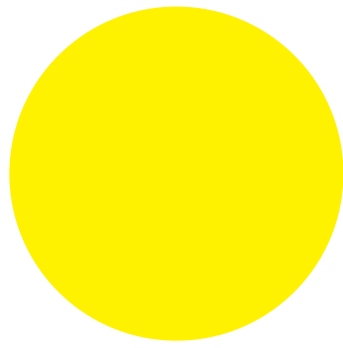




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A plume of smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike on the outskirts of Tyre, southern Lebanon, on June 1, 2026. AFP

Tehran sees wider regional agenda behind Israel's Lebanon offensive

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The intensification of Israeli aggressions in southern Lebanon has drawn reactions from Iranian officials, who have described it as tantamount to a violation of the ceasefire involving Tehran and have warned of its consequences. Meanwhile, Iran and the United States have themselves witnessed a limited exchange of fire near the Strait of Hormuz, although statements issued by both sides indicated that the incidents were solely related to developments in the waterway. These developments have cast doubt on the durability of the ceasefire and the continuation of diplomatic efforts on both the Iranian and Lebanese fronts. In an interview with Iran Daily, Hossein Kazemi, an international affairs analyst, said that Iran views Israel's operations in Lebanon as part of a broader project aimed at destabilizing the region. He argued that Tehran could use its political, diplomatic and regional leverage to raise the political and security costs of US support for Israeli actions and elevate the Lebanon issue into a regional and international demand.



Hossein Kazemi

IRAN DAILY: How do you analyze Iran's approach to developments in Lebanon? What tools does Iran have to pressure the United States and Israel to adhere to the ceasefire and halt operations in Lebanon?

KAZEMI: Iran does not view Israel's operations in Lebanon merely as a Lebanese issue. Rather, it sees them as part of a broader project of regional destabilization. From Tehran's perspective, the continuation of this trend could threaten not only Lebanon's security but also the security of West Asia as a whole. For that reason, Iran's opposition to the expansion of Israeli military operations should be understood within the framework of defending regional stability and preventing the outbreak of another large-scale war.

At the same time, Iran believes that the United States, as Israel's principal political and military backer, bears direct responsibility for the actions of this regime and cannot dissociate itself from their consequences. Washington speaks of diplomacy and de-escalation on the one hand, yet on the other it has not adopted a firm deterrent stance toward Israeli military actions. This dual-track approach has led many regional observers to question the sincerity of US support for peace and regional stability. As long as the United States is unwilling to use its influence to restrain Israeli actions, it will be difficult to speak of a sustainable ceasefire and regional security. Tehran can therefore draw on its political, diplomatic and regional capacities to increase the cost of continued Israeli aggression. Iran has also conveyed the message that ongoing attacks on Lebanon could negatively affect negotiations and regional security arrangements. In practice, Tehran's most important instrument is to raise the political and security costs of US support for Israeli actions and turn the Lebanon issue into a regional and international demand.

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Persian handwoven carpet Iran's 'second flag': **Businessman** Restoration of carpet industry to golden era takes five years

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Iran names 26-man squad for 2026 World Cup

Sports Desk

Iranian head coach Amir Ghalenoei on Monday named a 26-man roster for the 2026 World Cup, with Team Melli set to head to North America carrying a blend of experienced stars, domestic standouts and overseas-based players.

The tournament, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19, is the first World Cup expanded to 48 teams.

Veteran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand headlines Iran's goalkeeping unit alongside Hossein Hosseini and Payam Niazmand. In defense, Ghalenoei selected Ehsan Hajsafi,

Milad Mohammadi, Ali Nemati, Danial Iri, Shoja Khalilzadeh, Mohammad Hossein Kanaani, Saleh Hardani and Ramin Rezaeian. The midfield group features Aria Yousefi, Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Saeid Ezatollahi, Roozbeh Cheshmi, Amir Mohammad Razaghnia, Mohammad Mohebi, Mohammad Ghorbani and Mehdi Ghayedi.

Up front, Iran will rely on Saman Ghoddos, Mehdi Torabi, Ali Alipour, Shahriar Moghanlou, Dennis Dargahi, Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh and star striker Mehdi Taremi. Nine players in the squad currently play abroad, while the remainder come from clubs in Iran's top flight. Esteghlal, Persepolis and Tractor each have four representa-

tives in the final roster, the highest total among domestic clubs.

The coaching staff also named Mohammad Khalifeh and Omid Noorafkan on a standby list. Both players will travel with the team and could replace an injured member up to 24 hours before the tournament begins.

Iran have been drawn in Group G alongside Belgium, Egypt and New Zealand, with all three of their group-stage matches scheduled to be played in the United States.

The team opens its World Cup campaign against New Zealand on June 15 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, just outside Los Angeles.

Off the field, however, preparations remain complicated. Iran had originally planned to base itself in Tucson, Arizona, but later moved its World Cup training camp and headquarters to Estadio Caliente in Tijuana, Mexico.

The relocation comes as the squad continues to wait for US visas ahead of the tournament.

Iran's Ambassador to Mexico, Abolfazl Pasandideh, who visited Tijuana on May 28, said the team had not yet received visas to enter the United States and argued that Iran would not be competing under "equal conditions" because of difficulties surrounding its preparations before the tournament.

