

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baqaei's statement at the beginning of his weekly press conference with journalists

(Monday, June 16, 2025)

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Greetings to all my friends,

Today marks my first press briefing in a period during which our country Iran has come under the aggression of the most brutal occupying regime. Today is the fourth day of our national defense in the face of a blatant act of aggression. On the morning of Friday, June 13, while my fellow citizens were asleep and as our people were preparing for a major celebration, the Zionist regime launched an onslaught against our land using a wide array of weapons, mostly supplied by the US.

A number of our prominent figures in the fields of defense, science, and knowledge, along with many innocent compatriots, were martyred during this cruel aggression.

I extend my condolences to all the families, to the Iranian nation, and to all freedom-seeking people of the world for this crime and for the martyrdom of these great people. The memory of each and every one of these dear ones will forever live on in the proud history of Iran.

Following this heinous crime and unforgivable aggression, we began

fighting back fiercely by relying on all our own capacities and with the help of God the Almighty, and we shall resolutely continue the fight. Our response to the Zionist regime is defense, legitimate defense in accordance with international law, with reason, and with human logic.

All those individuals and all the countries that in any way supported this regime or attempted to justify this aggression are considered accomplices and partners in this crime. Their names will remain in the memory of Iranians and the people of the region as accomplices in these atrocities.

The Zionist regime's aggression against Iran did not occur in a vacuum. It is a continuation of the barbarities that have, for the past eight decades, turned our region into a hub of instability and violence, a region plagued by endless wars. This regime, while committing this aggression, is simultaneously engaged in genocide in the occupied Palestine. And I would like to stress right here that we must not forget the crimes currently unfolding in the West Bank and Gaza, simply because another act of aggression is underway. The lands of two Islamic countries remain under the occupation of this regime.

The impunity of this regime, coupled with the full-fledged support of the US and Western countries, has placed regional and global peace and security under an unprecedented threat.

Therefore, while we are defending Iran with all our might and fully supporting our courageous armed forces, we also remind every single country and every single member state of the UN, of their responsibility. If they truly believe in the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, if they believe in the prohibition of the use of force, if they believe in the rule of law at the international level, if they believe in collective security, then they must act... now. The UN Security Council must fulfill its responsibilities.

Ambiguous statements and words aimed merely at justifying aggression, statements that equate the aggressor with the country under attack and ask Iran to exercise restraint, are nothing but hypocrisy, nothing but irresponsibility.

During these four days, the attacks by the Zionist regime have targeted residential areas. The attacks also threaten Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities in Natanz and Isfahan. This act is a flagrant violation of all international norms and regulations.

Attacking residential areas, assassinating our military personnel during a time of no war, murdering innocent Iranian citizens, slaughtering Iranians in their own homes while they were simply living their normal lives.

Today, I want to tell you a few stories ... the stories of the sons and daughters of our land. Ehsan Eshraghi was a man from among these people, just a father, a humble bank employee, who every morning left for work with fresh bread in one hand and a kiss on his daughter's forehead. During the Zionist regime's savage and merciless assault on residential areas in Tehran, a missile landed in the middle of their life. Ehsan and his daughter had no nuclear bombs, posed no threat to anyone ... they were simply a father and a daughter, whose only crime was living. But even their breathing was unbearable for a regime that fears children, for a regime that treats the killing of children as amusement. Now their gravestones lie side by side. On the daughter's stone is written: "A nine-year-old girl who was taken before she even understood why".

Mohammad Mahdi Amini, a young hero who left his dreams buried beneath the rubble. He was just a child... joyful, energetic, and passionate about Taekwondo. When he put on his white uniform and carefully tied his yellow belt, his satisfied smile had a special glow. He belonged to the podium of champions, not in the horrifying headlines of war. But the child-killing regime drew him into an unfair game. The child who was meant to one day stand on a podium now rests in silence beneath the earth. His father, who always drove him to training, made his final journey with his son —a journey with no return. And his mother is left alone, holding a tiny Taekwondo uniform in her arms at night, embracing the dreams of her son.

The story of Majid Tajan Jari, the story of a dream that remained unfinished. He had returned with a suitcase full of silent codes, brilliant ideas, and a heart that beat for Iran, even beyond its borders. Majid, a son of Amol, was not only a genius in artificial intelligence and programming ...

he was a dreamer who wanted to rewrite the future for Iran. He came back three years ago, not for personal glory, not for wealth or fame, but to serve... just as a teenager in a small village or a boy in a distant neighborhood could learn to code in the language of tomorrow. He wanted to make technology accessible, to make science hopeful and within reach. He dreamed of an Iran that wasn't just a consumer of technology but a creator of it. But he was taken — sacrificed to the false claim that "We have no quarrel with the people of Iran." He was not ordinary. In a time when many think only of saving themselves, he thought of educating others. He was hope — and hope is the greatest enemy of darkness.

Zahra Shams-Bakhsh... Zahra was full of life. Her joy in exploring and discovering was endless. Sometimes she would ride her bike through the streets, other times she would brave cliffs and snow for the view from a mountain top. For her, travel was the beginning of a story, a story she saw and told herself. Zahra, who was the listening ear for her friends, would invite you for a cup of tea and an hour of conversation, even in the hardest times. If you said, "I'm feeling down," she would arrive from the farthest corner. She would prescribe a getaway and prepare the outing

so that life wouldn't fade under the shadow of sorrow. The days and hours spent walking beside her, laughing and crying in the streets, those were the secrets of a deep friendship that grew stronger each day. With that missile from Netanyahu that struck the Sarv-e-Jahan building, not only a vibrant, life-loving young woman was taken from us, but a facilitator and promoter of life and kindness was removed from among humanity. She was one who counted for a thousand.