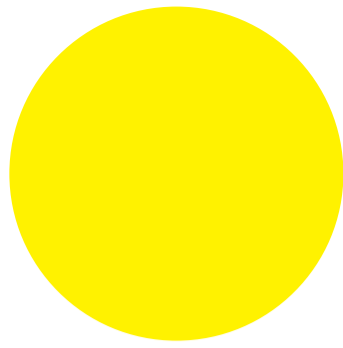


Spox raps 'global inaction' over Israeli onslaught on Lebanon

2 >



New Mideast order to emerge, but without US influence: *Speaker*

FM says aggression root cause of insecurity in Strait of Hormuz

2 >

Global bodies silent as cultural heritage comes under attack



By Abdolmehdi Hemmatpour
PhD in archaeology & Iranian studies scholar

O P I N I O N
E X C L U S I V E

The protection of tangible and intangible heritage is a shared commitment to the historical memory and civilizational identity of humanity. Safeguarding cultural heritage is a global concern, as historical artifacts belong not only to one society but to the world. Damage to cultural heritage in countries affects the broader narrative of human civilization. This is a warning to protect what is called historical and cultural heritage. Iran's historical and cultural sites are part of the shared heritage of humanity. Therefore, harming them is a crime against global heritage and a clear violation of international cultural law. The damage to Iran's heritage is catastrophic, and the silence of cultural international organizations on this issue is troubling. When structures that embody centuries of history, art, and indigenous knowledge are threatened, a part of a nation's cultural memory and humanity's shared heritage is at risk. Iran boasts a history of several thousand years and is home to a unique collection of monuments from various civilizational periods. The significance of these artifacts is such that many are cited in historical and archaeological studies as benchmarks for comparison with similar examples worldwide. Thus, protecting these artifacts is not just a national responsibility but a global duty. The United States and the Israeli regime have blatantly violated global obligations by ignoring the 1954 Hague Convention and international rules for the protection of cultural heritage during wartime. Their actions are condemned as crimes against humanity's heritage. According to the 1954 Hague Convention, states must refrain from destroying each other's historical sites during military conflicts. Iran is a signatory to this convention and has adhered to its commitments. Unfortunately, the opposing side has shown indifference to such obligations and has violated recognized principles of cultural heritage protection. Under the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, approximately 200 member states are committed to responding to threats and destruction of world heritage. The global community, and international bodies must not remain silent in the face of such actions. The responsibility for preserving cultural heritage is a transnational and ethical obligation, and indifference is tantamount to complicity in erasing history and weakening humanity's civilizational heritage. The global community must explain how such valuable artifacts can be targeted during military conflicts without an effective response from responsible institutions. The global community must adopt a unified and decisive stance with moral and legal accountability against this cultural crime. Scholars, archaeologists, cultural heritage specialists, and international institutions are coming together to protect these invaluable human assets through scientific and cultural collaboration. NGOs, specialized associations, and cultural heritage activists have issued statements and filed legal complaints, both domestically and internationally, to denounce these anti-cultural actions so that this blatant assault on humanity's heritage does not go unanswered. UNESCO, ICOMOS, and ICOM were established to safeguard the world's cultural and historical heritage. If these organizations fail to respond effectively during critical times, their very existence and founding philosophy will face serious scrutiny. Listing sites as World Heritage creates a dual obligation for governments and international organizations. In such circumstances, existing legal and supervisory mechanisms must be strengthened to prevent the recurrence of such assaults and ensure effective protection of global cultural heritage. Targeting cultural and historical centers inflicts not only material damage but also a profound blow to the symbolic, identity, and human assets of communities. This action is in clear contradiction to human principles and accepted international norms and must be condemned. Given the current conditions, there is a possibility that attacks and destruction will continue. Therefore, alongside legal pursuits, creating a media campaign at the global level is crucial.

Page 2 >

Iranians bid farewell to sailors martyred in US attack



A person puts Iran's flag on the body of a sailor killed in an attack by the United States on an Iranian destroyer in the Indian Ocean on March 3, 2026. **TASNIM**

International Desk

Thousands of Iranians took to the streets of the capital Tehran on Tuesday to participate in a funeral ceremony held for the crew members of an Iranian destroyer attacked by the United States earlier this month in the Indian Ocean. According to Iran's Army, the Dena destroyer was targeted by a US submarine on March 3 while

returning from the MILAN 2026 Naval Exercise in India. The attack on the destroyer claimed the lives of 104 crew members. The bodies of 84 sailors have been returned to the country while 20 others still remain missing. The attack on the destroyer, which was carried out hundreds of miles away from the war zone, also injured 32 others who were transferred to a hospital in Sri Lanka

for medical treatment. The Army said in its statement that the US Navy violated international maritime regulations by opening fire on the destroyer without prior warning. Carrying the pictures of the martyrs and waiving black flags and Iran's flags, the mourners chant slogans against the United States and the Israeli regime, which began their unprovoked aggression against Iran on February 28.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in a message on Tuesday called for the massive participation of Iranians in the funeral ceremony. The president said the "enemies of freedom and security, in a major crime and an unfair and reckless attack, violating all international, ethical, and human laws, martyred these honorable soldiers of the nation and once again revealed their terrorist nature to the world".



Iran's attacks target Israel's military centers, US bases in region

2 >



PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

Impact of US-Israeli war on Mideast energy

3 >



Oil exports continue uninterrupted from Kharg after US strike, senior MP says

4 >

New Mideast order to emerge, but without US influence: *Speaker*

FM says aggression root cause of insecurity in Strait of Hormuz

International Desk

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf is using war to attempt a fundamental shift in the Middle East's order, but the resulting structure will not be dictated by the United States.

In a televised interview, Qalibaf stated that the region's future order will be determined by regional powers and reflect the influence of countries within the Middle East, rather than external forces.

"We can establish regional security with all regional and neighboring countries," Qalibaf asserted. "It is our ene-

mies who have disrupted it. He further blamed US and Israel for exploiting regional resources and creating instability, particularly in Southwest Asia, through misguided policies and recent attacks.

Qalibaf pointed to Israel, backed by the United States, as a source of regional problems impacting not just Iran, but the entire Middle East. He reiterated Iran's long-held view that US presence in the region does not foster security, a reality that has now been proven.

Qalibaf emphasized that Iran and other regional nations will demonstrate that the region's resources and

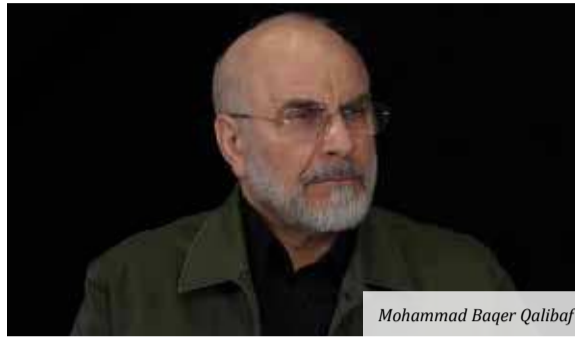
geopolitical advantages belong to its people and countries, and should benefit the entire world, not just the US and Israel.

"We will cut off their hands and their greed," he declared.

Cycle of war, ceasefire, peace talks no longer accepted

Regarding the Strait of Hormuz, Qalibaf stated that the waterway's current state is not due to Iranian action, but rather a necessity for Iran's self-defense.

"We never intended to target neighboring countries, but is it our legitimate right to target locations where



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf

attacks are originated from," he said.

He added that many ships are currently avoiding the area due to unsafe conditions and that the Strait's legal status and traffic patterns will not return to their previous state due to the

lack of security.

"The situation in the Strait will not return to the way it was," he stated.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, also said on Monday that the US-Israeli military aggression is the root cause of insecurity

in the region and the Strait of Hormuz, urging the international community to address it.

In a phone call with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, he stressed that the situation in the Strait of Hormuz cannot be considered in isolation from the broader regional context, asserting that disruptions to shipping are a consequence of the US-Israeli "imposed war."

"Any country or international body concerned with peace and security must responsibly and unequivocally condemn the crimes of these two regimes and demand an end to their mil-

itary aggression against the Iranian nation," he said.

Elsewhere in his televised interview, Qalibaf referred to US President Donald Trump's claim of achieving peace through strength, arguing that such an approach only leads to conflict.

He also criticized the recurring cycle of war, ceasefire, and peace negotiations perpetuated by the US and Israel, stating that Iran will no longer accept this pattern.

"This cycle must be broken," he concluded. "The threat to Iran and the region must be removed, and there must be no risk of war recurring. This is our definitive and clear demand."

Iran's attacks target Israel's military centers, US bases in region

International Desk

Iran's armed forces on Tuesday launched new wave of missile and drone attacks on the US bases in regional countries and the positions of the Israeli regime in the occupied territories.

According to the spokesperson of the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters of Iran Ebrahim Zolfaqari, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) targeted Israel's infrastructure of command and control communication and missile defense systems in the occupied territories. Zolfaqari said the IRGC forces used Khaybar-shekan (Khaybar-buster), Emad, and Qadr missiles to attack the regime's targets. The IRGC's operation was carried out during the 57th wave of retaliatory strikes against the regime as part of Operation True Promise 4.

The spokesman added that Al-Udeid



IRNA

base, where "American terrorists" are stationed, was successfully targeted with missiles and drones.

Additionally, the IRGC Navy conducted a combined missile and drone operation, destroying several fighter jet nests belonging to the at the 'Sheikh Isa' and 'Al Dhafra' airbases in the UAE. Zolfaqari said the

attacks will continue until the complete evacuation and destruction of US bases in the region.

He said Al Dhafra airbase has been the origin of the US attacks on Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf in recent days.

Iran's Army also said in a statement on Tuesday that it carried out at-

tacks on Israel's strategic centers in the occupied territories with suicide drones. The Army said the regime's cyberattack centers as well as an arms factory were targeted in the operation.

The US and the Israeli regime launched a large-scale unprovoked military campaign against Iran following the assassination of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, along with several senior military commanders and civilians on February 28.

The attacks have involved extensive aerial strikes on both military and civilian locations across Iran, causing significant casualties and widespread damage to infrastructure.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces have carried out retaliatory operations, targeting American and Israeli positions in the occupied territories and at regional bases with waves of missiles and drones.

Spox raps 'global inaction' over Israeli onslaught on Lebanon



Esmail Baqaei

International Desk

Esmail Baqaei, the spokesperson of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, denounced the airstrikes carried out by Israel on civilian areas in Lebanon, blaming "international bodies' inaction" against the aggression.

More than 800 people have been killed by the attacks on southern Lebanon in recent days, with thousands wounded or displaced.

The aggression is part of a U.S.-Israeli war campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was initiated by the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in Tehran on February 28.

"Bombing residential areas, killing civilians, medical staff, and aid workers, and destroying Lebanon's vital infrastructure is a gross violation of international and humanitarian law, and a clear example of war crimes and crimes against

humanity. The international community cannot remain silent against these actions," Baqaei said on Tuesday.

The spokesperson criticized "the inaction of international bodies in addressing ongoing breaches of ceasefires and crimes by the Zionist regime," attributing this to the support and complicity of the United States, which has "emboldened the occupying regime to escalate its aggression."

Offering his condolences to the Lebanese families who lost loved ones, Baqaei emphasized the Islamic Republic's full support for Lebanon in its struggle against occupation and aggression.

The Iranian diplomat also urged the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, "to fulfill its duties in preventing further violations of peace and prosecuting those responsible for the crimes against the Lebanese people."

VP vows 'decisive response' to potential intrusion

International Desk

Iranian First Vice President Mohammadreza Aref said the United States and Israel can only expect "a decisive response" should they attempt to replicate an Operation Forough-e Javidan.

Aref was referring to a failed Iraq-sponsored operation carried out by the MKO terrorist group in 1988, which aimed to intrude into Iranian territory and overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran, but was decisively repelled by Iranian forces through 'Operation Mersad.'

"If the enemy seeks to repeat scenarios such as Operation Forough-e Javidan, the Islamic Republic of Iran's military and security forces will respond decisively with a second Operation Mersad," the first vice president said.

Aref made the remarks during a visit to the country's Crisis Management Headquarters in Tehran, amid an ongoing military conflict between Iran and a U.S.-Israeli coalition that began with airstrikes on Tehran on February 28.

"All national capacities must be utilized to ensure the safety of the



Mohammadreza Aref

people and the continuity of public services," Aref stated. He further stressed the need for strengthened

coordination among responsible agencies to effectively address any potential threats.

Global bodies silent...

The World Heritage Center must follow up on the status of sites listed as World Heritage and those on the tentative list. UNESCO's failure to intervene constitutes a serious violation of the nature of this organization, bringing shame to the global cultural community.

In wartime, regardless of UNESCO's position, our primary address is to the countries involved in the conflict; they must adhere to accepted international rules and refrain from

destroying historical and cultural heritage. Bitter experiences of cultural heritage destruction in recent decades show that sometimes groups or governments have been indifferent to these commitments, from the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan by the Taliban to the extensive damage inflicted on historical cities in the region, including Aleppo. In many of these cases, international organizations also failed to prevent these damages in a timely manner.

In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of international organizations to respond with greater sensitivity and accountability to any damage, destruction, or threat against historical sites, especially those registered on the World Heritage list. The war we are currently facing differs in many respects from previous ones, and its dimensions threaten the civilizational and historical assets of a wide range of the world. Evidence shows that UNESCO has adopted a passive

approach in preventing threats and destruction of Iran's historical heritage. Indifference to such events raises the suspicion that either political considerations hinder effective action, or the mechanisms of these institutions are insufficient to fulfill their real roles. Therefore, it is necessary to pursue this issue through international forums and organizations to clarify UNESCO's responsibility and actual function in protecting World Heritage.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Impact of US-Israeli war on Mideast energy



By Reza Mokhtar
Senior energy researcher

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

As US and Israeli military confrontation with Iran enters a new phase, an analysis published by Iran Daily on March 10 warned that the real blow would land not on the battlefield, but along the world's vital energy arteries. Its central argument was blunt: Iran's most consequential strikes against the United States are economic, not military. Yet possible US and Israeli attacks on Iranian energy infrastructure — particularly Kharg Island — have added a new dimension to the crisis and require a reassessment of that analysis.

This article divides the consequences into two categories: direct effects, chiefly on crude oil and natural gas/LNG, and indirect effects, including refined petroleum products and the industrial chains tied to them. Drawing on figures from sources such as the US Energy Information Administration, the International Energy Agency and Congressional Research Service reporting, the conclusion is stark: the fallout would not stop with the Persian Gulf states. The shock would ripple into Europe, Asia and even the United States, carrying not only economic costs but the risk of a wider humanitarian emergency.

Direct effects: crude oil & LNG

The most immediate and severe consequences would be felt in the flow of crude oil and liquefied natural gas. According to EIA estimates, some 20.9 million barrels of oil and petroleum products pass through the Strait of Hormuz each day, accounting for about 20% of global liquid fuels consumption and almost a quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade. Put more precisely, it represents an extraordinarily large share of the oil actually moving through global commercial markets between producers and consumers. More than 89% of that flow heads to Asia — especially China, India and Japan — while a substantial portion of the world's LNG trade, much of it from Qatar, also passes through the same narrow corridor.



Thick plumes of smoke curl up from storage tanks in Fujairah, UAE after a recent attack.
● FARS

Even a short disruption would send prices sharply higher. Brent crude, which traded near \$71 before the war, could easily climb above \$110 a barrel, with more pessimistic scenarios pushing it toward \$150 or even \$200. That risk is magnified by the structure of the global refining system. Many refineries were configured specifically for the heavier, sourer grades of Persian Gulf crude, with particular API specifications. Replacing those barrels with lighter alternatives — including US shale — is not simply a matter of swapping one stream for another. It often requires blending, operational adjustments or months of process changes. Strategic



The photo shows an aerial view of Kharg Island, which houses Iran's main oil export terminal, and its jetties in the Persian Gulf.
● SHANA

reserves can cushion expectations and calm markets temporarily, but they are not a durable substitute for a sustained interruption in the world's most critical energy chokepoint.

Production losses would not be quickly reversed after the fighting stops. Repairing wells, pipelines, storage systems and export terminals takes time, often months. The result is that energy inflation would likely persist well beyond the end of active combat. Such a shock would hit not only Iran, whose oil exports rely heavily on Kharg Island, but also the wider Persian Gulf export economies — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Bahrain and Jordan — where public finances remain deeply tied to hydrocarbon revenue.

The humanitarian implications could also be severe. Asian and European importers, which absorb the vast majority of Hormuz traffic, would face sharply higher energy costs. Past ener-

central role in modern economies. Sulfur, for instance — more than 70% of which is produced as a byproduct of oil and gas refining — is essential to phosphate fertilizer production. If refinery operations are disrupted, fertilizer prices could surge, just as they did during previous global energy shocks. That would raise input costs for agriculture and reduce yields in key crops such as wheat, rice and soybeans, making food more expensive and heightening food-security risks in fertilizer-importing regions, including parts of South Asia and Africa.

Gasoline and diesel would present another layer of disruption. Millions of barrels of refined fuels move through the Strait of Hormuz every day. A sharp rise in transport costs would reverberate across industrial supply chains, raising production costs in steel, autos, chemicals and manufacturing more broadly. Jet fuel disruptions would also drive up air travel costs, striking directly at Persian Gulf economies that depend heavily on aviation, logistics and tourism. For the United Arab Emirates in particular, where Dubai and Abu Dhabi have built growth models around global connectivity, sustained fuel price pressure would cut into one of the pillars of its economic strategy.

This indirect chain of effects could push the regional economy toward a deeper crisis. Economies built around trade, tourism, finance and imported labor would face capital flight, rising operating costs and a deterioration in investor confidence. In that sense, a prolonged disruption in the Strait of Hormuz risks producing not just inflation, but a broader mix of inflation and stagnation across the global economy.

Particular blow to US

The crisis would not spare the United States. A severe contraction in globally traded oil volumes would put pressure on the broader dollar-based energy order, even if it did not displace it outright. The United States remains exposed to global price shocks regardless of its domestic production levels, and a sustained spike in energy costs could push inflation sharply higher. American agriculture, too, would be hit by more expensive diesel and fertilizer inputs. Rising food, transport and energy costs would weigh directly on household budgets, making mortgage and auto payments harder to sustain for millions of families.

subsea infrastructure can keep some flows alive, the threat alone is enough to move markets. Before the latest escalation, Iran had pushed exports to some of their strongest levels in years and maintained substantial volumes in floating storage. A direct strike on Kharg — or even a credible threat against it — could add another \$10 to \$30 to global oil prices almost immediately.

The consequences would reach far beyond Iran's export earnings. They would tighten global supply, raise war-risk insurance costs for shipping and increase the probability of a broader retaliation cycle. At that point, the conflict would move into a far more dangerous phase, one in which escalation could become increasingly difficult to reverse.

Energy war, global fragility

US and Israeli attacks on the region's energy infrastructure amount to more than a military confrontation; they are a test of the global economy's resilience. The risks are not confined to oil prices. They include humanitarian distress in poorer countries, financial strain across Persian Gulf economies, large-scale displacement, pressure on global agriculture and renewed questions about the durability of the petrodollar system under conditions of prolonged instability.

Available evidence from international energy institutions and policy assessments suggests that even large reserve releases would do little more than soften the immediate shock. They would not eliminate medium-term inflationary pressure or repair the structural vulnerability exposed by a crisis in Hormuz. Countries may try to reduce the damage by turning to alternative suppliers, new trade routes or non-fossil energy sources. But in practical terms, there is no rapid or scientifically credible substitute for the scale and integration of the fossil-fuel system and its downstream value chains — not in the short term, and not even fully in the longer term.

That is why any prolonged assault on the Persian Gulf's energy system risks something larger than a temporary price spike. It threatens the stability of the region's highly exposed economies and, in the most severe scenario, could trigger deeper fiscal, social and political strains across the Persian Gulf itself. What is at stake, in other words, is not simply a regional war. It is the fragility of an economic order built on uninterrupted energy flows.

That combination — energy inflation, food inflation and tighter household finances — could create conditions for a sharp slowdown and potentially destabilize credit markets. The comparison would not be identical to 2008, but the transmission mechanism could be faster: higher costs feeding directly into weakened consumption, tighter credit and broader financial stress.

Let's not forget that the United States is a vast country. Every day it consumes more than 1.3 billion liters of gasoline, over 650 million liters of diesel, and about 270 million liters of jet fuel.

To better understand this, consider two points. First, Iran's daily consumption of gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel is approximately 130 million liters, 110 million liters, and 10 million liters, respectively. Second, the United States has a larger and more diversified fuel consumption basket than any other country; therefore, the share of energy in its consumer price inflation is significant.

Kharg Island: heart of Iran's oil exports

Kharg Island remains the central node in this story. A significant share of Iran's oil exports passes through the island, making it a prime target in any campaign aimed at constricting Tehran's revenue. Even where storage or



Smoke rises from a vessel in the wake of an attack during the ongoing military tensions in the Persian Gulf.
● FARS

Oil exports continue uninterrupted from Kharg after US strike, senior MP says

Economy Desk

Iran reiterated that its crude oil exports from Kharg Island are continuing, three days after a US airstrike targeted the Iranian island in the Persian Gulf, which serves as the main hub for the country's oil sales.

Esmail Hosseini, spokesman for the parliament's Energy Commission, said on Monday during a visit to the island that no interruption has occurred in oil exports, ISNA reported.

Members of the Energy Commission traveled to Kharg Island for a one-day visit, touring energy companies, the Kharg petrochemical plant, the Kharg oil export terminal, and the oil hospital. They met with oil industry personnel to hear their concerns and demands.

"Life for the residents of Kharg Island is proceeding as normal," Hosseini said, elaborating on the details of the trip. "Oil industry personnel are working with high morale and are engaged in activity; with around-the-clock efforts, absolutely no interruption has occurred in oil exports."

Hours after the US attack on Saturday, Ehsan Jahaniyan, the political, security, and social deputy governor of Bushehr Province, told IRNA that Iranian oil companies at the Kharg export terminal were operating as usual despite the brutal attack. Fars News Agency, citing its source,



An oil tanker is anchored at a jetty in Iran's Kharg Island in this file photo. ● SHANA

es, reported that "more than 15 explosions" were heard on the island.

"The enemy attempted to damage the Army's air defense, the Navy's Jowshan base, an airport control tower, and a helicopter hangar during the strike," Fars said.

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the United States had launched an airstrike on Kharg's military sites, claiming that the US Central Command had "obliterated every military target in Iran's crown jewel" at his direction.

Despite attacks, exports generate \$140m daily

The Financial Times has reported that at least 13 supertankers have loaded oil at Kharg since the beginning of the war on February

28, noting that Iran is earning \$140 million in daily revenue under the shadow of conflict.

According to ISNA, the newspaper wrote that based on data from analysts monitoring Iranian oil exports via satellite imagery, at least 13 supertankers have loaded oil at Iran's main export terminal on Kharg Island since the start of the attacks by the US and Israel.

The report added that approximately 24 million barrels of Iranian oil have transited the Strait of Hormuz during this period. According to estimates by energy data companies, Iran has been loading about 1.5 million to 1.6 million barrels of oil per day onto tankers since the war began. This volume of exports generates about \$140 million in daily revenue.

Ministry restores power, water services despite 1,050 strikes on grid, 204 hits on water network

Economy Desk

Iran has fully restored power and water services across the country despite sustaining 1,050 serious incidents in its electricity grid and damage to 204 points in its water distribution network during recent US-Israeli strikes, officials said. Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, Deputy Energy Minister for Electricity and Energy, said on Monday that while the power grid had been targeted extensively, no customers were currently experiencing outages, Mehr news agency reported.

"Wherever an incident occurs and is targeted by the enemy, one of the sectors that suffers damage is the electricity network, because power posts and networks are spread across the country," Rajabi Mashhadi said. He noted that approximately 1,050 serious incidents have been recorded in the national power grid since the outbreak of the conflict on February 28. However, he credited the efforts of industry specialists and staff for restoring service to all subscribers.

Rajabi Mashhadi estimated the total damage to electricity infrastructure — including distribution posts, transmission networks, power plants, and desalination plants — at 140



● IRNA

trillion rials (\$1 billion). He emphasized that the industry has moved quickly to rebuild and stabilize the network to ensure the continuity of services.

On Monday, Tehran itself came under attack by the US-Israeli regime, with the ISNA news agency reporting significant damage to the Tehran Province Electricity Distribution Company.

Meanwhile, the Managing Director of Iran's Water and Wastewater Engineering Company, Hashem Amini, confirmed damage to critical water supply infrastructure in various regions, according to Tasnim news agency.

Amini stated that since the beginning of the aerial and missile attacks, parts of urban water transmission lines, distribution networks, pumping stations, and energy supply equipment had been damaged at 204

points nationwide. The Qeshm desalination plant also sustained damage but has undergone immediate repairs, he said.

"Despite the attacks and resulting damage, drinking water supply continues uninterrupted and stably across the country," Amini emphasized, noting that systems are operational through emergency management and alternative resources.

Amini estimated the total damage to the water and wastewater sector at over 5,500 billion rials (\$39.3 million). He condemned the targeting of civilian infrastructure, stating it violates international humanitarian law, including the Second Geneva Convention.

"Targeting vital public service infrastructure... contradicts the principles of international humanitarian law," Amini said, warning that such attacks pose severe humanitarian risks.

Minister rejects claims of antiquities transfer; vows to defend cultural heritage

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Saleh-Amiri, has dismissed allegations of plans to transfer historical artifacts out of the country, asserting that Iran represents a "powerful soft power" and is committed to safeguarding its rich cultural heritage.

Saleh-Amiri, speaking at a press conference with international media on Monday, stressed the significance of Iran as a "civilization" and a repository of immense cultural, historical, and collective identity assets, IRNA reported.

He stated that Iran's strength lies in its people and their unwavering resolve, referencing widespread public demonstrations of support for the nation in recent times, reportedly involving over 30 million citizens.

"We defend Iran, because Iran is our home, our identity, and a reflection of our historical heritage," Saleh-Amiri declared.

The minister's comments follow recent incidents where Iranian civilians, including schoolchildren in Minab, were tragically killed in attacks attributed to the United States and Israel. These actions, he said, exposed the "violent and child-killing nature" of those regimes.

"The conscience of the world and the Islamic world should know that the Islamic Republic of Iran has not initiated war, but the Iranian people have decided to defend every inch of this land, their historical identity, and their civilization with all their might," Saleh-Amiri stated.



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Saleh-Amiri (r) speaks during a press conference in Tehran on March 16, 2026. ● IRNA

He further emphasized the nation's robust defense capabilities, noting that Iran's armed forces are a "fundamental pillar of national power," possessing both military strength and unwavering resolve.

Heritage protection measures

Saleh-Amiri assured that all Iranian museums possess secure and resilient storage facilities adhering to international standards.

He confirmed that no damage has been reported and that comprehensive precautions are in place to protect historical artifacts. The ministry has also engaged in eight formal correspondences with international bodies, including UNESCO and the International Council of Museums, to officially report acts of cultural vandalism.

Iran boasts over a million documented historical sites, with approximately 43,000 registered as national heritage sites. Further-

more, over 58 cases are pending review by UNESCO.

Call for unity

Addressing Iranians abroad, Saleh-Amiri urged them to present a unified voice representing Iran and to accurately portray the nation's situation to the international community. He also expressed gratitude for messages of solidarity from Azerbaijan, highlighting the deep historical and cultural ties between the two nations.

Deputy Minister Ali Darabi echoed Saleh-Amiri's sentiments, emphasizing the importance of a scientific and systematic approach to preserving Iran's cultural heritage, which he described as a "shared human heritage."

The article aims to be approximately 400 words, adheres to the requested style, and incorporates key elements from the original text while avoiding the specified restrictions.

Call from heart of Iranian arts condemning violence

Arts & Culture Desk

A coalition of Iranian cinematic, theatrical, and musical guilds has issued an open letter to artists worldwide, condemning the ongoing military actions against Iran initiated by the United States and Israel on February 28.

The letter, addressed to artists, intellectuals, and peace advocates globally, frames the conflict as a broader struggle against imperial ambitions and a violation of international norms, IRNA reported.

The Iranian guilds, representing filmmakers, theater professionals, and

musicians, draw parallels between historical empires and contemporary geopolitics. They emphasize Iran's historical significance as a cradle of civilization, citing its role in developing early forms of governance and drafting a precursor to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The letter condemns the military actions as unwarranted and lacking legal justification, accusing the United States and Israel of redefining military targets to include schools, hospitals, and cultural sites.

It poignantly questions the definition of "humanity" and "crime" in the context

of the deaths of schoolchildren.

The guilds are calling on artists worldwide to take action, warning that inaction will have dire consequences. They urge a global response to defend the vulnerable and prevent further escalation. The letter seeks to galvanize international support and raise awareness of the situation in Iran, framing it as a challenge to universal values and a threat to global peace.

The Iranian cultural community hopes to break through the perceived silence and bring attention to the human cost of the conflict.



Rescue workers sift through the wreckage of a Tehran residential block after a US-Israeli strike hit the neighborhood. ● IRNA