

The **Iran–Israel War** is an ongoing [armed conflict](#) between [Iran](#) and [Israel](#).^{[17][18]} It began on 13 June 2025, when Israel launched attacks on dozens of targets with the stated aim of stopping the expansion of [Iran's nuclear program](#).^{[19][20]} Under the codename **Operation Rising Lion**,^[c] the [Israel Defense Forces](#) (IDF) and [Mossad](#) damaged key [nuclear sites](#), military installations, and residential areas.^{[21][22][23]} Beginning on the evening of 13 June, Iran retaliated with **Operation True Promise III**: ballistic missiles and drones launched at military sites, intelligence sites, and residential areas.^{[24][d]}

The conflict is considered an escalation of [decades-long animosity](#), during which Tehran challenged [Israel's legitimacy](#) and [called for its destruction](#), while Tel Aviv considered the Iranian nuclear program an existential threat. During the [crisis in the Middle East](#) that followed the [October 7 attacks](#) of 2023, the animosity escalated to direct confrontation. Israel weakened [Iranian proxies](#) such as [Hamas](#) and [Hezbollah](#), and began planning action against Iran. The countries traded [strikes](#) in April 2024 and October 2024.^{[26][27][28][29]} The Israeli attacks of June 2025 began the day after the expiration of a two-month deadline that U.S. President [Donald Trump](#) had set for [securing a deal](#) to keep Iran from developing a nuclear bomb.

The Israeli attacks killed several of Iran's military leaders, leaders of the [Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps](#), top nuclear scientists,^{[30][31][23]} and some 200 civilians, according to the Iranian health ministry and the [Human Rights Activists in Iran](#) nonprofit group.^{[32][33][34]} Airstrikes destroyed the overground section of the [Natanz nuclear facility](#) (though the underground area was not destroyed) and damaged Isfahan's uranium conversion facility, but apparently failed to damage the underground [Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant](#).^{[35][36]} Israel also hit a missile complex near [Tabriz](#), a missile base in [Kermanshah](#), and IRGC facilities near Tehran and in [Piranshahr](#). The attacks also damaged public infrastructure.^{[35][36]} The Iranian retaliation included about 100 missiles and about 100 drones, the IDF said.^[37] Iran's attacks have killed about 24 people, all civilians, according to the Israeli government.^[38]

The Israeli strikes were condemned by countries across the [Islamic world](#), [China](#), [Russia](#), the [European Union](#) and other countries. However, they were praised by some Iranian opposition groups and by Trump, who urged Iran to agree to a nuclear deal promptly.^{[39][40][41]} A number of Western countries have reiterated that Iran must never acquire nuclear weapons, and called on both Israel and Iran to de-escalate.^{[42][43][44]}

Background

Iran–Israel opposition

Further information: [Destruction of Israel in Iranian policy](#), [Iran–Israel proxy conflict](#), and [Iran–Israel relations](#)

See also: [Iran–Saudi Arabia proxy conflict](#)

Historically Israel and Iran enjoyed a close relationship until the 1979 [Islamic Revolution](#).^[45] Since the revolution, Iran's new theocratic government^[45] has employed [antisemitic](#) and genocidal rhetoric^{[46][47]} towards Israel and pledged to destroy it.^{[48][49][50][51][52]} Iranian supreme leader [Ruhollah Khomeini](#) and the religious right in Iran view Israel as an "illegitimate occupier of Muslim land" and being part of Western imperialism.^{[53][46]} Israel says that the Iranian nuclear program will allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon and thus Israel believes, poses an existential threat to Israel.^[45]

Although Iran and Israel have long had a proxy conflict, 2024 saw the first time both attacked each other openly and directly. On 1 April 2024, an [Israeli airstrike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus](#) killed several Iranian officers. Iran retaliated with [strikes against Israel in April 2024](#), to which Israel then retaliated the same month with [strikes on Iran](#). In July 2024, Israel [assassinated Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh](#) in Iran's capital of Tehran. In October 2024, [Iran struck Israel](#), and [Israel struck Iran](#).^[54]

Iranian nuclear program

Further information: [Iran and weapons of mass destruction](#)

Israeli prime minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) cited the [Iranian nuclear program](#) as the chief reason Israel decided to preemptively strike Iran.^[55] Israel regards Iran's nuclear program to be a strategic threat, although Israel possesses nuclear weapons itself.^[56] Israel says it has the right to take military action against Iran's nuclear program if it believes it has become non-peaceful.^{[50][54]} In the mid-2000s, the United States and Israel sabotaged Iranian nuclear facilities as part of [Operation Olympic Games](#).^[57] The [assassination of five Iranian nuclear scientists](#) in Tehran since 2010 is commonly attributed to Israel.^[54]

In 2015, Iran signed the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#) (JCPOA), negotiated by President [Barack Obama](#), the [United Nations Security Council](#) and [Germany](#) to manage Iran's civilian nuclear development at a limited level.^[58] In 2018, President [Donald Trump](#), during his [first presidency](#), suspended his country's participation in the deal and resumed economic sanctions on Iran, despite the report by the [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) (IAEA) that Iran was keeping to the deal.^[58] Iran retaliated against Trump's abandonment of the deal by incrementally increasing its uranium enrichment.^[59]

Following the [assassination of Qasem Soleimani](#) by the US in January 2020, Iran said it would no longer abide by JCPOA's enrichment restrictions.^[60] By 2021, Iran was [enriching uranium](#) to 60% purity, similar to weapons-grade uranium.^[58] In May 2025, the IAEA reported that Iran had amassed 409 kg of 60% pure uranium,^[58] which is higher than required for civilian uses and close to military grade.^[61] In response, Iran announced a new nuclear enrichment facility (its third), that would be put under IAEA monitoring.^{[62][63]} [United States Central Command](#) (CENTCOM) commander [Michael Kurilla](#) warned on 10 June 2025 that Iran was " 'weeks away' from nuclear weapons".^[64] A day before the Israeli strikes occurred, the IAEA found Iran non-

compliant with its nuclear obligations for the first time in 20 years.^[65] Iran insists it does not seek nuclear weapons and Iranian supreme leader [Ali Khamenei](#) delivered a [fatwa](#) saying nuclear weapons are unethical.^[66]

In April 2025, Trump announced [negotiations between the United States and Iran](#) regarding Iran's nuclear program. The White House declared that Iran had two months to secure a deal; the two-month deadline expired the day before Israel's strikes.^{[67][68]}

Iranian ballistic missile program

Along with the Iranian nuclear program, the Iranian ballistic missile program is considered a threat by Israel. In a [New York Times](#) article, it was reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu believes Iran aims to produce 300 ballistic missiles each month, which he views as a direct threat to Israeli cities.^[69]

Axis of Resistance

Further information: [Axis of Resistance](#)

The Axis of Resistance is a geopolitical and military strategy devised by Iran in the 1980s in order to deter an attack on Iran and project Iranian power.^[70] Over the years, Israel has fought multiple wars with various Iranian proxies. Such wars include wars against [Hezbollah](#) such as the [1982 Lebanon war](#),^[45] the [2006 Lebanon war](#), as well as the various wars and operations against [Hamas](#) in the [Gaza Strip](#).^[71] On 7 October 2023, Hamas, an Iranian proxy in the Gaza Strip, launched a surprise attack on Israel leading to war between Israel and Hamas and later between Israel and other Iranian proxies such as Hezbollah and the [Houthis](#) in Yemen. Over the war, the Iranian proxies were severely weakened.^{[45][72][70]} This is said to have weakened Iranian deterrence and increasing Iranian isolation.^{[45][72]}

The Israeli airstrikes against Iran's nuclear program were carried out by over 200 [fighter jets](#), including multiple [F-35I Adir](#) fighters,^[73] the Israeli variant of the American [F-35 Lightning II](#) stealth [strike fighter](#). The F-35I's were reportedly modified with low-observable [conformal fuel tanks](#) to enable them to have the range and endurance to conduct operations over Iran without compromising stealthy characteristics or requiring mid-air refueling.^{[74][75]} Israeli fighter jets targeted over 100 sites across Iran,^[73] including the Natanz enrichment facility and other infrastructure associated with Iran's nuclear program.^[76] No nuclear accidents occurred as a result of the airstrikes, as operational nuclear reactors, such as the [Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant](#) and the [Tehran Research Reactor](#), were not attacked. Although damaged [nuclear centrifuges](#) can release low-level radiation and industrial chemicals that can threaten on-site personnel, they can neither trigger nuclear explosions nor can they cause large-scale contamination of an area.^[76]

Immediate prelude

On 12 June 2025, [ABC News](#) reported that Israel was considering taking military action against Iran.^[77] Hours later, US officials had been told that Israel was "fully ready" for an operation against Iran, according to [CBS News](#). The Trump administration purportedly considered options to support Israel without leading the operation.^[78] The [US Embassy in Jerusalem](#) restricted the movement of its staffers the following day, though [Mike Huckabee](#), the US ambassador to Israel, said it was not likely that Israel would strike Iran without approval from the [Trump administration](#).^[79] Prior to the airstrikes, Israel told the Trump administration it would not strike without first notifying the United States.^[31] Trump spoke to Netanyahu on the eve of the attacks, and later admitted having known in advance of Israel's planned actions.^[80] Officials in the United Kingdom's [Foreign Office](#) and [Ministry of Defence](#) were also aware of the Israeli intention to strike Iran ahead of time, but it has not been confirmed whether a formal notification was provided by Israel.^{[81][82]} According to two Israeli officials, the Israeli government asked the Trump administration to join them and help in the prelude of attacks against Iran.^[83] Key right-wing figures, including some of Trump's allies, questioned Israel's attacks and warning of a US war with Iran.^[84]