Minister urges ITU follow-up on war damage assessment request

Economy Desk

Iran's communications minister has urged the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to follow up on Tehran's request for a comprehensive assessment of damage to the country's communications and broadcasting infrastructure and technical recommendations for its reconstruction, while stressing the need to preserve the organization's nonpolitical and technical mandate.

Sattar Hashemi made the appeal during a meeting with ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin on the sidelines of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 in Doha, IRNA reported.

Highlighting Iran's active participation in the ITU's activities, meetings and study groups, Hashemi called for continued technical cooperation and exchanges of experience among member states.

He also strongly condemned US and Israeli military attacks on Iran during the 40-day war that began in late February, saying they had resulted in civilian deaths and damage to communications infrastructure and other civilian facilities.

Hashemi stressed the need to respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity and comply with international humanitarian law, calling on the international community to take a responsible stance to prevent similar actions and protect civilian lives and security.

He said preserving the nonpolitical nature of specialized international organizations, including the ITU, was essential to maintaining technical and scientific cooperation among countries, warning that politicizing their mandates would undermine their effectiveness and credibility.

Referring to the ITU secretary-general's responsibility to safeguard the organization's neutrality and technical mandate, Hashemi emphasized the importance of maintaining channels for technology diplomacy and addressing issues through professional and specialized engagement.

Hashemi also recalled Iran's Aug. 10, 2026, letter to the ITU concerning damage to the country's information and communications technology (ICT) and broadcasting infrastructure and called for continued follow-up on the request until it was addressed.

He said Iran expected a comprehensive assessment of the damage, identification of reconstruction priorities and technical recommendations for restoring damaged infrastructure. Noting that the matter had been referred to the ITU's Asia-Pacific regional office, he called on the organization's secretariat to pursue it actively.

Bogdan-Martin welcomed Hashemi's views and proposals, emphasizing Iran's active participation in the ITU's activities and programs. She said the secretariat was ready to examine the issues raised within the organization's technical mandate.

Regarding Iran's request for an assessment of damage to its communications and broadcasting infrastructure, she also stressed the importance of pursuing the matter through expert and technical channels, expressing hope that engagement between Iran and the ITU secretariat would strengthen bilateral cooperation and advance agreed issues.

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, the organization's highest decision-making and policymaking body, is being held in Doha, Qatar, from Nov. 9 to 27, 2026. Convened every four years, the conference brings together representatives of member states to set the ITU's future strategies and priorities.

On Friday, Hashemi also met Kazakhstan's deputy prime minister and minister of artificial intelligence and digital development. The two officials emphasized expanding bilateral and regional cooperation in communications and information technology, digital infrastructure and emerging technologies.

Hashemi also held talks with Sid Ali Zerrouki, Algeria's minister of post and telecommunications, on prospects for expanding bilateral cooperation and coordination between the two countries in international forums.



Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology Sattar Hashemi (R) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin exchange commemorative gifts during a meeting on the sidelines of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 in Doha, Qatar, on November 13, 2026.
IRNA

Tehran Stock Exchange leads global markets with 150% annual gain in August

Economy Desk

The Tehran Stock Exchange recorded the world's highest annual growth in August 2026, with its price index rising 150% from a year earlier, outperforming 74 major stock markets worldwide, according to the latest report by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

The index reached 1,091,379 points, putting Tehran ahead of South Korea's stock market, which ranked second with a 114% gain, and Ghana's exchange, which placed third with a 105% increase, Eqtesad-e Moaser reported.

The performance came despite wartime conditions in Iran and followed a period of pressure on the market amid political uncertainty and an extended trading suspension that prompted investors to adopt a more cautious approach.

Trading on the TSE resumed on May 19 after an 80-day suspension, with Iranian equities ending the session higher than expected and showing early signs of stability following the prolonged halt caused by the 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February.



IRNA

The country remains on a war footing, with its southern ports under a US naval blockade.

Meanwhile, stock markets in several Arab countries in the region recorded declines or only modest gains during the same period, amid the economic fallout from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Dubai's stock market fell 3.8% in August, while Abu Dhabi's benchmark declined 0.9%. Bahrain's market rose just 0.4%, compared with gains of 4.7% in Kuwait and 4% in Saudi Arabia. Oman's Muscat Stock Exchange, however, posted a 69% increase.

In the United States, the Nasdaq index gained 22%, while the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) rose 19%.

Indonesia's stock market recorded the steepest decline among the 75 major exchanges, falling 23.7% during the month.

Iran, Uzbekistan step up transport cooperation to boost regional trade, transit

Economy Desk

Iran and Uzbekistan are working to expand rail and road transport cooperation, improve transit flows and strengthen logistics and trade ties through regional corridors, with Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq calling for the implementation of previous agreements and closer coordination during talks with her Uzbek counterpart in Tashkent.

Sadeq met Uzbek Minister of Transport Ilkhom Makhkamov in Tashkent on Thursday to discuss ways to expand bilateral transport and transit cooperation, with both sides stressing the need to remove obstacles and facilitate trade and transit along regional routes, IRNA reported.

Bilateral trade between the two countries exceeded $280 million in the first five months of the current Iranian year, which began on March 21, according to Rahmatollah Khormali, Iran's commercial attaché in Uzbekistan.

Sadeq described her visit to Tashkent and talks with Uzbek officials as reflecting the strategic importance of political, economic, transport and transit relations between the two countries.



Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq (1st R) meets with Uzbek Minister of Transport Ilkhom Makhkamov (1st L) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on November 12, 2026.
IRNA

Referring to her previous talks with Makhkamov on the sidelines of the 14th meeting of transport ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Astana, Kazakhstan, she called for continued efforts to follow up on the agreements reached and put them into practice.

Describing bilateral cooperation in road, air and rail transport as positive, Sadeq proposed holding a trilateral railway meeting involving Iran, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to improve coordination and accelerate rail cooperation among the three countries.

She also highlighted the potential of both countries in logistics and transit, describing Iran's northern and southern ports as valuable assets for expanding regional trade.

Sadeq said the imminent connection of the southeastern port of Chabahar to Iran's national railway network would enhance transit capacity, expand logistics cooperation and facilitate regional countries' access to open waters.

She also welcomed the development of corridor-based ties and multilateral cooperation, emphasizing the need to capitalize on the two countries' complementary capabilities to strengthen their positions in regional transport and transit networks.

Makhkamov, for his part, stressed the importance of expanding comprehensive transport cooperation with Iran and expressed Uzbekistan's readiness to broaden engagement and implement joint programs in the sector.

He also highlighted existing road and rail cooperation between the two countries and called for continued consultations, follow-up on agreements and efforts to create the conditions for further expanding bilateral ties.

The UN Charter ...

Article 51 recognizes the right of self-defense in the event of an armed attack. To treat a potential future threat as grounds for military action would be to accept preventive war based on the unilateral judgment of individual states. Such an interpretation would seriously undermine, if not altogether empty, the prohibition on the use of force of its practical meaning.

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The legality of the US attack has also been challenged within the American legal community. In a statement issued on March 6, 2026, the president of the American Branch of the International Law Association described the attack on Iran as unlawful, stressing that speculative threats concerning what might happen in the future cannot justify the use of military force.

The attacks on schools, sports stadiums, civilian infrastructure, and Iranian nuclear facilities subject to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards raise further questions under international law. Apart from the prohibition on the use of force, these attacks must also be examined in light of the rules of international humanitarian law. Parties to an armed conflict are required to distinguish between military targets and civilians, refrain from disproportionate attacks, and take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Military aggression carries international legal responsibility

UN General Assembly Resolution 3314, which sets out the Definition of Aggression, identifies acts such as attacks by one state's armed forces against the territory of another and the blockade of a state's ports or coasts as acts of aggression. In the absence of a valid legal justification for the use of force, the US military attack on Iran constitutes an internationally wrongful act for which the United States bears responsibility.

Under the law of state responsibility, a state incurs international responsibility when conduct attributable to it breaches an international obligation. That responsibility entails specific legal consequences: the state must cease the wrongful conduct if it is continuing, offer appropriate assurances and guarantees that it will not be repeated, and make full reparation for the injury caused. Political or security considerations cannot, by themselves, relieve the United States of the legal consequences of its actions.

Serious breaches of obligations arising under peremptory norms of international law, or jus cogens, also have implications for other states. International law requires states to cooperate through lawful means to bring such breaches to an end, refrain from recognizing as lawful situations created by them, and withhold aid or assistance that would help maintain those situations.

Iran, for its part, retains the right of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter in response to an armed attack. It may exercise that right subject to the conditions and limitations imposed by international law.

This is about more than Iran

The significance of this case extends far beyond Iran's security or the balance of power in the Middle East. What is ultimately at stake is the credibility of an international legal order designed to prevent states from resorting to force at will. If military strength is allowed to take precedence over legal obligations, and states responsible for aggression can escape accountability, no country's security can be taken for granted.

The prohibition on the use of force is not a concession that powerful states make to weaker ones. It is a binding obligation that applies equally to all states. Ending US aggression, respecting Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and providing reparation for the damage caused by unlawful military action are matters of legal obligation, not political goodwill.

If power is permitted to prevail over law, Iran will not be the only casualty. The foundations of the international legal order, and the authority of the UN Charter itself, will also be at risk.

The article first appeared on Kyodo News on November 13.