



Statement Protesting the Widespread Military Strikes by the US and Israel against Iran

Human Rights Now forcefully protests the initiation of armed conflict and the widespread military strikes by the governments of the United States and Israel against Iran beginning on 28 February 2026 and continuing as of 1 March. They violate the UN Charter, which clearly prohibits states using force against other states under Art. 2(4), except either when a UN Security Council resolution authorizes it under Art. 42 or when the force is used in individual or collective self-defense “if an armed attack occurs” against the state under Art. 51.

Iran has long suppressed civil liberties, and in January 2026, a nationwide crackdown on protests reportedly resulted in thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of arrests.¹ However, these circumstances do not justify a preemptive attack by the US and Israel. Furthermore, the US has justified its attack by arguing that if Iran possesses nuclear weapons, it poses a serious threat to the world.² However, it is nuclear-armed states like the US that have threatened the world with nuclear war in the first place. Additionally, until February 26, Iran had been participating in high-level government consultations with the US regarding the development of its nuclear technology, and the two countries agreed to continue negotiations. This does not justify a preemptive attack in any way.

The strikes were unprovoked and conducted without advance warning, public discussion, or advance authorization by the respective legislatures of the US and Israel. They were widespread, targeting dozens of sites across at least 14 cities and sites in Iran, including urban sites with concentrations of civilians.³ There have already been multiple reports of civilians killed by the strikes, including an attack on two schools by Israeli forces, a girls’ elementary school in the city of Minab “targeted by three missile attacks” which reportedly killed at least 148 people, many children, and another school east of the capital Tehran that killed at least a further two students; and as of midday March 1, the Iranian Red Crescent has reported a total of at least 201 people killed and 747 injured by the attacks.⁴ Around 40 Iranian officials have also reportedly been killed as illegally targeted assassinations by Israeli strikes, including the state’s leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, commander of the Revolutionary Guards General Mohammad Pakpour, Security adviser Ali Shamkhani, and Defence minister Aziz Nasirzadeh.⁵ In response to the attacks, Iran has already reportedly attacked sites in Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Oman,⁶ which has also led to reported civilian casualties including one person killed and 11 injured in strikes on airports in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.⁷

Human Rights Now condemns the targeting of any civilians or civilian objects or sites, as well as disproportionate uses of force which harm civilians and civilian objects, and we call on all parties involved to immediately cease hostilities and their military actions and to return to peaceful resolution of the conflict.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/02/iran-un-experts-demand-transparency-and-accountability-following-nationwide>

² <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/fact-checking-statements-made-by-trump-to-justify-u-s-strikes-on-iran>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/28/world/middleeast/us-israel-iran-attack-maps.html>

⁴ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/28/israel-strikes-two-schools-in-iran-killing-more-than-50-people>;

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1i7rvqq51eo>

⁵ [https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cn5ge95q6y7t?post=asset%3Ac5fb52fc-7982-4313-89ef-c7defa2dd0e6](https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cn5ge95q6y7t?post=asset%3Ac5fb52fc-7982-4313-89ef-c7defa2dd0e6;);

<https://news.sky.com/story/whos-in-charge-of-iran-now-and-who-will-be-its-new-leader-13513739>

⁶ <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/middle-east/iran-us-israel-strikes-uae-qatar-bahrain-oman-jordan-kuwait-trump-b2929674.html>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c363zkp1pgxo>