

Hold Israel accountable for Iran strikes

Touhid says at OIC

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Adviser
Touhid Hossain
yesterday urged the international community to hold Israel accountable, terming its attack on Iran reckless.



He made the call during his speech at the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in Istanbul, said a foreign ministry statement.

In his address at a special session, Touhid strongly condemned Israel's attack on Iran, saying the aggression was a grave violation of international law, the UN Charter, and Iran's sovereignty.

"Such reckless actions by Israel pose a threat to regional stability and undermine global peace and security," he said.

He also called for an immediate end to the ongoing Israeli aggression in Palestine.

"The OIC must remain united and vocal in demanding justice and accountability through the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Our solidarity must translate into strategic and sustainable actions."



Every Friday during the monsoon, traders gather at the Atghar Floating Market in Pirojpur's Swarupkati upazila to sell boats. Farmers from nearby villages buy them, at prices ranging from Tk 2,500 to Tk 7,000, depending on size, and use them for farming, fishing, transporting fodder, and other daily needs. The photo was taken last Friday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

From origins to today's dispute

AFP, Vienna

A week ago, Israel launched an unprecedented attack against Iran, saying the country was on the verge of developing a nuclear weapon, a claim Tehran has always denied.

Western powers have repeatedly expressed concerns about the rapid expansion of Iran's nuclear programme, questioning in particular the country's accelerated uranium enrichment.

The following is a recap of the main developments regarding Iran's nuclear programme, as European foreign ministers are holding nuclear talks with their Iranian counterpart in Switzerland on Friday.

Iran laid the foundation for its nuclear programme in the late 1950s with technical assistance from the United States, when Iran's ruling shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, signed a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement



with the US.

In 1970, Iran ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT),

committing it to declare its nuclear material to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

But revelations in the early 2000s about undeclared nuclear sites raised concerns. An 2011 IAEA report, collating "broadly credible" intelligence, said that at least until 2003 Iran "carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device".

After suspending enrichment activities, Iran began talks with European and then international powers that would later culminate in a historic deal.

On July 14, 2015, Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States – plus Germany reached an accord in Vienna.

The deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), placed significant restrictions on Iran's nuclear programme

in exchange for sanctions relief after 12 years of crisis and 21 months of protracted negotiations.

But the hard-won deal began to unravel when the US under President Donald Trump walked away from it on May 8, 2018, and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

Following the US withdrawal, Iran retaliated by stepping up its nuclear activities as if "a red cape had been waved in front of a bull," said Clement Therme, associate researcher at the Rasanah International Institute for Iranian Studies.

According to Therme, Iran "embarked on a strategy of escalation" in a bid to up pressure and obtain help to circumvent sanctions. But Tehran's moves were unsuccessful and came at an "exorbitant economic cost".

Iran first began enriching uranium to five percent – breaching the limit of 3.67

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Diplomatic push loses steam

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Such a bomb, which Israel is not known to possess, is the only weapon capable of destroying Iran's deeply buried nuclear facilities.

When reached for comment, the Pentagon referred AFP to the White House, which did not immediately respond.

Trump, who rarely spends weekends in Washington, is due to return to the White House yesterday evening to hold an unspecified "National Security Meeting."

On the ground, Israel yesterday said it had killed three Iranian commanders in its unprecedented bombing campaign across the Islamic republic, which Foreign Minister Gideon Saar claimed had already delayed Tehran's presumed nuclear plans by two years.

Overnight, Iran said it targeted central Israel with drones and missiles.

Israel's military said its fighter jets successfully targeted a top Iranian official Saeed Izadi, in charge of coordination with Palestinian militant group Hamas, in Qom, south of Tehran and announced the deaths of two other commanders from Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

As Israel continued to strike Iran's nuclear facilities and military targets, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said in an interview that by the country's own assessment, it had "already delayed for at least two or three years the possibility for them to have a nuclear bomb".

"We will do everything that we can do there in order to remove this threat," Saar told German newspaper Bild, asserting Israel's onslaught would continue.

However, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian yesterday warned of a "more devastating" retaliation should Israel continue to attack Iran, saying the Islamic republic would not halt its nuclear programme "under any circumstances".

In a phone call with French President Emmanuel Macron, Pezeshkian said Iran was "ready to discuss and cooperate to build confidence in the field of peaceful nuclear activities".

"However, we do not agree to reduce nuclear activities to zero under any circumstances," he added, according to Iran's official IRNA news agency.

Meanwhile, US-based defence think tanks – the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) – said in their latest joint assessment of the conflict that Iranian nuclear material was relocated to secure locations to prevent its destruction.

"Protecting Iranian nuclear material by hiding the material" would

make "a US or Israeli effort to destroy the material more difficult," the ISW/CTP said.

"This statement is presumably intended to suggest to a Western audience that destroying all of Iran's nuclear material would require a long, challenging, and possibly futile hunt for hidden material and that therefore the West should negotiate with Iran," it said.

Israel and Iran have traded wave after wave of devastating strikes, after Israel launched its aerial campaign on June 13, saying Tehran was on the verge of developing a nuclear weapon – an ambition Iran has denied.

Israel said it had attacked Iran's Isfahan nuclear site for a second time after its air force said it had also launched salvos against missile storage and launch sites in central Iran.

The military later said it struck military infrastructure in southwest Iran.

Trump warned on Friday that Tehran has a "maximum" of two weeks to avoid possible American air strikes, as Washington weighs whether to join Israel's unprecedented bombing campaign.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who arrived in Istanbul yesterday for a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to discuss the conflict, told NBC News that "we're not prepared to negotiate with them [the United States] anymore, as long as the aggression continues."

Top diplomats from Britain, France and Germany met Araghchi in Geneva on Friday and urged him to resume talks with the United States that had been derailed by Israel's attacks.

Trump was dismissive of European diplomatic efforts, telling reporters, "Iran doesn't want to speak to Europe. They want to speak to us. Europe is not going to be able to help in this."

"I'm giving them a period of time, and I would say two weeks would be the maximum," Trump told reporters when asked if he could decide to strike Iran before that.

He added that the aim was to "see whether or not people come to their senses."

On Thursday, Trump gave a two-week window to mull US involvement in the conflict, citing a "substantial chance of negotiations." But his latest remarks suggest he may act sooner if no progress is made on dismantling Iran's nuclear program.

Trump also said he is unlikely to ask Israel to stop its attacks to get Iran back to the table.

"If somebody's winning, it's a little bit harder to do," he said.

Meanwhile, US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard yesterday

said Iran could produce nuclear weapons "within weeks", months after she testified before Congress that the country was not building them.

Her change of position came after Trump said she was "wrong" and that intelligence showed Iran had a "tremendous amount of material" and could have a nuclear weapon "within months".

Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

RIA Novosti news agency yesterday reported that President Vladimir Putin had told Israel repeatedly that Iran does not intend to acquire nuclear weapons.

At the OIC meeting, where the Israel-Iran conflict topped the agenda, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Israel's attacks on Iran right before a planned new round of nuclear talks with the US aimed to sabotage negotiations and showed Israel did not want to resolve issues through diplomacy.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan accused Israel of leading the Middle East towards "total disaster".

Iran's health ministry said in an updated toll yesterday that Israeli strikes on Iran have killed more than 400 people.

"As of this morning, Israeli attacks have claimed the lives of over 400 defenceless Iranians and left 3,056 others wounded by missiles and drones," health ministry spokesman Hossein Kermanpour said in a post on X.

Iran's retaliatory strikes have killed at least 25 people, in Israel, according to official figures.

Traffic police and Fars news agency reported congestion on roads into Tehran yesterday, indicating some inhabitants were returning to the capital.

Internet service was partially restored in Iran yesterday, after Tehran imposed a blackout during its war with Israel, London-based online watchdog NetBlocks said.

Overnight, Iran said it targeted central Israel with drones and missiles.

Israeli rescuers said there were no casualties after an Iranian missile struck a residential building in Beit She'an.

Israel's air force yesterday said it intercepted about 400 drones overnight.

Israel's National Public Diplomacy Directorate said more than 450 missiles have been fired at the country so far, along with about 400 drones.

Meanwhile, the International Atomic Energy Agency's chief Rafael Grossi told CNN there was no evidence to suggest that Tehran had all the components to make a functioning nuclear warhead.

Dhaka South held hostage for 40 days

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of birth and death certificates, trade licences, tax documentation, cemetery services, roadwork, community centre operations, and streetlight and drainage maintenance, have ground to a halt.

Every day, an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 people rely on DSCC services. Aslam Hossain of Narinda has visited DSCC offices repeatedly over the past month for an inheritance certificate, but without success, as the office remained closed. "Our family is going through stress," he said.

Asit Kumar Saha from Shantinagar said his son is critically ill and needs urgent treatment abroad, but a birth certificate required for a passport remains out of reach. "We haven't been able to get the certificate for 25 days. His condition is worsening."

The deadlock reached a peak on June 16, when Ishraque began discharging mayoral duties without taking the official oath. In response, the government termed his actions a "criminal offence", accusing him of forcefully entering the Nagar Bhaban, the DSCC headquarters in Gulistan.

Experts say the standoff, while fuelled by Ishraque's defiance, also reflects a failure of a timely institutional response. They say that only immediate government intervention and Ishraque's departure from his position as a self-declared mayor can resolve the crisis.

Prof Tofayel Ahmed, a local government expert, agreed with the government to some extent. "Ishraque's actions are unlawful and politically damaging," he told The Daily Star.

The deadlock stems from a March 27 Election Tribunal ruling that nullified the 2020 DSCC mayoral win of Awami League candidate Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, naming Ishraque, the runner-up, as the validly elected mayor. The Election Commission issued a gazette on April 27 endorsing this verdict.

But rather than proceeding with the swearing in, the Local Government Division sought legal opinion from the law ministry. That process was further delayed after a Supreme Court lawyer filed a writ petition on May 13 challenging both the tribunal ruling and the gazette.

The very next day, Ishraque's supporters began a sit-in outside the Nagar Bhaban. They locked the building on May 15, effectively halting DSCC operations. Though the High Court later cleared the path for the swearing in, the matter moved to the Appellate Division. On legal advice,

the government refrained from administering the oath, citing sub judice status.

Meanwhile, the DSCC mayoral term officially expired on June 1, rendering the gazette ineffective. Nonetheless, Ishraque began what he called "parallel mayoral duties" on June 16, holding meetings with mosquito control teams, health officials, and ward staff under banners that described him as the "Honourable Mayor of DSCC".

Tofayel said the crisis emerged as the Election Tribunal took five years to deliver its verdict.

"There should be a judicial review on why the tribunal delivered the verdict after five years," he said.

He also said that following the ruling, the government could have allowed Ishraque to serve the remaining days of the mayor's tenure. "But Ishraque has started discharging his duties as mayor in

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a very impractical manner. What message he is sending out when the city corporation is locked and being run by party loyalists? This can't continue," he added.

Prof Adil Muhammad Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said, "When the election was declared flawed, how can someone now claim legitimacy based on it?"

"This creates a dangerous precedent. The BNP should handle this responsibly, and Ishraque must show greater maturity," said Adil, also an urban expert.

Ishraque, however, said his actions were intended to serve the public. "Even during the protests, we tried to keep emergency services running," he told The Daily Star.

On the other hand, he alleged that Local Government Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiain instructed officials not to cooperate.

On being identified as "Mayor" at public events, he said, "I didn't put

Student coordinator sued for 'demanding Tk 10 lakh bribe'

UNB, Feni

A case has been filed against a local student coordinator of the July uprising and another person on charges of demanding Tk 10 lakh bribe in exchange for a government job.

Iftekhhar Hasan Bhuiyan, resident medical officer of Parshuram Upazila Health Complex, filed the case with Parshuram Police Station on Thursday night.

Nahid Rabbi, a coordinator of the anti-discrimination student movement's Parshuram unit, is the prime accused, according to Md Nurul Hakim, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The other accused is Abdul Kader, 30, son of Belal Hossain of Anantapur village. Rabbi hails from Kolapara village under Parshuram municipality.

According to the case statement, an audio clip circulating on social media caught the attention of Iftekhhar. In the clip, Rabbi is purportedly heard demanding Tk 10 lakh from a jobseeker named Hridoy, promising him appointment as office assistant-cum computer typist at Feni Civil Surgeon's Office with Kader's help.

Sources at Feni Civil Surgeon's Office said a recruitment test was held on Friday for 115 posts under the office, for which around 12,000 applications were received.

Two die of Covid, four test positive in 24hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two people died from Covid-19 and four others tested positive in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Both deceased were women, hailing from Chattogram and Khulna, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services.

A total of 211 samples were tested during this period.

With the latest data, nine people have died of Covid-19 so far this year. Since the outbreak began in 2020, the total number of confirmed cases now stands at 2,051,942, and the death toll at 29,510.

After a long gap, the first Covid death this year was reported on June 5. The recent rise in cases has prompted health authorities to issue precautionary directives, including wearing masks.

Covid-19 was first detected in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020. The country reported its first death from the virus ten days later.