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Iranians hold a funeral procession, also attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian and other senior officials, to bid farewell to 110 unknown soldiers fallen during the 1980s Iraq-Iran war in Tehran on November 13, 2026.
president.ir

The UN Charter under fire: Why US attacks on Iran violate int'l law



By Abbas Araghchi
Iranian foreign minister

OPINION

If states were free to attack one another based on their own assessments of possible future threats, what would be left of the international legal order? This question goes well beyond the political dispute between Iran and the United States. It concerns one of the fundamental principles on which the international order established after the Second World War rests: the use of force is governed by law, and no state, however powerful, is entitled to place its own judgment above binding rules of international law.

The military attacks launched by the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran constitute a clear violation of the prohibition on the use of force and an infringement of Iran's sovereignty. Their legality must be assessed against the UN Charter and established principles of international law, not against political arguments or justifications advanced after military operations have begun.

The UN Charter sets clear limits on the use of force

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. This prohibition is not merely a treaty obligation. It is also a fundamental rule of customary international law, as the International Court of Justice confirmed in its 1986 judgment in the Nicaragua case.

International law permits the use of force only in narrowly defined circumstances, including the exercise of the right of self-defense under Article 51 of the Charter. The US military attack

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on Iran had no authorization from the Security Council, nor can allegations of possible future threats, in themselves, provide a sufficient legal basis for invoking self-defense.



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