open to all except US, its allies

Washington plotting false flag ops against Americans, Larijani says

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the Strait of Hormuz is open to all ships except those of the United States and its allies.

Araghchi reiterated in an interview with Al-Arabi Al-Jadid that the United States and Israel initiated the war, saying, "We are defending ourselves, and we only attack American bases and interests in the region."

The chief Iranian diplomat underscored the Iranian Armed Forces have not targeted any civilian or residential areas in the region, speculating that the Israeli regime may have targeted non-military areas in Arab countries to sever their relations with Iran.

"The Americans have made a drone identical to our Shahed drone, named Lucas, and it is being used to attack targets in Arab countries," he stated. Araghchi also voiced Iran's readiness to form a joint investigation committee with the participation of regional countries regarding the areas that have been targeted.

Addressing regional mediation efforts, the foreign minister said, "So far, no specific initiative has been proposed to



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi
● IRNA

end the war, but we welcome any regional initiative that leads to a just end to the war." "However, the end of the war is contingent upon ensuring that it does not recur and compensation is paid," he added.

Araghchi warns France of expanding conflict

In a phone call with his French counterpart, the Iranian foreign minister noted that the root cause of insecurity in the entire region, including Lebanon, is the aggression and hegemony of the Zionist regime.

In the telephone conversation on Saturday night, Araghchi stressed the importance of refraining from any actions that could escalate and broaden the scope of conflict.

While US President Donald Trump has called on France, China, Japan, South Korea and the UK to send warships to keep the Strait of Hormuz open, France's Minister of Armed Forces and Veteran Affairs Catherine Vautrin said Paris has no plans to send naval vessels to the strategic waterway.

In an interview with FRANCE 24, she also stressed that France is not participating in the war in the Middle East.

Iran 'has no war' with Americans

The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council wrote on his social media page that Iran is fundamentally opposed to terrorist schemes and "has no war with the American people".

Ali Larijani wrote Sunday on his X account, "I have heard that remnants of the Epstein team have plotted a scheme to create an incident similar to September 11 and to accuse Iran of it."

Emphasizing that Iran is fundamentally opposed to such terrorist plans, the top security official added, "Today, in response to US and Israeli aggression against Iran, it is acting in self-defense. In this defense, however, it is strong and resolute in punishing the aggressors."

President: Iran will rise stronger

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized that with the cooperation of "the noble people of Iran," the country will overcome the current circumstances and rebuild everything the enemy has destroyed and make them "better than before".

Addressing the Iranian people on the 15th day of the war, Pezeshkian wrote in a post Saturday night on X, "Despite transportation and communication difficulties, thanks to our colleagues in the government, there has been no significant interruption in public services."

IRGC resolved to pursue, kill 'child-killer' Netanyahu if he is still alive

Enemy drones shot down over Tehran sky



The emblem of the IRGC

International Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) underscored the elite force's resolve to pursue and kill the "child-killer" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he is still alive.

In a statement on Sunday morning, the IRGC said that uncertainty over Netanyahu's fate and the possibility of his death or escape with his family from the occupied territories reveals the crisis and tremor in the illegal regime.

"In the event that this child-killing criminal is alive, we will continue to pursue and kill him with all our might," it said.

The statement also said that the 52nd wave of Operation True Promise 4 was carried out against the industrial sectors and the concentration points of American forces in three American air bases with powerful missiles and drones.

The IRGC said it attacked Israeli targets, adding, "Continuous sounds of ambulance sirens and the admission by Israeli entities of the rising number of casualties due to Iran's effective operations revealed the depth of the heavy strikes by the IRGC's missiles on the industrial sectors of Tel Aviv."

In another statement released on Sunday morning, the IRGC stated that 10 hypersonic Fatah and Qadr missiles, as well as destructive drones, were

fired at the US terrorist army forces at Al-Zafra base, which played a supporting and intelligence role in the attack on the Islamic Republic.

"With God's grace, continuous and powerful attacks against targets, centers, and interests of the United States and the Zionist regime will continue until the aggressor surrenders and is punished," the statement read.

Moreover, the IRGC said a three-stage solid fuel-powered Sijzil, super-heavy Khorramshahr with a two-ton warhead, as well as, Qadr, Emad, and Kheibar-Shekan missiles were successfully fired at key decision-making centers, military infrastructure, and gatherings of the regime's forces in the heart of the occupied lands.

Drones downed before breaching Tehran's airspace

The IRGC also announced the downing of three enemy drones before they could carry out operations in the airspace of Tehran. During Saturday night's aggression by US-Israeli enemy drones against Tehran's airspace, the IRGC fighters, using a modern air defense system controlled by the country's integrated air defense network, successfully shot down three armed enemy drones, IRGC said.

The IRGC had earlier announced that three waves of attacks were carried out

against the US terrorists' bases in the region on Saturday morning.

Iran as 'graveyard' of enemy drones

Iran's Army in a statement released late on Saturday put the number of the enemy's drones downed and destroyed by its forces thus far at 116.

More than 80 percent of the drones destroyed by the Iranian Army Forces are of the most advanced and sophisticated combat drones of "MQ-9", "Heron" and "Hermes".

Iran is the graveyard of the enemy's drones, the statement said, adding, "Relying upon the assistance of the God Almighty, the destruction of the most advanced and sophisticated drones of the aggressive enemy will be continued by commanders and fighters of the defense systems of the Army and IRGC under the command of the Air Defense Headquarters with its utmost power and strength."

The United States and Israeli launched an unprovoked war on Iran on February 28, assassinating former Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and top Iranian military commanders in the midst of Tehran-Washington negotiations.

Iran immediately launched retaliatory strikes against Israeli and American targets across the region using volleys of drones and missiles.

Deputy FM raps targeting Iran's ancient sites as attack on civilizational identity

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, has stressed the fact that US-Israeli attacks against museums and historical sites constitute an assault on part of Iran's civilizational identity.

"Attacks against museums and historical sites constitute an assault on part of Iran's civilizational identity and on cultural property protected under international law," Gharibabadi wrote on his X account on Sunday, IRNA reported.

"Damage to dozens of historical and cultural sites during the US-Israeli attacks shows that the scope of this aggression has extended to cultural heritage

as well," he added.

"This situation is a clear manifestation of the systematic violation of international law in its various dimensions by the US and the Israeli regimes," he noted. Earlier, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi thanked UNESCO for its prompt and responsible reaction to the bombing of Tehran's Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

He expressed that, "UNESCO will maintain firm and principled stance against further attacks on cultural heritage," including "historical monuments in Isfahan as site protection is international concern."

In the US-Israeli attacks against Iran, the aggressors



Kazem Gharibabadi

have been bombing different parts of Tehran and other cities, which has resulted in damages to various Iranian historical sites, including Golestan Palace.

Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has declared

that at least 56 museums, historic buildings and cultural sites across the country were damaged following US-Israeli military attacks, describing the move as a crime against Iran's historical identity and humanity's shared heritage.

Bringing war to ...

The battlefield, in effect, has been transformed into a negotiating arena where legitimacy, resilience, and asymmetric capabilities matter as much as force itself.

Endurance, authority & new regional equation

The developments of the past two weeks suggest that Iran's governing structure has proved more resilient than many of its opponents expected. Under Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, political authority has been

portrayed as resting on a combination of religious legitimacy, strategic discipline, and national consensus.

The Strait of Hormuz, once treated largely as an energy transit route, has emerged as a central factor in global stability. Iran's ability to influence this maritime chokepoint has become a defining feature of its deterrence doctrine — one based less on expansion than on endurance, calculated pressure, and the projection of resolve.

Ultimately, the conflict appears to have produced

the opposite of its intended effect. Rather than eroding Iran's sovereignty, it has reinforced it. Across the region, and increasingly beyond it, Iran's posture is being framed as evidence that national resilience may now play a more decisive role in shaping security than external intervention.

If that assessment holds, then the confrontation with Iran may come to be remembered not as a demonstration of Western control, but as a warning about the costs of miscalculation in an interconnected world. History has repeatedly

shown that wars launched to impose order can end up producing the very instability they were meant to prevent. The unfolding confrontation with Iran risks becoming another such example.

For Washington, the strategic question is no longer simply how to pressure Iran, but how to manage the cascading consequences of a conflict whose effects now extend across the global economy and the wider geopolitical landscape. Bringing war to Iran, it turns out, may also mean bringing crisis back home.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Blue Shield warns of 'irreparable damage' to Iranian heritage

Iranica Desk

Following extensive diplomatic and cultural initiatives by Iran, including high-level consultations by the government, the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Cultural Heritage, and Science, as well as various civil society organizations, Blue Shield International has issued a formal statement addressing the status of cultural heritage in the region. This statement was issued in direct response to reports of military strikes by the US and the Zionist regime targeting several of Iran's historic landmarks and archaeological sites, according to IRNA. Underlining the funda-

mental necessity of safeguarding cultural property, Blue Shield International declared, "While the protection of human life and dignity must remain the paramount priority in any crisis, the protection of people is fundamentally incomplete without the preservation of their cultural heritage. Such legacy constitutes an intrinsic element of human identity and serves as a collective asset for all of humanity." The organization further echoed the grave concerns previously voiced by UNESCO regarding the vulnerability of historical sites across the region. It issued an urgent appeal to all parties involved in



IRNA

the conflict to refrain from any military actions or operations that could inflict irreparable damage upon historical monuments and cultural landscapes.

Additionally, the statement underscored that the protection of cultural property remains a cornerstone of International Humanitarian Law. It emphasized

that adherence to these international legal frameworks must be upheld as a binding standard of professional and military conduct, transcending all political considerations or geographical boundaries. "As an independent, neutral, and non-governmental organization dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage, Blue Shield International is continuously monitoring the condition of heritage sites, archives, libraries, and historic buildings throughout the region," the statement read. The organization added that it is mobilizing its extensive global network of experts to mitigate potential risks

and prevent further degradation of these invaluable cultural assets. Blue Shield International expressed its full readiness to cooperate with all relevant authorities and stakeholders to ensure the safety of cultural heritage. The organization also offered its formal support for initiatives aimed at minimizing damages and advancing toward peaceful resolutions. The statement, published on March 13, 2026, was officially signed by Professor Peter Stone, President of Blue Shield International. In response to the onset of the US-Israel conflict against Iran, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handi-

crafts organizations of some provinces — including West Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Gilan, and Kermanshah — have initiated the urgent installation of the international "Blue Shield" emblem at their museums, archaeological sites, and historical monuments. Blue Shield International was formally established in 1996 through a strategic partnership between four leading global entities: the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Council on Archives (ICA), and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

Record-breaking ceremonies celebrate Persian food traditions

Iranica Desk

The holy city of Qom, in north-central Iran, witnessed the preparation of the world's largest ritual and civilizational Halva on Thursday night, a massive undertaking weighing over two tons. The event, held on the eve of the 23rd of the holy month of Ramadan, was organized by the "Tanoorkhaneh Nan-e Iran" (The Iranian Bread House). The ceremony attracted a large crowd where more than 15,000 pilgrims and those observing the fast (fasting faithful) were served

this traditional Iranian delicacy, chtn.ir wrote. While Iran boasts an impressive 131 distinct varieties of ritual Halva, this specific event was dedicated to showcasing one of the most unique and historically significant types of these traditional sweets. Characterized by its aromatic blend of saffron, rosewater, and cardamom, Persian Halva is far more than a simple dessert. It stands as a cornerstone of Iranian hospitality and spiritual life, traditionally shared during religious observances as a symbol of

community and devotion. The Halva ceremony follows another major cultural milestone earlier this month; from March 8 to 10, a staggering 21 tons of Samanu — a traditional Persian sweet paste—was prepared in a large-scale votive ritual along the same boulevard. Asghar Keshvari, Director of Tanoorkhaneh Nan-e Iran, emphasized that these initiatives are central to reviving the nation's culinary and civilizational heritage. "To date, our center has baked and introduced 313 types of na-

tional, local, and regional breads. We are currently implementing strategic programs to restore historical ovens (Tanoors), traditional mills, and ritual foods such as Samanu and Halva," Keshvari stated. Regarding the massive Samanu preparation, Keshvari noted that the large-scale production adhered strictly to traditional methods, utilizing whole-wheat flour with the active participation of the public and cultural enthusiasts. To further encourage community involvement,

a public campaign titled "Samanu Votive Offering" (Nazr-e Samanu) was launched. This cultural and ritual campaign was centered on the Prophet Azam Boulevard. "Through this public campaign, the Islamic world's first large-scale Samanu was produced using whole-wheat flour," the director added, highlighting the authenticity of the process. Keshvari expressed his optimism that with the continued support of the public and cultural institutions, Iran's culinary her-



chnn.ir

itage — which has faded over time — can be fully

revitalized and preserved for future generations.

Patriotic women football stars to be welcomed in Iran

Sports Desk

Prominent members of Iran's national women's football team, who made a patriotic decision to reject seductive and politically motivated asylum offers from Australia, have arrived in Malaysia to rejoin their teammates.

After a brief stay in Malaysia, the trio is scheduled to return to Tehran to reunite with their families and the nation. Meanwhile, Valiollah Mohammadi, Iran's Ambassador to Malaysia, met with members of the Iranian national women's football team, expressing his great pleasure in hosting the

representatives of Iran." Highlighting the status of Iranian sportswomen on the international stage, the ambassador added, "You are the women who have elevated Iran's name in global arenas and brought pride to our people. The fact that you remain committed to the sacred

authorities to provide the best possible services and facilities for the team under current conditions. He specifically noted the efforts of the cultural attaché and other embassy staff in supporting the national squad. The ambassador emphasized, "The people of Iran are eagerly awaiting your arrival and deeply appreciate your efforts and achievements."

He further revealed that Mehdi Taj, the President of the Football Federation, has confirmed plans for a grand official reception for the players upon their return to Tehran. Additionally, billboards celebrating the national team's success have already been installed throughout Tehran in cooperation with the city's municipality. Concluding the session, Mohammadi expressed his hope for the players' safe and swift return to their families. "We have tried to ensure a peaceful and satisfactory environment for you here. I look forward to seeing the continued powerful presence of Iranian women in international competitions and many more honors for our country in the near future," he added.



IRNA

According to IRNA, Mona Hamoudi, Zahra Sarbali, and Zahra Moshkekar reached Malaysia early Sunday morning. They were officially welcomed upon arrival by Farideh Shojaei, the Vice President of the Football Federation for Women's Affairs, and Marziyeh Jafari.

squad at the embassy. During the meeting, Mohammadi welcomed the team to Malaysia, stating, "We are honored to host our national women's football team. While we would have preferred to meet during the competitions, we are proud today to host you as worthy

national jersey despite all the temptations from the country's adversaries demonstrates your deep commitment and responsibility." Mohammadi expressed his appreciation for the coordination between various embassy departments and Malaysian au-

Iran proposes relocating World Cup matches to Mexico

Sports Desk

Iran's Ambassador to Mexico, Abolfazl Pasandideh, has called on FIFA to relocate the Iranian national team's 2026 World Cup matches from the United States to Mexico, citing the US government's refusal to cooperate on visas and logistical support. In a recent interview, Pasandideh clarified that while Iran remains committed to participating in the tournament, the US has failed to provide the necessary administrative and logistical backing for the team. "We emphasize once again that the US is not cooperating regarding visas. We are keen to participate, but

they are not providing the required support," he stated, according to IRNA. The ambassador proposed that FIFA intervene to facilitate Iran's participation by moving their fixtures to Mexico, one of the tournament's three co-hosts alongside Canada and the United States. "FIFA can intervene to ensure the Iranian national team can compete, but in Mexico," Pasandideh said, noting that while the final decision rests with Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth, the alternative would be immediately welcomed. "We have no animosity toward the American people; our issue is with the US government. We have great affec-

tion for the Mexican people, and for us, the ideal scenario is to play our matches in Mexico." He added that if such a proposal is formally tabled, Iran would accept it, though the reaction of other teams in the group would need to be considered. Under the current schedule, Iran is placed in Group G alongside Belgium, New Zealand, and Egypt. All of Iran's group-stage matches are currently slated to be held on US soil, specifically in Los Angeles and Seattle. FIFA has yet to issue an official response or condemnation regarding the administrative hurdles mentioned by the Iranian diplomat.



IRNA

Minister: Over 43,000 homes, businesses damaged in US-Israel attacks

Supply chains remain unbroken

Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh has confirmed that more than 43,000 residential and commercial units have been damaged since the start of the US-Israel coalition attacks on February 28, with assessments of the full extent of destruction still ongoing. Speaking in a press briefing on Saturday, Sadegh said that 17 provinces across the country have suffered significant damage. Of the affected units, 700 have been completely destroyed, and approximately 7,000 require partial repairs.

She added that Tehran's municipal authorities are leading recovery operations within the capital city. "The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has held ongoing coordination meetings with the Housing Foundation and provincial governors," Sadegh said. "While the Housing Foundation will oversee partial repairs, major reconstruction projects will be jointly managed with provincial authorities to ensure a swift and effective response."

Regarding the 700 fully destroyed homes, Sadegh announced that government plans are underway to lease alternative housing for affected families — particularly in border regions. The minister also condemned a



Farzaneh Sadegh
● IRNA

recent Israeli airstrike on a road maintenance station in Zanzan Province in north, which killed five road workers who were performing essential winter maintenance tasks, including gravel and salt spreading. She added that the Shariati Bridge connecting Zanzan and Qazvin was struck in a previous attack but was fully restored within three days, underscoring the resilience of Iran's infrastructure teams.

Supply chains hold strong
Sadegh emphasized that despite repeated strikes on roads, bridges, and maintenance stations, Iran's supply chains remain fully operational. "The supply of essential goods is being maintained with

strength and determination," she said, crediting the efforts of "patriotic truck drivers" who have kept the nation's logistics network running. She highlighted a record-breaking performance during the 12-day Israeli-imposed war in June, noting that truckers are now active at all major ports and are immediately loading and unloading cargo across the country.

Over 19m tons transported
"Since the beginning of the war, over 19 million tons of goods have been transported across Iran's road network," Sadegh said. "Despite the enemy's numerous attacks on infrastructure, we have not allowed the national road

transport system to falter."

4 million passengers relocated

She also reported that more than 4 million passengers have been relocated across the country during the conflict, thanks to coordinated efforts by provincial authorities.

With expanded powers granted to provincial governors — especially in border regions — Sadegh confirmed that border crossings previously closed have now been reopened, and transportation and movement of people and goods are fully resumed.

Over 1.1m tons of essential goods delivered

The minister confirmed that in just the past two weeks, more than 1.1 million tons of essential goods have been cleared through Iran's ports. "The processes of unloading, loading, and customs clearance are proceeding at full speed," she said, adding that warehouse capacity — both inside and outside port zones — has been carefully assessed and optimized. "There is no shortage of essential goods," Sadegh said. "Shoppers can see for themselves — no supermarket is empty. This is the result of both government planning and the united efforts of all actors in the supply chain, working with full commitment. She also confirmed that medical supplies are being prepared and delivered in coordination with the Ministry of Health, with all government agencies operating under maximum inter-ministerial coordination.

Iran joins int'l renewable energy certification system

Economy Desk

Iran has been registered as a new member of the International Electrotechnical Commission's (IEC) system for evaluating renewable energy conformity, the Iranian National Standards Organization announced.

Farahnaz Qalasi, the deputy for standardization and promotion at the organization, stated that the IEC Secretariat officially recognized Iran's membership in the IECRE System.

She added that the membership covers wind and photovoltaic energy sectors and aims to strengthen Iran's presence in international conformity assessment mechanisms and develop technical cooperation on renewable energy equipment.

"This marks the third IEC conformity assessment system Iran has joined, demonstrating the expansion of the country's international interactions in this field," Qalasi said, according to the ILNA.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is already a member of other IEC conformity assessment systems, including those for equipment used in explosive atmospheres and for testing and certifying electrical equipment components.

The government aims to install 30,000 MW of non-fossil capacity over the next three years amid an expected power shortfall next year. According to the Energy Ministry, the country is expected to face a power shortfall of between 17,000 and 20,000 megawatts next year.



● IRNA

Iran moves 50,000 artifacts to secure vaults as threats grow to national treasures

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has transferred more than 50,000 historical artifacts to secure storage facilities across the country as a precaution against damage from the ongoing US-Israeli military strikes that began on February 28, the head of Iran's National and World Heritage Bases said on March 15. Farhad Azizi-Zallani said the emergency operation forms part of a broader effort to safeguard museums and historic monuments amid escalating security risks.

IRNA reported. "The transfer of some artifacts to safe repositories and the installation of the Blue Shield were carried out as preventive steps to ensure the protection and security of historical objects," he said. The Blue Shield initiative, established in 1996 under the framework of the 1954 Hague Convention on the protection of cultural property during armed conflict, is often described as a cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. Its emblem identifies monuments and collections that must be shielded from

Jahan Square and Chehel Sotoun Palace, as well as the historic Khorramabad Valley and nearby prehistoric caves.

According to him, blast waves shattered wooden lattice windows known as orsi and damaged decorative features at multiple sites. "Openings, doors and orsi frames were destroyed and parts of the mirrorwork, stucco ornamentation and wooden decorations were harmed," he said of the Golestan Palace complex.

In Isfahan, the Chehel Sotoun palace also suffered

ers including mirrorwork, stucco and valuable wall paintings were affected," he said. Historic buildings in the western city of Sanandaj also recorded damage. The Khosroabad mansion, Sal-ar Saeed mansion and Asef Vaziri house, known as the Kurdish House, lost sections of their wooden lattice windows and interior decorative elements after shockwaves from nearby strikes rippled through the historic district. The official said Iran's cultural authorities had circulated detailed protection guidelines to heritage managers before the crisis escalated and had opened urgent communication channels with UNESCO once the attacks began. He said documentation of the damage is now underway through digital recording and technical surveys. Expert teams are compiling detailed restoration files while emergency stabilization work has begun at several monuments, including Golestan Palace.

"Under international obligations, attacks on cultural heritage contradict the fundamental principles of international law," he said. "Iran will pursue this matter through legal and diplomatic channels and expects responsible international bodies to take a clear position in defense of humanity's shared heritage."



● IRNA

Authorities have also installed the internationally recognized "Blue Shield" emblem at most major heritage sites, museums and historic complexes to signal protected cultural property under international law,

military attack. Iranian heritage officials say several high-profile cultural landmarks have sustained damage during the recent strikes. Among the affected sites are Tehran's Golestan Palace, Isfahan's Naqsh-e

structural and decorative damage after nearby explosions struck administrative buildings close to the Safavid-era monument. "The wooden orsi windows and openings were destroyed and Safavid decorative lay-

Fajr Visual Arts Festival resumes online



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran relaunch the 18th Fajr Visual Arts Festival in a virtual format on March 15 after the event was halted following recent wartime attacks, the festival's policy council chief Aydin Mehdizadeh said.

Mehdizadeh said the festival's exhibitions were temporarily suspended on February 28 after what he described as a "US-Zionist attack" on Iran that killed Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several senior military commanders, plunging the country into mourning, IRNA reported.

"The festival secretariat was preparing the remaining exhibitions when the attack occurred on February 28," Mehdizadeh said,

adding that organizers decided to close the displays "temporarily" until conditions allowed them to reopen.

He said the cultural event had formally begun days earlier. The opening bell of the 18th edition was rung beside the historic Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System in southwestern Iran, while the main exhibition titled Baba Ab Dad (Father Gave Water) opened on February 26 at the Imam Ali Religious Arts Museum in Tehran.

Organizers had also prepared a series of additional exhibitions under themes including "Festival of Festivals" and "National Unity", intended for public viewing across the capital. Those displays will now be staged online because of the war.



"Given the current circumstances, the exhibitions will be held virtually," Mehdizadeh said.

According to the festival secretariat, the works will be available to the public from Sunday, March 15, via the official website of the Fajr Visual Arts Festival. The Fajr arts festivals, staged annually around the anniversary of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, form the country's flagship state-backed cultural showcase, spanning cinema, theater, music and visual arts and drawing artists from across Iran and abroad.