

Pezeshkian vows continued self-defense against US-Israeli aggression

President urges vigilance toward US-Israeli plots to sow division among Muslim nations

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian denounced the US-Israeli aggression against Iran as inhumane and illegal, affirming Iran's firm resolve to continue its robust and assertive self-defense against any acts of aggression. In a telephone conversation with Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid on Friday, he

emphasized Iran's right to self-defense in targeting American bases in the region where attacks on Iran originate from, IRNA reported. He urged vigilance against plots by the US and Israel, aiming to sow division and incite unrest among Muslim nations by equipping terrorist groups and utilizing neighboring countries'

territories for attacks against Iran. Since the start of the US-Israel aggression on February 28, Iran has targeted military and commercial centers linked to the US in neighboring countries, explaining that these actions are in response to those countries allowing the US to use their territories and airspace for attacks against Iran, and are in line with its



right to self-defense. The Iranian president also condemned the US and Israeli attacks on Iraqi mili-

tary and security positions, stressing Iran's readiness for enhanced interaction and cooperation with Iraq.

During the conversation, President Rashid strongly condemned the US-Israeli attacks against Iran, reaffirming Iraq's solidarity with the Iranian national resistance against these acts of aggression.

He further described the US-Israeli escalation and war against Iran as an action against all Muslim nations and the region, reiterating his country's principled stance against this war and preventing third parties from using Iraqi territory to attack Iran.

IRGC orders evacuation near US sites, bans enemy-linked shipping as Hormuz shut

Political Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Friday it had banned all shipping linked to ports of "enemy allies," declared the Strait of Hormuz closed, and urged residents across West Asia to evacuate areas hosting US forces, as it

pressed ahead with missile and drone strikes on American and Israeli military assets. In a statement, the IRGC said its naval units turned back three container vessels of various nationalities attempting to enter an authorized transit corridor, warning that any move-

ment through Hormuz would face a "decisive" response, IRNA reported. It also cautioned civilians to immediately leave locations where US troops are stationed, accusing American and Israeli forces of operating from civilian areas and using noncombatants as "human shields."

"The cowardly American-Zionist forces... are attempting to use civilian locations and innocent people as human shields," the statement said, adding that Iranian forces are "obliged" to target hostile elements "wherever found." The moves come amid intensifying hostilities that

began on February 28 following US-Israeli strikes on Iranian territory, prompting Tehran's ongoing retaliatory campaign. Separately, the IRGC said it carried out the 83rd wave of Operation True Promise 4 early Friday, targeting key US and Israeli positions across the region with a

combination of long- and medium-range missiles and loitering drones. Strikes focused on logistics nodes, fuel depots and military infrastructure. The IRGC described the operation as a "full success," highlighting the deployment of precision-strike and multi-warhead sys-

tems. It added that sustained barrages have disrupted daily routines for Israeli settlers, forcing repeated sheltering under alerts. Reiterating its warning, the IRGC urged civilians to distance themselves from US military sites to avoid harm.

Sports Ministry restricts Iranian teams from visiting hostile countries



VARZESH

casts doubt on Iranian club Tractor's participation in the knockout phase of the AFC Champions League Elite. The Iranian top-flight champion is set to take on Emirati club Shabab Al Ahli in the round of 16 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on April 14, after the Asian Football Confederation announced the new schedule for the remainder of the continent's elite clubs' competition on Tuesday. "In the wake of news indicating a confrontation between Tractor S.C. and an Emirati team on Saudi Arabian soil in the AFC Champions League Elite, the Ministry of Sports and Youth announces that the presence of all national and club teams in countries considered adversaries, where the security of Iranian athletes and team members cannot be guaranteed, is prohibited until further notice," the statement read on Thursday. "Therefore, the Iranian Football Federation and clubs are obligated to inform the Asian Football Confederation about this matter to relocate the matches," the statement added. Tractor and the national governing body of the sport have yet to respond to the statement, though the AFC is unlikely to approve any request to change the venue of the games.

Sports Desk

The Iranian Ministry of Sports and Youth has barred the country's national and club teams from visiting "adversary countries" amid an ongoing military conflict with a US-Israeli coalition. The United States and Israel initiated a military campaign against Iran on February 28, with Iran responding with widespread missile and drone attacks against Israel and U.S. bases in the region. The Sports Ministry's announcement

UN Human Rights Council condemns attack on Minab school, demands investigation

International Desk

The United Nations Human Rights Council convened an emergency session in Geneva on Friday and unanimously condemned the attack on a school in Minab, Hormozgan province, which resulted in the deaths of at least 170 students and teachers. The council called for an immediate investigation and accountability for those responsible, IRNA reported. The attack occurred on February 28, the first day of the US and Israeli aggression against Iran, when an elementary school was struck by an airstrike, leaving over 170 casualties. The session, requested by Iran, China, and Cuba, aimed to address and condemn the airstrikes by the United States and Israel. Senior Iranian and international officials, including Iran's Foreign Minister, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and a special rapporteur on the right to education, delivered speeches.



Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, addresses the UN Human Rights Council session on Minab school attack through video conference on March 27, 2026. MEHR

Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, speaking virtually, described the event as part of a broader pattern of systematic human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law. He highlighted the destruction or damage to over 600 schools and the killing or injury of more than 1,000 students and teachers in recent weeks, asserting that targeting civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, water

facilities, and refineries, was "deliberate" and could not be attributed to error. "When aggressors claim to possess the most advanced technologies and precise military and data systems, no one can believe that the attack on this school was anything other than a deliberate and pre-planned act," he stated. Araghchi labeled the attack a war crime and a crime against humanity, urging the interna-

tional community to condemn the actions and hold perpetrators accountable. He warned that continued silence on such incidents would weaken the international legal system and exacerbate insecurity. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also condemned the attack, describing it as a shocking example of the impact of war on civilians, particularly children. The Commissioner emphasized that the killing of students is never justifiable and called for swift, independent, and transparent investigations to clarify the facts and ensure accountability. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, declared that the attack potentially constitutes a "war crime" and a serious violation of international humanitarian law. She stressed that schools are protected civilian spaces and that any attack on them is prohibited, warning that such cases should not remain in a culture of impunity.

Ground war against...

This asymmetry is steadily driving up the enemy's cost of war. Iran, for its part, is not seeking to prolong the conflict and is prepared to accept its conclusion under the conditions it has outlined, conditions aligned with the guidance of the Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei. Nevertheless, there is currently no clear prospect of negotiations yielding a tangible outcome. There remains, however, a possibility that the enemy, amid the negotiating track, could commit another mis-

calculation and initiate a ground incursion into Iran, potentially aiming to seize one of its islands. Such a move, particularly any attempt by Trump to enter into a ground war with Iran, would constitute a comprehensive strategic blunder. The distance between Iranian islands, including Kharg Island, and the mainland is minimal. Since the eight-year imposed war, Iran has developed extensive defensive arrangements to safeguard these areas. Even in the unlikely scenario that several thousand enemy troops

were to set foot on these islands, Iran could swiftly target and neutralize their concentrations using short-range missile systems, effectively turning Iranian territory into a graveyard for American forces. This approach to countering enemy infantry formations is not limited to the islands; it is applicable across any part of the country that might come under attack. Any aggregation of hostile ground forces would be decisively suppressed. Iran enjoys substantial superiority in both equipment and manpower in the domain

of ground warfare, and its forces stand ready, and willing, for direct engagement with the enemy. While it cannot be entirely ruled out that the enemy might proceed with such a risky course of action, any ground invasion of Iran would, from a military standpoint, amount to suicide for the attacking forces. Moreover, such aggression would provide Iran with the legal and operational latitude to target the origins of the attack, granting it the right to enter the territory of hostile states to eliminate the threat at its source.

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