

Pezeshkian warns hitting schools aims to derail Iran's development

Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said that adversaries are targeting schools and universities to hinder Iran's development. Speaking at a meeting with the education minister and senior officials during a supervisory visit to the Ministry of Education on Tuesday, Pezeshkian described education as the "foundation" of sustainable development and warned that any reform without a robust schooling system would be short-lived, IRNA reported. He praised teachers and administrators for maintaining instruction and public

services during the 40-day war period, calling their efforts "steadfast." "Enemies" oppose Iran's "knowledge and capability" and "do not want" the country to advance, he said, adding that this explains why "schools and universities" come under pressure. He urged educators to clearly convey this to students and motivate them to help build a "prosperous" Iran. Pezeshkian stressed the need for greater coordination across the executive branch, saying a shared understanding among managers would streamline progress toward national goals.

He also called for expanded delegation of authority and administrative decentralization, citing recent government experience as "effective" in accelerating problem-solving and boosting efficiency at the local level. Reaffirming the government's commitment to development, he said Iran would continue along a path of progress by relying on domestic expertise and scientific capacity. "We will pursue advancement with full force," he said, stressing unity and empowerment of capable managers as key drivers of faster, more balanced growth.



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (5th L) speaks during a meeting with the education minister and senior officials at the Ministry of Education in Tehran on April 14, 2026. ● president.ir



Nearly 1m tons of CO2 released during war

Social Desk

Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) said on Tuesday that recent attacks on industrial facilities and protected areas across 10 provinces released close to one million tons of carbon dioxide and caused widespread environmental damage. The report details the environmental toll of what Iranian authorities describe as the "Ramadan war," saying strikes on key industrial, oil and conservation sites triggered large-scale fires, air pollution and ecosystem degradation, with impacts expected to persist for decades, IRNA reported. The agency said attacks targeted production and service units in provinces including East Azerbaijan, Alborz, Bushehr, Tehran, Razavi Khorasan, Khuzestan, Markazi, Yazd, Gilan and Fars, with environmental effects ranging from low to severe. It added that 13 protected areas across seven provinces sustained varying degrees of damage. A major share of emissions stemmed from fires at fuel storage facilities in the capital. The agency said more than 360,000 cubic meters of oil products burned at sites in Shahr-e Rey and Kouhak, releasing nearly

1 million tons of carbon dioxide. Separate strikes on fuel tanks in Fardis, Alborz province, emitted a further 53,000 tons of carbon dioxide and about 220 tons of aromatic compounds. Experts cited in the report said nearly 4,000 tons of volatile organic compounds were released, posing serious risks to public health and the environment. Environmental activist Majid Fazeli told Mehr News Agency that soil degradation is the "primary" consequence of explosions. "When soil is destroyed, erosion accelerates to the point that living organisms are wiped out and the chain of life is disrupted," he said, pointing to severe erosion in mountainous areas and the destruction of forests. He added that chemical changes in the atmosphere have led to "acid rain," damaging vegetation and threatening biodiversity. "If such pressures persist in areas with high ecological value, some species could face irreversible extinction," Fazeli said. Fazeli also highlighted noise pollution as a key factor in wildlife mortality. "Explosions act like a shock," he said, adding that intense sound waves can cause sudden death among birds and wild



Environmental damage in Tehran following airstrikes on key infrastructure, including the Shahr-e Rey oil depot, on March 7, 2026, with large fires releasing toxic pollutants and blanketing surrounding areas in heavy smoke. ● AMIR KHLOUSI/ISNA

animals, which cannot be relocated safely during conflict. Hamid Zohrabi, deputy head of natural environment and biodiversity at the Department of Environment, said natural ecosystems were among the "victims" of the hostilities, noting that attacks on fuel storage sites contributed to severe air pollution in Tehran. He said that during the 12-day conflict, about 8,500 hectares of protected forests and rangelands were affected by fires, with the bulk of damage occurring in the Zagros ecological zone. The body said it would continue conservation efforts despite the damage, while calling on international bodies to take note of the environmental impact and support remediation. The report warns that damage to air, soil and biodiversity extends beyond immediate infrastructure losses and could take decades to reverse.

Iran officials voice support for Pope's peace remarks, rebuke Trump

Qalibaf praises pontiff's 'fearless' stance

Social Desk

Christian members of Iran's Parliament, joined by senior officials and clerics, on Tuesday praised Pope Leo XIV's anti-war stance and condemned US President Donald Trump's remarks about the pontiff, describing them as an affront to "peace" and religious sanctities. In a joint statement issued on behalf of Iran's Christian community, three lawmakers denounced what they called "insults" by Trump toward the head of the Roman Catholic Church, after the Pope criticized recent aggression against Iran and warned against a "delusion of omnipotence" driving conflict, IRNA reported. The legislators said the Pope's position reflected divine teachings that call for unity and peace, stressing that humanity should act as a "single family." They described Trump's comments as a "blatant attack" on justice and interfaith values, and said disrespect toward religious leaders and figures such as Jesus Christ was unacceptable to "any free person." President Masoud Pezeshkian echoed the criticism a day earlier, condemning the



Pope Leo XIV presides over a Prayer Vigil and Rosary for Peace, in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, April 11, 2026. ● REMO CASILLI/REUTERS

remarks in a message addressed to the pontiff and reaffirming that desecration of revered religious figures runs counter to shared human and moral principles. "His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, I condemn the insult to Your Excellency on behalf of the great nation of Iran, and declare that the desecration of Jesus, the prophet of peace and brotherhood, is not acceptable to any free person. I wish you glory by Allah," the Iranian president wrote in a post on his X account. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also lauded the Pope's "fearless" stance against what he termed war crimes, saying the message "I fear nothing" had

resonated widely among those who refuse silence in the face of civilian suffering. Grand Ayatollah Hossein Nouri Hamedani, in a letter released Monday, described the Pope's position as "courageous" and enduring, saying it would be immortalized globally as a stand against injustice. He highlighted the role of religious leaders in defending human dignity despite political pressure. Culture Minister Abbas Salehi, in a separate post, criticized Trump's rhetoric as excessive and warned it reflected the historical trajectory of "Pharaohs," invoking a religious metaphor to stress the limits of power. The statements follow escalating rhetorical exchanges after the Pope voiced opposition to military action targeting Iran, drawing reactions across political and religious circles in the country.

US Naval blockade ...

How do you assess the role of countries that transit the Strait of Hormuz or benefit from it in this crisis?

Page 1 >

Countries that transit the Strait of Hormuz or benefit from it—including Persian Gulf littoral states and major energy importers such as China, Japan, India, and South Korea—are highly sensitive to any threat of disruption in this strategic waterway. For Arab states in the southern Persian Gulf, the stability of the Strait is a vital national security issue, as a large portion of their revenue and economic stability depends on oil exports through this route. As a result, these countries are naturally inclined to ensure that the crisis does not escalate to a level that threatens their exports. In such situations, they typically seek to step in as mediators or de-escalators, although their positions may be influenced by their relations with the United States. Countries like China and India, as the largest consumers of the region's energy, fun-

damentally oppose any action that could even raise the possibility of disrupting the daily flow of millions of barrels of oil, since even minor shocks in Hormuz could destabilize global energy prices and harm their economies. These concerns tend to push them toward exerting diplomatic pressure on Washington to moderate its actions. Accordingly, the role of these countries in the crisis is largely that of balancers and deterrents—seeking, through their economic and political influence, to contain the situation and prevent it from escalating into a broader conflict.

What role can international organizations such as the United Nations or the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) play in resolving this crisis? The United Nations stands as the primary reference body for addressing such a crisis. Any unilateral action that threatens international peace and security must, under the UN Charter, be reviewed by the Security Council. If Iran frames such a move

as a threat to regional stability, the Council could convene an emergency session and potentially issue a statement or resolution calling for de-escalation. While, in practice, the US veto could block the adoption of a binding resolution, merely bringing the issue before the Security Council would generate considerable political and media pressure. Alongside this, UNCLOS provides a clear framework governing freedom of navigation, the security of shipping lanes, and the prohibition of hostile actions without legal basis. Iran could invoke these principles to challenge the legitimacy of US actions. Other bodies, such as the International Maritime Organization, could also warn of the risks posed by insecurity along shipping routes. Overall, international mechanisms primarily serve to apply diplomatic pressure and undercut the legitimacy of a blockade. While their role is not absolutely binding, they are highly effective in shaping global consensus and increasing the political cost of unilateral action.