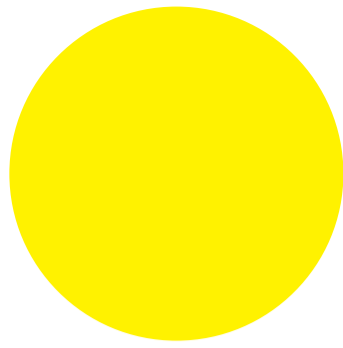


Tehran leads toll as 120 historic sites hit nationwide

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## Army, IRGC pummel enemy sites in fresh strikes as Yemen enters fray

Strategic centers in Tel Aviv, Haifa targeted by drones

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### Israel to pay 'heavy price' for attacks on infrastructure: *Araghchi*

President warns regional states against acting as staging grounds for war

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People gather around the site of an Iranian retaliatory missile that struck Arad, located 45 kilometers from Beersheba in the south of the occupied territories.

REUTERS

## Steely resolve; Hormuz closure, ferocious payback, and global economy crunch



By Masoud Dashti Derakhshan  
International affairs analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

As the world observes Iran's display of authority and resolve in the strategically pivotal Strait of Hormuz, the unequivocal message issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei — asserting the use of the strait as leverage and threatening the "seizure of assets" or "destruction of assets" of adversaries in the event of non-payment of reparations — has sent shockwaves through the global economy. This steadfastness not only reflects the firm determination of the Iranian nation to defend its interests but also demonstrates a nuanced understanding of power dynamics within the international arena. The directive for avenging the martyrs of Minab school and the surprise operation in Hormuz delivered a precise and calculated blow to the fleets supporting the Israeli regime, underscoring Iran's decisive posture in safeguarding its national interests. These actions — alongside the announcement of a review regarding conditional passage based on the 1958 Geneva Conventions and the 1982 Jamaica Convention — convey a clear message: Iran is not merely a participant subject to the rules but a

determining force in shaping them. The traffic-control parameters, encompassing the obstruction of American and allied vessels until complete strategic objectives are met, the continuation of the strait's partial closure pending compensation and cargo seizure, and ultimately the potential removal of sanctions in exchange for the release of detained tankers in India, constitute a multifaceted strategy integrating both military and economic dimensions. This approach, guided with precision and firmness under the new leadership, has communicated Iran's capabilities to the world in an indirect yet unmistakably assertive manner.

### 1. Closure of the Strait and escalating tensions

**Hormuz as a Choked Artery:** Iran's assertive policy has effectively resulted in the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. This action — combined with a legislative initiative concerning "sovereignty, control, surveillance, and the collection of tolls" — has placed the operational management of this strategic waterway squarely in Tehran's hands. Iran has instituted a new navigational order in the Strait, now functioning through a designated special-passage code (as reported by Lloyd's). The widespread suspension of commercial and oil tanker movements and the requirement to deactivate tracking systems have demonstrated Iran's deterrent capacity and maritime dominance.

A legislative proposal to formalize sovereignty, oversight, and tariffs on vessels transiting the strait is currently under review in the Iranian Parliament. At present, the movement of more than 350 commercial vessels and tankers—including 25 supertankers, 200 standard oil tankers, and 70 gas carriers—across the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Strait of Hormuz has been halted. Iranian armed forces have assumed control of maritime routes, with vessels required to deactivate tracking systems. At the height of restrictions, daily traffic dropped to fewer than five authorized vessels.

**Firm preparedness and global warning:** Iran has declared readiness to assume the risks associated with potential mine-laying operations in the Strait. Additionally, in response to the possible authorization by the US Congress of ground operations against the Iranian islands of Qeshm, Hormuz, Kish, and Kharg, Iran has warned that any incursion would result in a complete and prolonged closure of the strait, accompanied by a destructive and irreversibly punitive response. The stated message epitomizing peak readiness is, "Advance if you dare; Iran has waited for years."

**Expanding tensions and the Bab-el-Mandeb scenario:** Peripheral incidents—including fuel-storage fires in Bahrain and a drone strike on a Turkish oil tanker in the Black Sea—indicate the spillover of tensions beyond the

immediate zone of conflict. The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait has emerged as the next potential pressure point, elevating geopolitical risks. Iranian armed forces' acquisition of detailed infrastructure maps of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait further underscores the strategic value of intelligence in this confrontation.

**Peripheral events:** The fire at fuel tanks in Bahrain's Al-Muharrraq Province following an airstrike (with no reported casualties) and the drone impact on a Turkish tanker carrying 140,000 tons of oil in the Black Sea highlight the widening reach of conflict-related disruptions.

### 2. Global economic consequences and energy markets

**Volatility in oil prices and alarming forecasts:** The closure of the Strait of Hormuz—through which over 20 million barrels of crude oil and condensates pass daily, accounting for roughly 20% of global oil consumption—has produced severe repercussions for global markets. Oil prices have surged to unprecedented levels, placing supply chains on the brink of collapse. Analytical forecasts have reached scenarios of USD 200 per barrel, reflecting deep concern over accelerating instability. Brent crude has risen by more than 27%, while WTI has climbed nearly 35%, demonstrating the market's acute sensitivity to supply disruptions

and geopolitical escalation.

**Contradictory gains amid crisis:** Russia's energy revenues have nearly doubled—from approximately USD 12 billion to nearly USD 24 billion—amid the crisis. Meanwhile, former President Trump's proposal to lift sanctions on Iranian oil has been interpreted by some U.S. outlets (USA Today) as advantageous to Iran. These developments underscore the fragile equilibrium in global energy markets.

**Storage constraints and production decline:** Due to halted exports triggered by the closure, Iraq's oil storage facilities have reached capacity, limiting further production (Reuters). This directly undermines global supply resilience during a period of extreme volatility.

**Consumer nations activate emergency systems:** South Korea and East Asian states, heavily dependent on West Asian energy, have activated emergency response mechanisms to manage energy shortages linked to the conflict. China, one of the world's largest energy consumers, has raised domestic gasoline and diesel price ceilings to their highest levels since March 2022 and suspended fuel exports—actions that tighten global supply conditions and amplify market anxiety.

**Crisis spillover into food security:** The economic disruptions have extended to global food systems. Granular urea prices in New Orleans—one of the most widely used

nitrogen fertilizers—have surged 89% since December, reaching USD 660 per ton (TKL). Rising agricultural input costs are expected to trigger worldwide food-price increases (Foreign Policy).

### Strategic maritime chokepoints

**Bab-el-Mandeb as the next pressure valve:**

As another critical artery of global trade, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait carries strategic significance. Following the closure of Hormuz, it has emerged as the next potential focal point of crisis, with over 10% of global merchandise trade and substantial oil and LNG flows passing through it.

### Sources of heightened risk:

- The closure of Hormuz and the search for alternative routes,
- An increasingly multipolar global order,
- The evolution of low-cost but high-impact threats,
- The concentration of global trade through narrow corridors, and
- High supply-chain sensitivity to delivery timelines.

**Energy security reassessed:** Recent developments underscore that energy security extends far beyond access to resources. It now encompasses diversification of sources, diversification of transit routes, infrastructure resilience, rapid shock-response capability, and societal adaptability to energy policy.

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## Israel to pay 'heavy price' for attacks on infrastructure: *Araghchi*

### President warns regional states against acting as staging grounds for war

#### International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi issued a stern warning following the Israeli regime's attacks on key Iranian facilities, including steel factories and nuclear sites.

"Israel has hit 2 of Iran's largest steel factories, a power plant and civilian nuclear sites among other infrastructure. Israel claims it acted in coordination with the US," Araghchi wrote on his X (formerly, Twitter) account on Friday. "Attack contradicts POTUS extended deadline for diplomacy," he added, warning that "Iran will exact HEAVY price for Israeli crimes."

According to eyewitnesses, workers and engineers were working at Mobarakeh Steel Company at the time of the attack.

Located southwest of Isfahan, the company is Iran's largest producer of steel and iron products, manufacturing a variety of items including construction metal materials, auto parts, galvanized containers,

agricultural equipment, shipbuilding materials, and similar products.

In another post on Friday evening, the Iranian foreign minister stressed that the Israeli prime minister has gambled with Americans' money and lives.

Araghchi added, "Having badly lost that gamble, [Benjamin Netanyahu] is now singlehandedly making sure that ordinary Americans, particularly retirees and those retiring in the next few years, will pick up the tab."

Following the recent Israeli attacks, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also wrote in a post on X on Saturday: "We have repeatedly stated that Iran does not carry out preemptive attacks, but in response to attacks on infrastructure and economic centers, we will deliver a firm response to the criminal enemy."

Pezeshkian's message to the countries of the region is that "if you are seeking development and security, do not allow our enemies to conduct war from your countries."



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi  
● IRNA

In telephone conversations with their Pakistani and Turkish counterparts, respectively, Iranian president and foreign minister both denounced the US administration's contradictory stances and illogical demands, saying the paradox in the words and deeds of American officials raises doubts about their sincerity and has created mistrust. The US and Israel started a war of choice on February 28 by assassinating the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and bombing a school in southern Iran, which resulted in the deaths of 170 students and teachers.

Iran has been responding to the aggression by blocking the Strait of Hormuz and attacking US military assets in oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf and the Israeli-occupied territories.

#### Iran to make exception for ships carrying humanitarian goods

Tehran has agreed to the United Nations' request for the safe passage of ships carrying humanitarian goods through the Strait of Hormuz, says Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva Ali Bahreini. Iran has made this decision

in line with its longstanding humanitarian and legal principles and in response to the request from the United Nations, Bahreini said, emphasizing that operational arrangements will be finalized in due course in coordination with the United Nations.

In a telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart on Friday, the Iranian foreign minister reaffirmed Tehran's legal entitlement as a coastal nation to prevent only the transit of vessels belonging to aggressors and their allies through the Strait of Hormuz.

Araghchi stated that measures have been taken to defend Iran's sovereignty and national security and to prevent aggressors from abusing the Hormuz Strait to carry out acts of aggression against Iran.

Araghchi also explained that the movement of vessels belonging to other countries through the Strait of Hormuz is coordinated with relevant Iranian authorities.

For his part, Sergei Lavrov condemned the US and Israeli aggression, emphasizing the necessity to respect the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and expressing Russia's readiness to continue consultations aimed at reducing tensions and restoring security and stability in the region.

## Tehran leads toll as 120 historic sites hit nationwide



#### Iranica Desk

Tehran has become the focal point of a cultural crisis following recent US-Israel air strikes, as more than 50 historical sites in the capital alone have sustained damage. Across Iran, the nation's civilizational legacy is in grave danger, with field reports from various provinces indicating that historical identity has been directly targeted. According to preliminary statistics, at least 120 museums and historical buildings nationwide have been affected, with damages ranging from minor decorative cracks to complete structural failure.

Alavi, Chairman of the Cultural Heritage Committee of the Tehran Islamic City Council, expressed deep regret, highlighting prominent damaged sites such as the Golestan Palace World Heritage Site, the Sa'dabad Cultural-Historical Complex, the Marmar (Marble) Palace, the War University Museum (Teymourash House), the former National Consultative Assembly building (Senate Palace), and the Shokufeh Cinema. A shocking point in Alavi's remarks was the total destruction of three valuable works of contemporary Tehran architecture, including the former Gendarmerie building, the Bazaar police station, and the Baharestan police station.

In Alborz Province, the condition of the Soleimaniyeh Palace-Museum and other historical buildings in the city of Karaj has been reported as concerning.

Nader Zeinali, Director General of the Provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, detailing the damage caused by the US and Israeli attacks, stated that the massive explosion waves

caused deep cracks in the main walls of the Soleimaniyeh Palace and the collapse of part of the stained glass and interior decorations.

Emphasizing the sensitive nature of historical buildings against continuous vibrations, Zeinali added, "The Pol Dokhtar, known also as Soleimaniyeh Bridge, Samsam Castle, and even the building of the Provincial Cultural Heritage Organization have not been spared from these waves."

Hamedan Province was also not immune to the shrapnel of these attacks. Mohsen Masoum-Alizadeh, Director General of Hamedan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, reported damage to the Tomb of Baba Taher during a field visit to this iconic monument.

The explosion wave caused several stones of the tomb's facade to break and damaged the delicate decorations of the building.

Stating that the Tomb of Baba Taher is one of the tourism and spiritual hubs of the west of the country, he noted that the process of precise documentation of the damages by experts has begun so that the extent of the losses caused by the attacks can be officially recorded and reported.

In Khorramabad, Lorestan Province, the 1,800-year-old Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, a symbol of the resilience of Iranian history, faces a serious threat. According to reports, explosion waves from heavy missiles have transmitted severe shocks to the Sassanid structure of this building. Following recent rains, these damages have appeared as deep cracks and fissures in various parts of the castle, doubling concerns about its structural stability.

## Army, IRGC pummel enemy sites in fresh strikes as Yemen enters fray

### Strategic centers in Tel Aviv, Haifa targeted by drones

#### International Desk

The spokesperson for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters announced that ongoing missile and drone operations by the country's Armed Forces, including the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), continued as part of the 83rd wave of the Operation True Promise 4, targeting US and Israeli positions across the region.

According to the spokesperson, joint operations by the naval and aerospace divisions of the IRGC were carried out in successive waves, striking oil storage facilities in Ashdod, military positions in Modiin, and a US military

information exchange center in the region.

He also cited attacks on US bases in Al Dhafra and Al Udeid, as well as aircraft maintenance hangars, fuel depots, and a Patriot missile system facility at Sheikh Isa base.

In a subsequent wave, he added, Iranian forces targeted Al Kharj airbase, describing it as a hub for aerial refueling and logistical support. Several large refueling aircraft were reportedly destroyed, with others sustaining heavy damage.

The public relations office of the IRGC also said its naval forces carried out a combined drone and missile attack on "centers of American Zionist terrorists" on



● TASNIM

Bubiyan Island. The Army announced on Saturday that since the early hours of the day, the strategic electronic warfare and radar center "ELTA", part of the Israeli regime's aerospace group in the port of Haifa, and the fuel storage facilities at Ben Gurion Airport have been targeted by the powerful drone strikes of the armed forces.

The retaliatory strikes come as the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said that the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) was attacked by the US and Israel for the third time.

#### Yemen formally steps in, fires missiles at Israel

The Yemeni Armed Forces announced that they have

attacked sensitive Israeli targets in the southern parts of the occupied territories with ballistic missiles, indicating that Yemen has officially intervened to defend Iran amid the US-Israeli war of aggression.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the Armed Forces of Yemen highlighted that, given the ongoing military escalation, targeting of infrastructure, and the perpetration of crimes and killings against their brothers in Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, and Palestine, they executed their first military operation by firing ballistic missiles at sensitive military targets of the illegal regime in southern occupied Palestine.

The statement also affirmed that Yemen's operations would continue until the declared objectives are achieved and until the aggression ceases on all fronts of resistance.

## Steely resolve; Hormuz ...

### 3. Political positions and analyses concerning the United States

Shifts in Trump's threats; delays in military action:

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US President Donald Trump has again postponed potential strikes on Iranian power facilities, extending the delay by an additional ten days. This adjustment reflects an awareness of the complex and potentially uncontrollable consequences of such an action amid wartime conditions.

#### Failure of Washington's approach:

Repeated delays and recalibrations in U.S. threats—alongside Iran's rejection of Trump's 15-point proposal—indicate the ineffectiveness of coercive strategies in the face of Iran's wartime resolve.

#### Historic market losses in the United States:

US financial markets experienced significant downturns on the most recent Thursday:

- The S&P 500 fell 1.7%, marking its worst performance since the onset of conflict.
- The Nasdaq dropped 2.4%, more than 10% below its all-time high.
- The Dow Jones declined by 469 points (1%).

These losses occurred despite Trump's attempts to ease tensions through claims of constructive dialogue with Iran. Markets, however, appeared to take Iran's signals and the realities on the ground more seriously, reflecting widespread investor concern over geopolitical escalation and its cascading effects on global energy stability and economic performance.

### 4. Domestic messaging and national resolve

A large new mural in Tehran—depicting the Supreme Leader armed and accompanied by the statement "The people demand continued effective and punitive defense"—has become a symbol of national unity and resolve at the height of the conflict. The conflict in the region and Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz have reinforced the country's deterrent position while generating far-reaching consequences for global energy markets, supply chains, food security, and geopolitical dynamics. With Hormuz closed, Bab-el-Mandeb now stands as a central arena of concern for the future of global trade. Understanding the geopolitical and economic complexities of wartime conditions—as well as the critical importance of securing strategic maritime corridors—is essential for navigating the unfolding crisis. Iran, through its resolve and national cohesion, plays a pivotal role in these developments.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

