

---

## **A Call for Accountability and Restoring International Legal Order**

---

*While the I.R. of Iran was the immediate target of the unlawful attacks by the Israeli regime and the U.S., the real casualty is the international legal order, the rule of law, and the global non-proliferation regime.*

By Javad Aghazadeh Khoei, Ambassador of the I.R. of Iran in Helsinki

**Let's set the scene:** The Islamic Republic of Iran is engaged in ongoing indirect negotiations with the United States—talks it has entered in good faith to address international concerns. Yet, just one day before a scheduled meeting in Oman, in the early hours of June 13, 2025, the Israeli regime, led by a Prime Minister currently under an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court, launched a large-scale and unprovoked armed attack against the Islamic Republic of Iran. This blatant betrayal of diplomacy is no coincidence; it is widely interpreted as a deliberate and calculated attempt aimed at sabotaging peaceful dialogue and escalating regional tensions. Their call for regime-change at some point, further reveal their systematic policy of destabilization and unlawful interference.

This aggressive act flagrantly violates the United Nations Charter and multiple fundamental principles of international law; a breach so clear that even those with no legal training can recognize it for what it is: a grave act of aggression!

Despite their public statements that 'our war is not with the people of Iran', the brutal reality of the 12 days that followed exposed a calculated campaign of civilian terror. The assault deliberately targeted civilians in densely populated areas, causing the tragic loss of hundreds of innocent lives, including women, children, scientists, and senior military officers and their families, at their homes and while off duty, and injuring thousands more. The attack on civilians and civilian infrastructure such as hospitals,

residential neighbourhoods, media centres, and critical energy installations is not only morally reprehensible but constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law and amounts to war crimes.

## **I. Iran's Legitimate Right to Self-Defence**

Iran exercised its inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter by responding proportionately to the attacks. In contrast, the Israeli regime's invocation of so-called “pre-emptive self-defense” has no standing under international law and has long been rejected by the international community. Its actions constitute an outright crime of aggression—a grave violation of the UN Charter and a breach of General Assembly resolutions.

Iran posed no “imminent threat”, and was in fact, at the negotiating table in good faith, even after President Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018.

## **II. Violations of International Humanitarian Law and Nuclear Norms**

**An alarming 90 percent of the casualties are innocent civilians (including more than 45 children and 132 women),** while medical facilities, healthcare workers, journalists, detention centers, and critical civilian infrastructure were also deliberately targeted. These actions represent grave breaches of international humanitarian law and constitute war crimes. This campaign of terror extended beyond airstrikes to include targeted assassinations of senior military officials and scientists, as well as other acts designed to terrorize the public—such as setting fire to crops and sabotaging essential resources.

Now consider the terror of living under the constant threat of attacks on your nation's nuclear facilities—facilities safeguarded by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Israeli regime's persistent strikes against these sites, compounded by the United States' heavy bombings of

three major nuclear facilities, flagrantly violate established international law.

Iran's peaceful nuclear program is transparent and compliant with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and related agreements, whereas the Israeli Regime, an undeclared nuclear actor, has consistently refused to join key disarmament treaties or allow international oversight of its arsenal. The attack by a Nuclear Weapon State against a Non-Nuclear Weapon State party to the NPT, deals a major blow to the non-proliferation regime.

The IAEA has conducted more inspections in Iran than in any other country, dedicating 14% of the IAEA's overall safeguards budget to monitoring Iranian facilities. Despite this unprecedented level of intrusive scrutiny, **not a shred of evidence** has ever been found to suggest that Iran's nuclear program serves anything other than peaceful, civilian purposes. Iran has repeatedly voiced its principled position—rooted in legal, strategic, and ethical considerations—that it **does not pursue nuclear weapons and remains committed to peaceful nuclear advancement under international law.**

The Israeli regime and the United States bear full responsibility for the consequences of these acts of aggression, which blatantly violate multiple international obligations, such as IAEA General Conference Resolution 533, Article 56 of the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, UN Security Council Resolution 487 (1981), and Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

**Did you know that it was Iran who first proposed the establishment of a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as early as 1974?** Since then, Iran has remained a consistent and vocal advocate of this initiative. Yet, this proposal has faced sustained and meaningful opposition solely from the Israeli regime, with the unwavering support of the United States.

This asymmetry threatens regional and global security and undermines the rule of law.

### III. The Responsibility of the International Community

This grave aggression demands urgent collective action. Third states have an undeniable legal obligation under international law to neither recognize nor assist the Israeli regime's unlawful actions. The failure of some to exert pressure on the Israeli regime or to hold it accountable risks normalizing aggression and weakening the entire international legal order.

Regrettably, the United Nations Security Council's repeated inaction in the face of these violations has endangered global peace and security and undermined the credibility of international institutions.

### IV. The Pursuit of Justice and the Power of Iran's Resolve

While Iran is the immediate target of these unlawful attacks, **the real casualty is the international legal order, the rule of law, and the global non-proliferation**

**regime.** The Islamic Republic of Iran has urged the UN Secretary-General and Security Council to recognize the Israeli regime and the United States as the initiators of the act of aggression and their subsequent responsibility therefor, including compensation and reparation, and take decisive measures to halt further attacks and restore peace.

**Iran will not forfeit its right to develop peaceful nuclear programme, a right firmly guaranteed under international law.** While one may possess the military capability to bomb nuclear facilities, no force can bomb knowledge and know-how. Iran's nuclear expertise is entirely indigenous, developed through domestic capacity and achieved despite the most severe sanctions. Its scientific advancement, national resolve, and strategic independence are irreversible realities.

**The Islamic Republic of Iran has never pursued nuclear weapons, nor will it ever do so.** The persistent allegations to the contrary are nothing more than a pretext or an excuse to justify unlawful actions, in clear violation of international law.

**Behind the veil of misguided, groundless and fabricated non-proliferation concerns, claimed by the Israeli regime and repeated by its supporters, lies a deeper agenda that disregards both regional and international stability and rule of law in pursuit of its hegemony, as an unchecked power.**

However, it is only a delusion, doomed to fail.