

IRAN UPDATE SPECIAL REPORT



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Information Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) will be publishing multiple updates over the next 24 hours from June 12-13, 2025, to provide insights into the ongoing strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, military infrastructure, and key military and nuclear program leadership. We will continue to produce Iran Update special editions until the strikes conclude. We will prioritize covering Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities in response to the attacks that threaten US forces and interests.

CTP-ISW will resume our coverage of the Israeli strikes on Iran tomorrow, June 14, 2025. We will produce two updates. The first will cover events between 2:00 PM ET on June 13 and 6:00 AM ET on June 14. The second update will cover events between 6:01 AM ET and 6:00 PM ET on June 14. We will continue to produce two updates per day while conditions warrant it.

Key Takeaways

- **Israel launched an air campaign targeting the Iranian nuclear program and regime leadership on June 12 to “degrade, destroy, and remove [the] threat” of Iranian weaponization of its nuclear program. The June 12 to 13 strikes are the opening volley in a weekslong air campaign, according to multiple Israeli officials. It will be difficult to assess the success or failure of the Israeli air campaign based on these objectives in this early stage.**
- **Israel's strikes intended to impose discrete military effects on Iran that made it difficult for Iran to respond quickly. These effects included the suppression of Iranian air defenses, the degradation of Iran's ability to retaliate against Israel, and the disruption of Iranian command and control. Israel's ability to generate at least some of these effects has contributed to Israel's immediate success and set conditions for Israel to continue and expand the campaign as needed.**
- **Israel has targeted Iranian nuclear infrastructure on June 12 and 13 in an effort to cripple Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities. Israel struck enrichment capabilities at Natanz, nuclear facilities in Esfahan. There are unverified reports of strikes at or near Fordow, possibly targeting air defense systems.**
- **The IDF also targeted multiple Iranian military targets, including a major missile base in Kermanshah Province.**

- **The IDF targeted prominent members of the Iranian nuclear research network. Israel killed five senior Iranian nuclear scientists from Shahid Beheshti University on June 12 and 13.**
- **Unspecified Iranian sources told a *New York Times* journalist that Israeli strikes killed IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani.**
- **Iran has replaced its slain commanders with other high-ranking officers with long records of service to the regime.**
- **Iran conducted a two-wave ballistic missile attack targeting Israel from Iranian territory about 18 hours after the initial Israeli strikes. This retaliation seems to have had limited to no effect at this time.**
- **Iran’s partners and proxies in the Axis of Resistance—excluding the Houthis—released generic statements condemning the Israeli strikes and have not yet changed their behavior toward Israel. The parties gave no indication that they would intervene on behalf of Iran, reflecting how weakened they are after years of fighting Israel. The Houthis are the only Axis partner that has targeted Israel after the strikes.**
- **US President Donald Trump warned that “even more brutal” attacks on Iran will follow if Iran does not commit to a nuclear deal with the United States. Iran subsequently announced that it has withdrawn from the US-Iran nuclear talks.**
- **The US Navy deployed the USS *Thomas Hudner* to the eastern Mediterranean, presumably to assist Israeli ballistic missile defenses.**

Israel launched an air campaign targeting the Iranian nuclear program and regime leadership on June 12 to “degrade, destroy, and remove [the] threat” of Iranian weaponization of its nuclear program.[1] The June 12 to 13 strikes are the opening volley in a weekslong air campaign, according to multiple Israeli officials.[2] It will be difficult to assess the success or failure of the Israeli air campaign based on these objectives in this early stage. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) declassified an Israeli intelligence report on June 12 that argued that Iran was approaching a “point of no return” in its ability to weaponize its nuclear program.[3] The intelligence report, which cited the May 31 International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive report, argued that Iran’s rapid enrichment of uranium would enable it to quickly weaponize and produce multiple nuclear weapons.[4] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on June 12 that the strikes are part of a campaign to “roll-back the Iranian threat to Israel’s survival.”[5] It is not immediately clear at what point Israel would determine that Iran’s nuclear program no longer poses a threat to its survival. An air campaign designed to cause significant damage to Iran’s nuclear program will nonetheless be a lengthy undertaking, as public statements by senior Israeli officials and comments by unspecified Israeli officials suggest.[6] An unspecified senior Israeli official cited by the Wall Street Journal on June 13 stated that Israel’s air campaign targeting Iranian nuclear and military targets is intended to force Iran into negotiations or incapacitate it.[7] An operation to force Iran to negotiate could be much less intensive than an operation to incapacitate Iran, for example.

Israel's strikes intended to impose discrete military effects on Iran that made it difficult for Iran to respond quickly. The strikes have targeted air defenses and missile sites as well as key leaders. These strikes appear to be imposing three effects on the Iranian military:

- *Suppressing Iranian air defenses.* Reports indicate that Israel has struck some key components of Iranian air defense systems, including an early-warning radar at the Khatam ol Anbia Western Air Defense Zone in Hamadan Province.[8] Other strikes may have hit the air defense base responsible for protecting the nuclear facility at Fordow.[9] Strikes that destroy components of Iran's air defense systems will cause a temporary disruption to Iranian defenses that would enable Israeli 4th-generation, non-stealthy aircraft to operate in Iranian airspace with greater ease.
- *Degrading Iranian retaliatory capabilities.* Israeli airstrikes and drones have struck numerous Iranian ballistic missile silos and launchers. These strikes may have destroyed some of Iran's missiles, launchers, and missile stockpiles, which would limit Iran's ability to immediately retaliate in a meaningful way.[10] Iran claimed on June 11 that it had finalized plans for an "immediate counterstrike" against Israel that would involve hundreds of ballistic missiles, but may have only been able to enact part of its plan due to degraded capabilities.[11] CTP-ISW is currently monitoring a large-scale Iranian missile attack targeting Israel, which may suggest that the degradation of Iran's retaliatory capability had only a limited temporal effect (see below under "Iranian Retaliation").
- *Disrupting Iranian command-and-control.* Israel has conducted a decapitation campaign targeting Iranian military leadership.[12] This disruption is temporary and limited, however. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has already appointed successors for a majority of the military leadership that killed.[13] Iran has presumably already drafted a plan for retaliation that these successors can adopt. The successors may have difficulty implementing the retaliation plan, however, given the losses incurred from Israeli strikes targeting Iran's retaliatory capabilities.

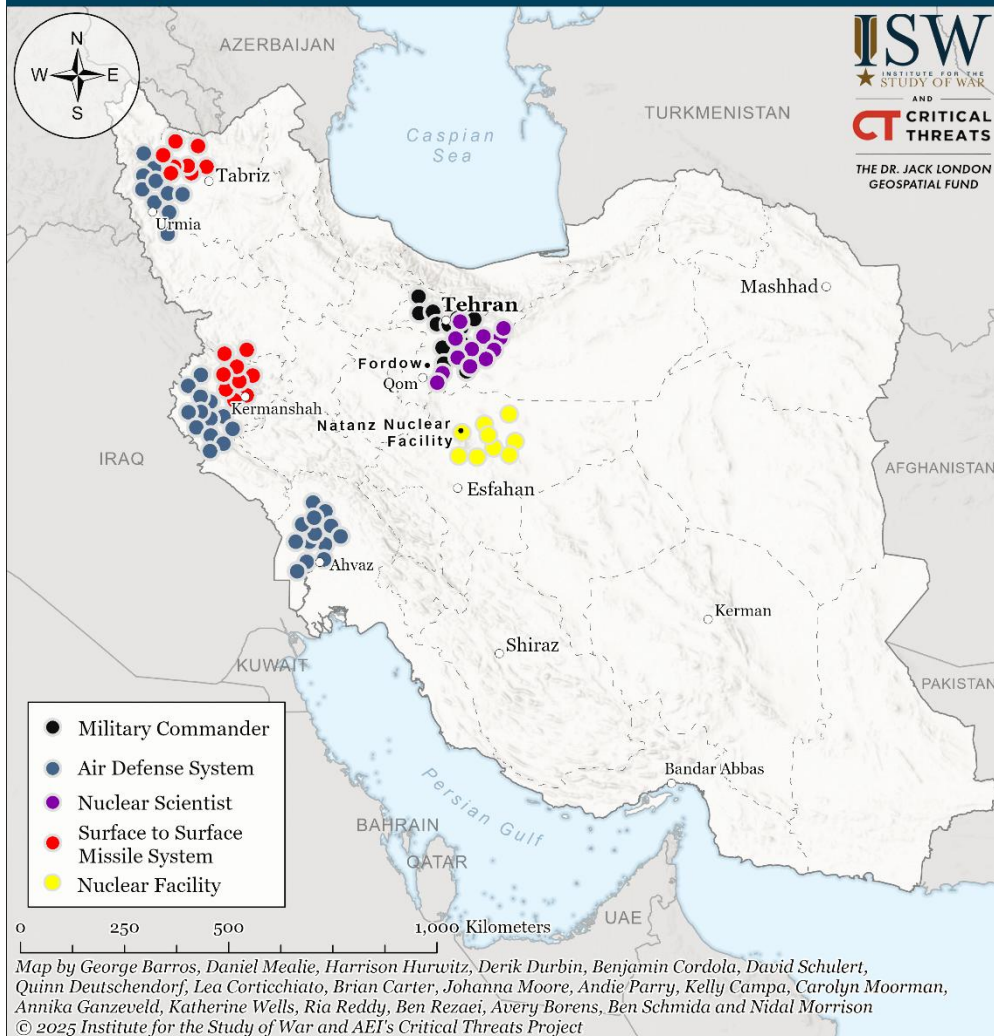
These constraints have contributed to Israel's immediate success and set conditions for Israel to continue and expand the campaign as needed. Israeli strikes on nuclear facilities serve Israel's long-term purpose of removing the Iranian nuclear threat and protecting Israel.

Israel has targeted Iranian nuclear infrastructure on June 12 and 13 in an effort to cripple Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities. Israel struck several facilities at the Natanz Enrichment Complex. Satellite imagery confirmed that Israeli airstrikes destroyed the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP) at Natanz.[14] The PFEP housed over 1,700 advanced centrifuges, including IR-4 and IR-6 centrifuges, to produce 60 percent enriched uranium. Satellite imagery also confirmed that the strike damaged electrical substations and support buildings critical to the power supply across the facility. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi confirmed on June 13 that a strike hit the Natanz site but said IAEA monitoring and Iranian reports showed "no elevated radiation levels." [15] A senior Israeli official told Israeli media that Israel dealt a "severe blow" to Natanz but did not destroy it, and "there will be more strikes." [16] This is consistent with CTP-ISW's observation that these strikes are only the initial volley in an air campaign.

Israeli Strikes in Iran June 13, 2025 at 2:30 PM ET



Claimed Israeli Strikes June 13, 2025 at 7:00 AM ET

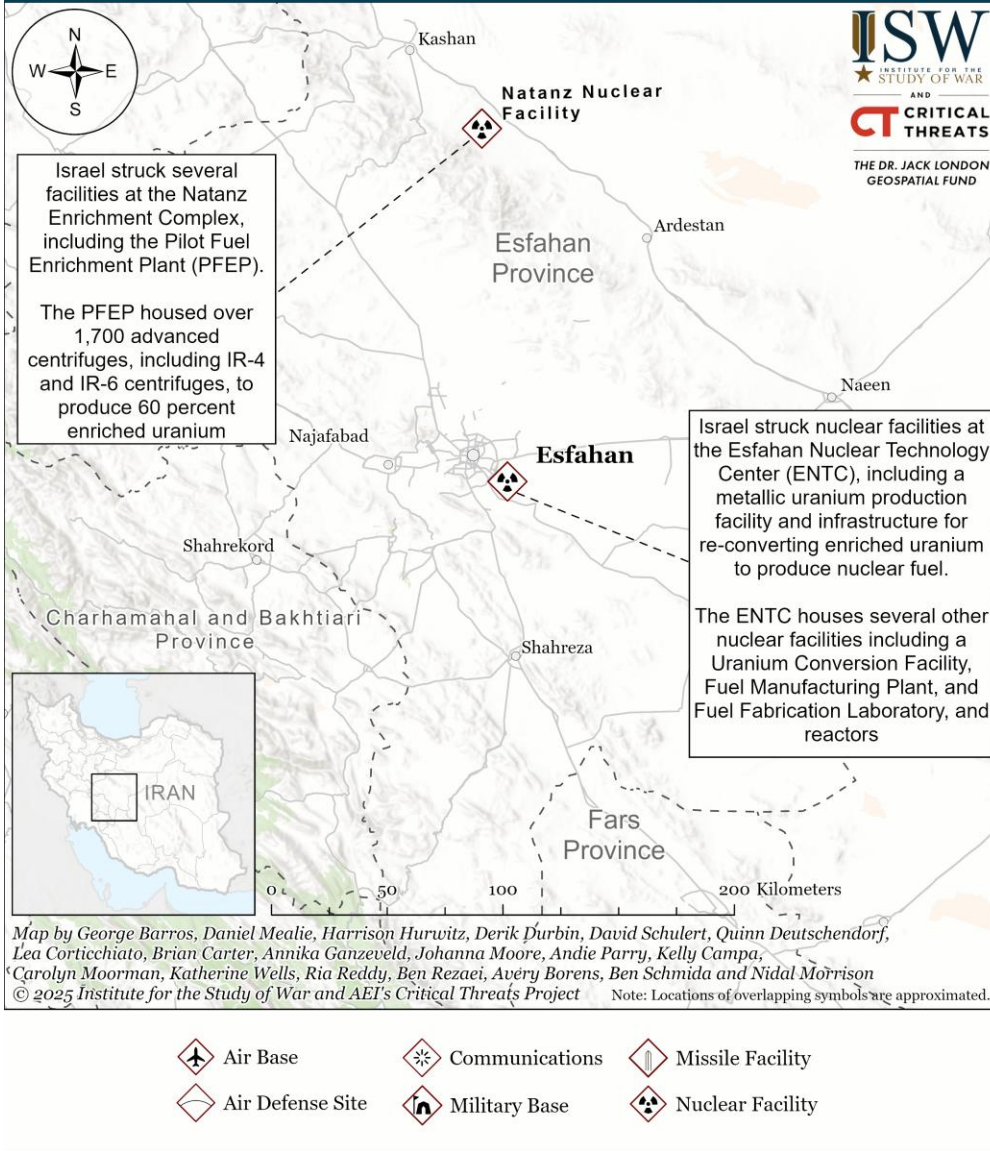


Israel also struck nuclear facilities at the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center (ENTC) in Esfahan Province, including a metallic uranium production facility and infrastructure for re-converting enriched uranium to produce nuclear fuel.[17] The ENTC houses several other nuclear facilities, including a Uranium Conversion Facility, Fuel Manufacturing Plant, and Fuel Fabrication Laboratory, as well as reactors.

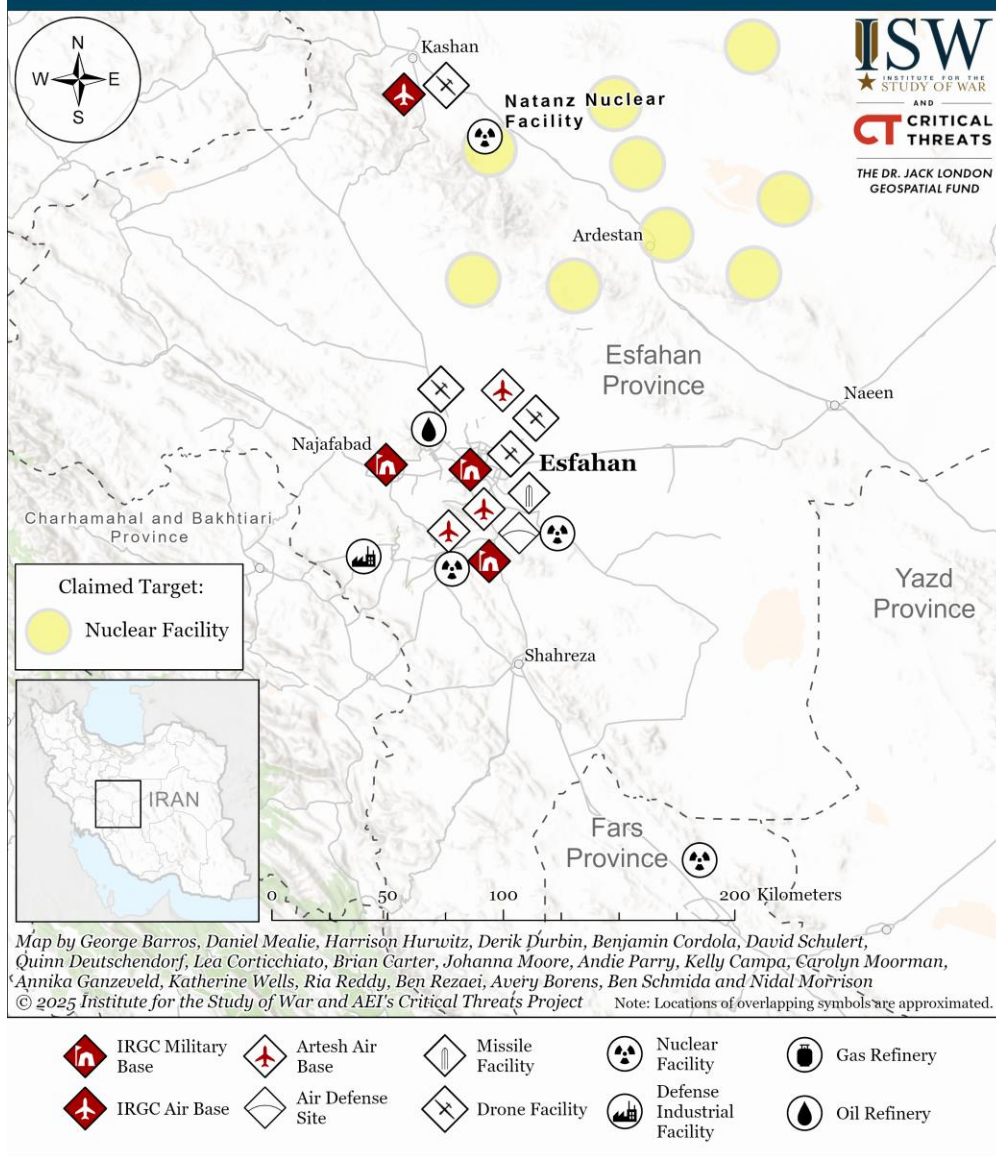
There are unverified reports claiming Israel targeted Fordow Fuel Enrichment.[18] The Fordow site is especially hardened against strikes, as much of the facility extends deep underground.

Iranian media reported on June 13 that an Israeli strike killed one Artesh colonel and one soldier at the Hazrat-e Masoumeh air defense site in Qom Province, which protects the nuclear facility at Fordow.[19] It remains unclear whether the colonel commanded the air defense site. The air defense site, also known as the Fordow Air Defense Group, sits roughly 16 km east of the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP).[20] Khatam ol Anbia Air Defense Commander Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi Fard previously inspected the site on April 16 to assess operational readiness.[21]

Israeli Strikes in Esfahan Province June 13, 2025 at 2:30 PM ET



Claimed Israeli Strikes in Esfahan Province June 13, 2025 at 7:00 AM ET

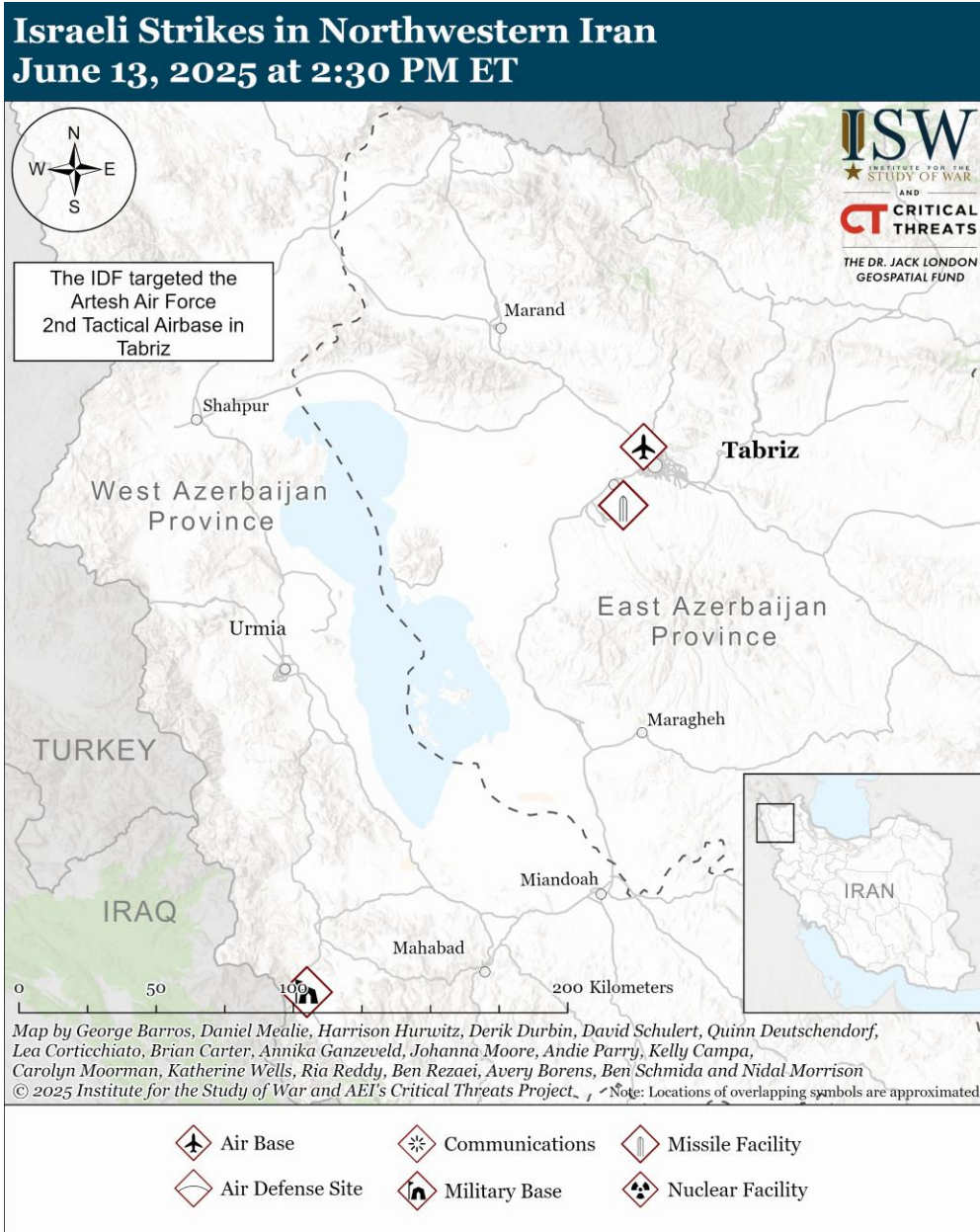


The IDF targeted multiple Iranian military targets, including a major missile base in Kermanshah Province. Satellite imagery shows that Israeli airstrikes destroyed a facility that Iran likely used to store ballistic missiles.[22] The base reportedly supports missile deployments in western Iran and stores ballistic missiles, including the Qiam-1.[23] Iranian media reported that the IDF also targeted the Artesh Air Force 2nd Tactical Airbase in Tabriz and other unspecified military sites in East Azerbaijan Province.[24]

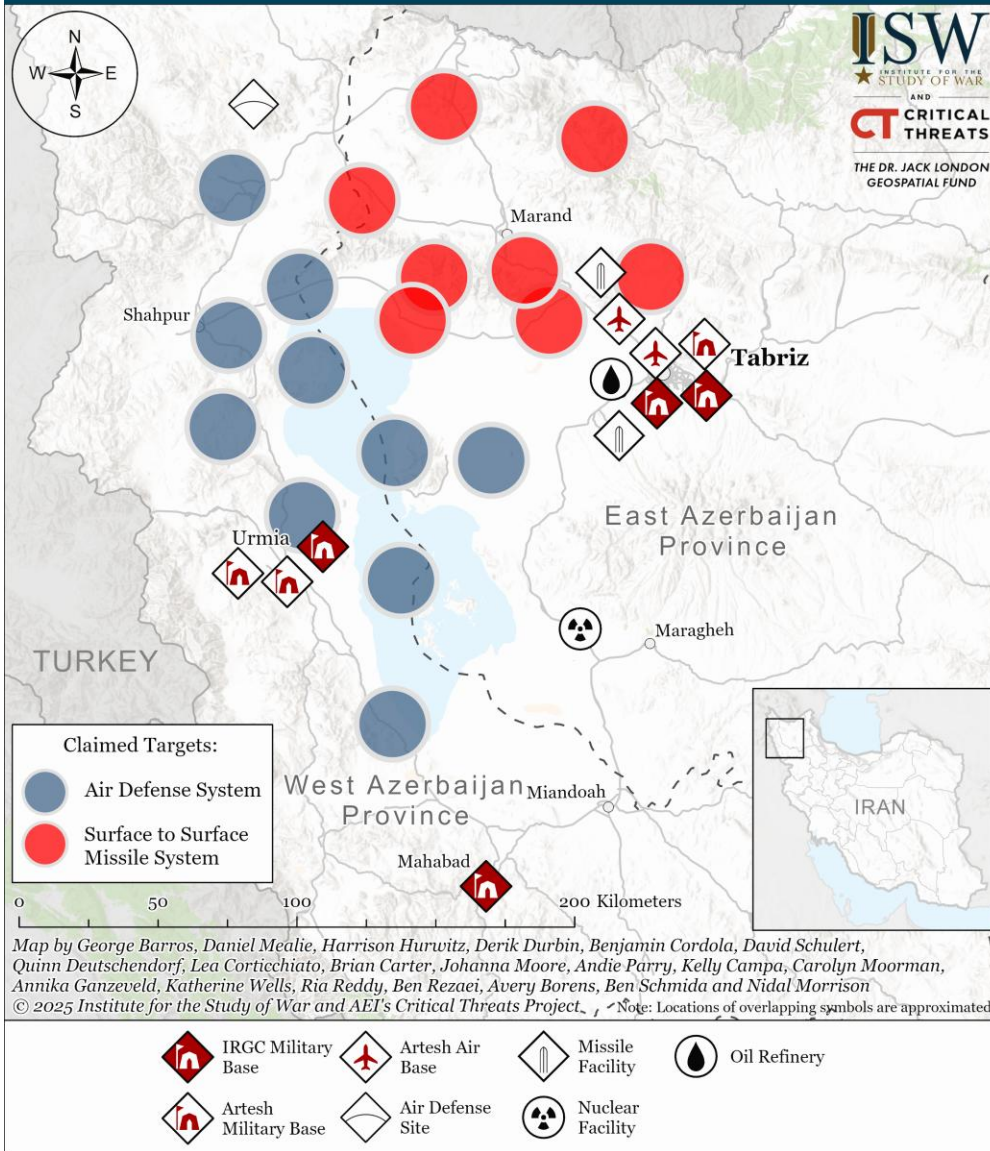
IRGC-affiliated media also confirmed on June 13 that the IDF targeted the following locations:[25]

- Israeli strikes targeted multiple areas in Tehran Province, with explosions heard in the neighborhoods of Robat Karim, Baharestan, Malard, and Shahr-e Rey in Tehran City.

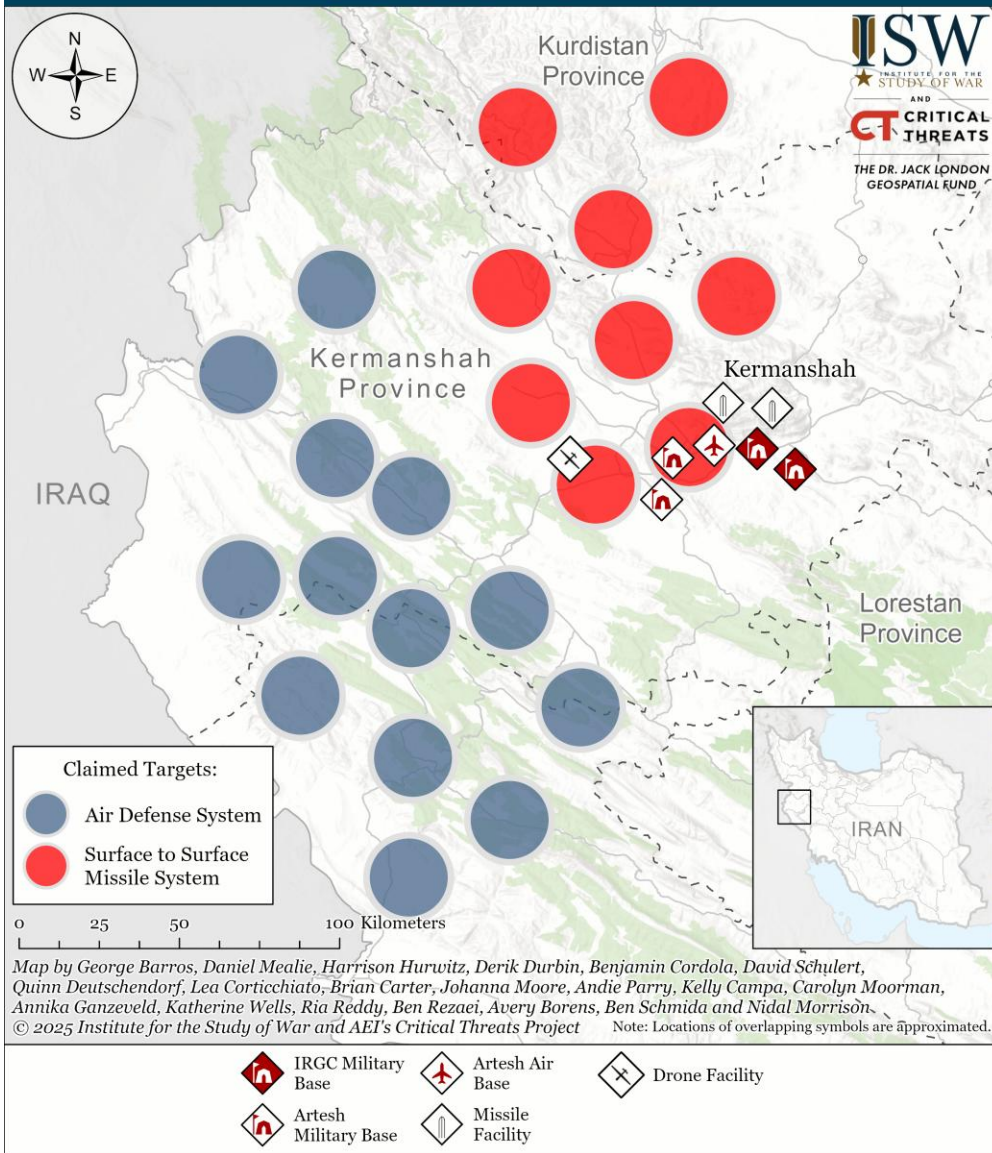
- Iranian air defense systems activated over Andimeshk and Dezful (Khuzestan Province), Esfahan, Pakdasht (Tehran Province), and Qom.
- Iranian officials confirmed that strikes took place in Bostan Abad and Maragheh (East Azerbaijan Province) and in Zanjan Province. Iranian officials confirmed damage to Tabriz Airbase and Madani Airport.
- Explosions were reported in Buin Zahra (Ghazvin Province) and Mohammad Shahr (Alborz Province).



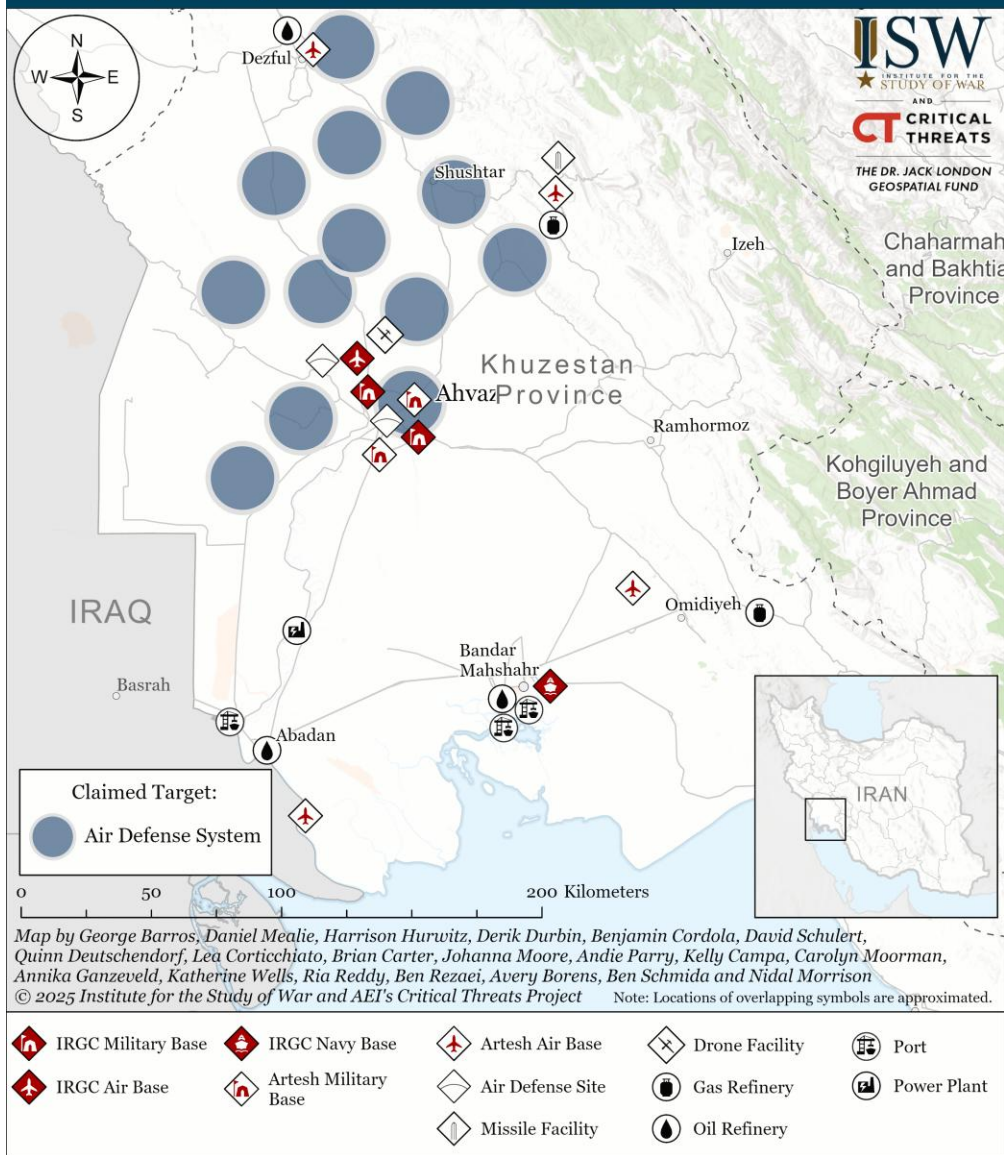
Claimed Israeli Strikes in Northwestern Iran June 13, 2025 at 7:00 AM ET



Claimed Israeli Strikes in Kermanshah and Kurdistan Provinces June 13, 2025 at 7:00 AM ET



Claimed Israeli Strikes in Khuzestan Province June 13, 2025 at 7:00 AM ET

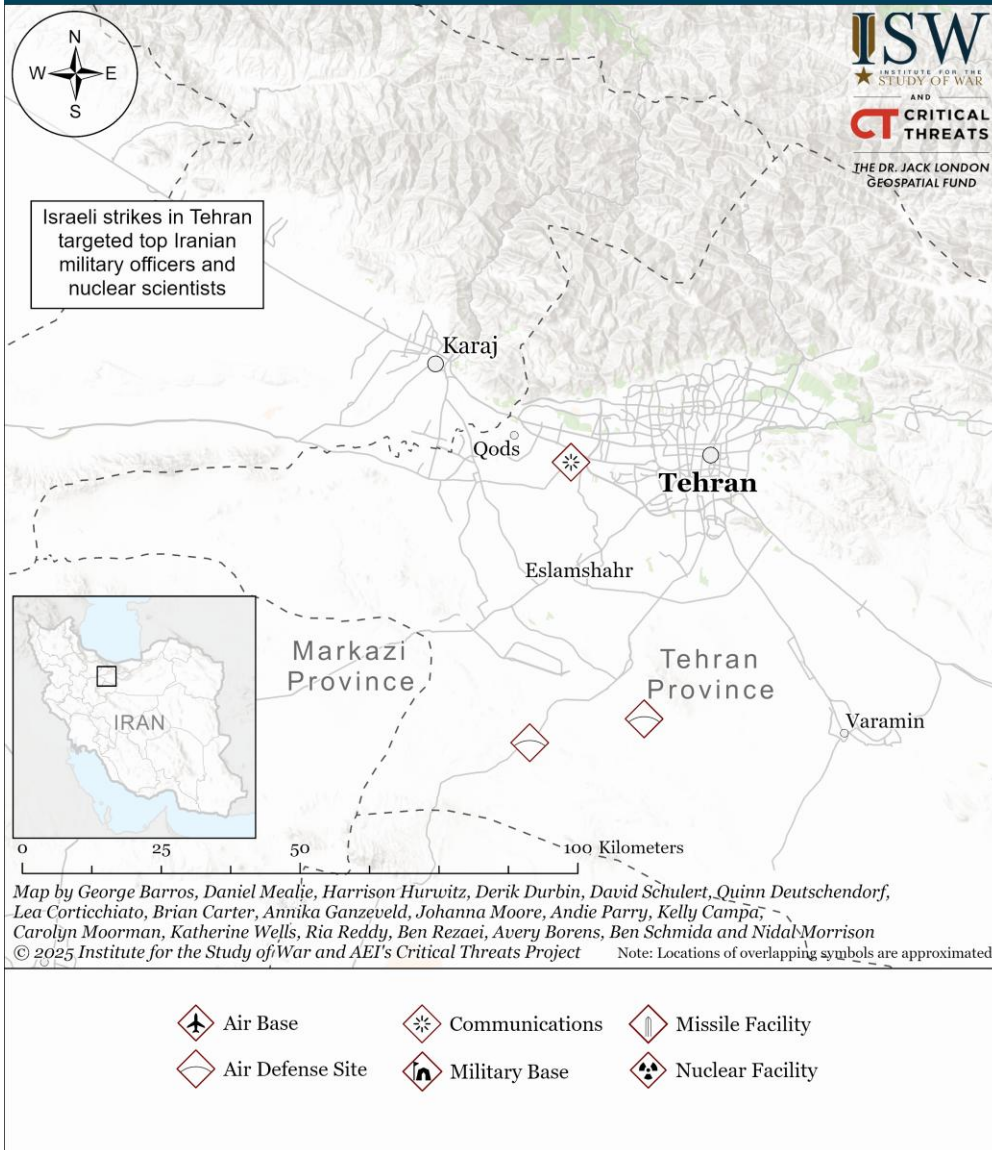


The IDF targeted prominent members of the Iranian nuclear research network. Israel killed five senior Iranian nuclear scientists from Shahid Beheshti University on June 12 and 13.[26] Shahid Beheshti University, which is located in Tehran, plays a significant role in Iranian nuclear research. The United States and the European Union have sanctioned Shahid Beheshti University for its connections to the Iranian nuclear program.[27] Iranian media confirmed that the IDF killed the following individuals:[28]

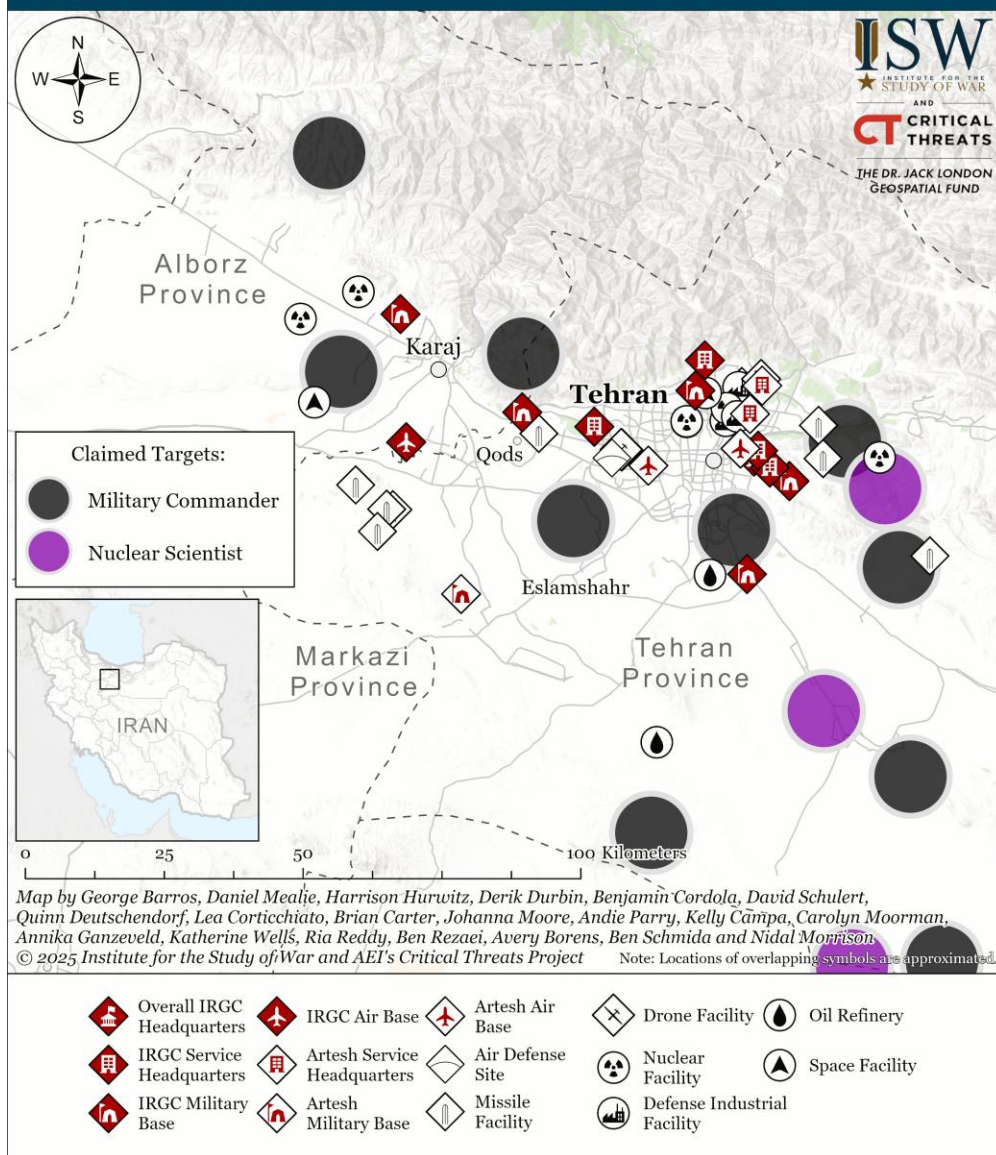
- **Fereydoon Abbasi:** Iranian nuclear scientist and former head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).
- **Mohammad Mehdi Tehranchi:** Professor of physics and former Amad Project supervisor. The Amad Project was Iran's nuclear weapons program prior to 2003.

- **Ahmad Reza Zolfaghari:** Nuclear engineering professor at the Shahid Beheshti University
- **Abdol Hamid Minouchehr:** Dean of the Shahid Beheshti University nuclear faculty.
- **Amir Hossein Fegghi:** Head of the Nuclear Science and Technology Research Center, which operates under the AEOL.[29]

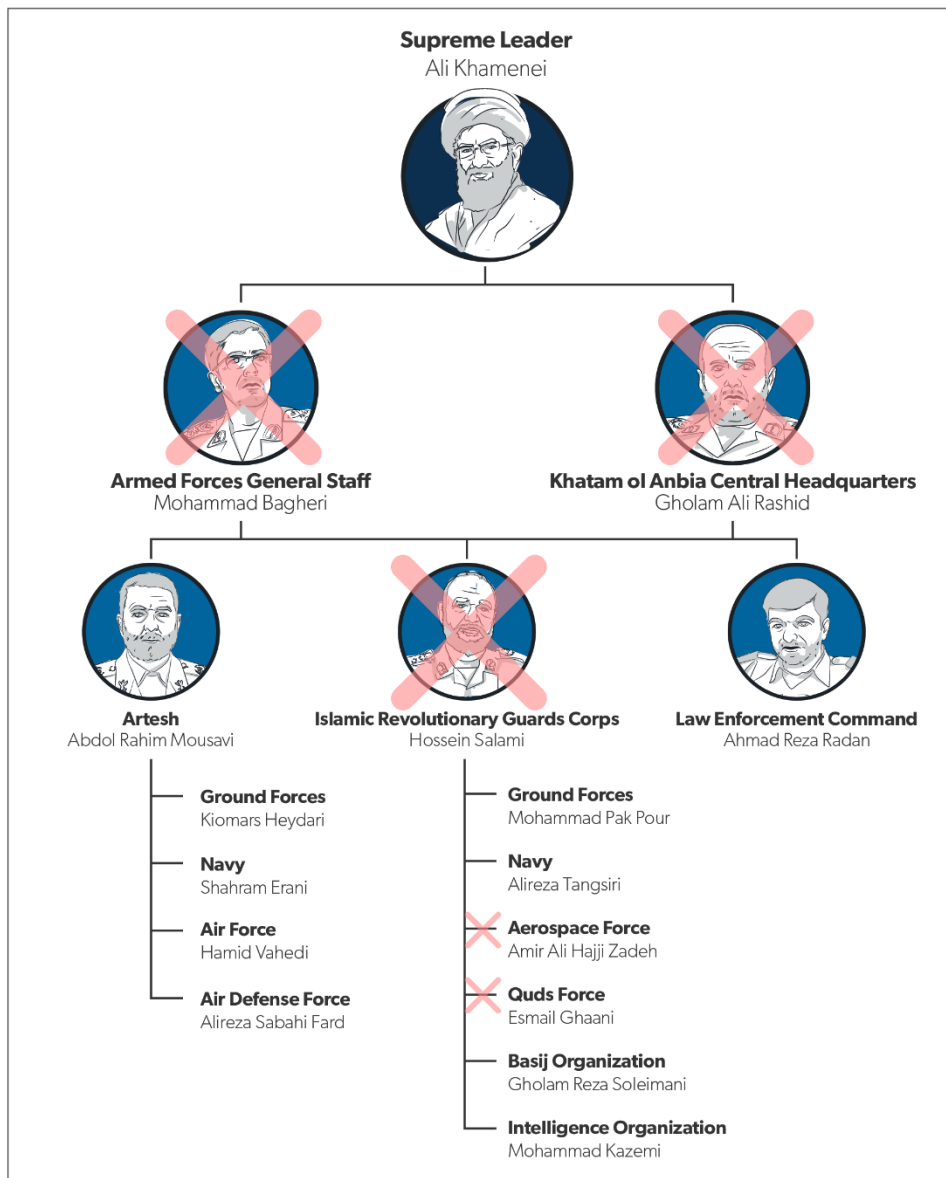
Israeli Strikes in Tehran and Alborz Provinces June 13, 2025 at 2:30 PM ET



Claimed Israeli Strikes in Tehran and Alborz Provinces June 13, 2025 at 7:00 AM ET



Unspecified Iranian sources told a *New York Times* journalist that Israeli strikes killed IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani.[30] Ghaani took the position after the United States killed his predecessor, Qassem Soleimani, in Baghdad in January 2020. Ghaani was responsible for managing and supporting the Axis of Resistance. See the “Iranian Response to Israeli Strikes” section for biographies of the commanders who will replace the dead Iranian officers.



The Israeli air campaign will likely continue in the coming days. An unspecified senior Israeli official told the *Wall Street Journal* that Israel planned for the campaign to take place over 14 days.[31]

Iranian Retaliation

Iran conducted a two-wave ballistic missile attack targeting Israel from Iranian territory about 18 hours after the initial Israeli strikes.[32] The IRGC announced that it targeted dozens of Israeli military sites and airbases.[33] Iran launched less than 100 ballistic missiles at Israel during the attack, according to the IDF.[34] Israeli air defenses reportedly intercepted the majority of the Iranian missiles that crossed into Israeli territory.[35] A senior US official and an Israeli official said that US THAAD systems intercepted some of the missiles.[36] At least seven missiles or Israeli

interceptors impacted in Tel Aviv.[37] A fire also broke out in northern Israel due to fallen missile fragments.[38] Israeli emergency services reported that the attacks have injured at least 35 people as of this writing.[39] Sources may misinterpret information about this attack. Social media users posted footage that showed dozens of bright streaks in the sky during the October 2024 Iranian ballistic missile attack on Israel and claimed that all the streaks were ballistic missiles, for example. It later emerged that some of the streaks were ballistic missile interceptors, not missiles. Iranian state media is incentivized to exaggerate the success of the attack and may spread misleading information.[40]

This is the third direct attack that Iran has ever conducted on Israel. The IRGC named the attack “Operation True Promise III” and declared that the attack was in retaliation for the recent Israeli strikes on Iranian territory.[41] Iran conducted Operation True Promise I and Operation True Promise II against Israel in April and October 2024, respectively.[42] Iran initially responded to the recent Israeli air campaign by launching over 100 drones at Israel from Iran about six hours after the initial Israeli strikes.[43] None of the drones entered Israeli airspace, however.[44] CTP-ISW will publish further analysis about Iran’s retaliatory strikes on Israel in future updates.

Iranian Response to the Israeli Strikes

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei gave an extremely rare, televised address during which he vowed to retaliate against Israel.[45] Khamenei said that Iran will respond with force and make Israel “helpless.” The Iranian Supreme National Security Council previously stated on June 9 that Iran would strike Israeli nuclear facilities in retaliation.[46]

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which marks Pezeshkian’s first call with a foreign leader since Israel launched its air campaign.[47] The Iranian readout claimed that Pezeshkian and Putin condemned the Israeli strikes. It is notable that Pezeshkian’s first call was to Putin and illustrates the close and growing relationship between Iran and Russia.

As CTP-ISW already reported, Khamenei has appointed new leaders to replace some of the senior officers whom Israel has killed.[48] The following is a brief description of the promoted individuals.

Abdol Rahim Mousavi is a career Artesh officer and was the overall Artesh commander before Khamenei appointed him as Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS) chief. His appointment marks the first time in the history of the Islamic Republic that an Artesh officer has held this position; Khamenei has usually selected IRGC officers for the post. Nevertheless, Mousavi is a sensible choice for two reasons. He has some experience managing and coordinating between the armed forces at this level, as he was the AFGS deputy chief from 2016 to 2017. Furthermore, Mousavi is deeply ideological, despite being an Artesh member, having declared repeatedly in recent years that he would have served in the IRGC’s paramilitary Basij if he were not already in the Artesh.[49] Khamenei has thus empowered a competent and deeply loyal officer to manage the Iranian armed forces. Khamenei previously entrusted Mousavi with managing the Iranian integrated air defense network in 2019, further highlighting the trust that Khamenei has in him.[50]

Mohammad Pak Pour was the commander of the IRGC Ground Forces before Khamenei appointed him to be the overall IRGC commander. Khamenei seems to have significant confidence in Pak Pour,

given that Khamenei has kept him as the IRGC Ground Forces commander since 2009. During this time, Pak Pour oversaw the deployment of IRGC Ground Forces cadres to Syria to support the effort to keep Bashar al Assad in power.[51] These cadres reflected the growing Iranian focus on expeditionary operations and coalition warfare with the Axis of Resistance and Russia. Pak Pour also commanded the IRGC Ground Forces through intense periods of social unrest in Iran. The IRGC Ground Forces deployed in some cases to brutally suppress anti-regime demonstrations.[52] That Pak Pour kept his position through this unrest is even more remarkable when considering that Khamenei has replaced virtually every other major official responsible for internal security in recent years.

Ali Shadmani was the Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters coordination deputy before Khamenei appointed him to command the headquarters. Coordination deputies in Iran are roughly equivalent to a chief of staff in the US military. Shadmani spent his career commanding different units in the IRGC Ground Forces before going to the headquarters. CTP-ISW previously identified Shadmani as a rising figure in the military establishment, as influential military figures appeared to favor and empower him.[53]

It remains unclear at the time of this writing who will replace IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajji Zadeh and IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani.

Axis of Resistance Response to Israeli Strikes

Iran’s partners and proxies in the Axis of Resistance—excluding the Houthis—released generic statements condemning the Israeli strikes and have not yet changed their behavior toward Israel. The parties gave no indication that they would intervene on behalf of Iran, reflecting how weakened they are after years of fighting Israel. Hamas condemned the Israeli strikes, stating that the strikes call for “a unified stance from the nation and its vital forces in the face of this dangerous aggression.”[54] Several Iranian-backed Iraqi militias condemned the strikes and stated that “Iraq may not remain inactive” if the conflict escalates.[55]

An unspecified Hezbollah official told Western media that Hezbollah “will not unilaterally launch an attack on Israel in support of Tehran.”[56] Hezbollah issued a statement condemning the Israeli strikes and expressing its “full solidarity” with Iran.[57] Hezbollah’s decision not to support Iran and its relative impotence in the face of Israeli strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities demonstrate how Hezbollah was defeated and deterred by Israel after the November 2024 Hezbollah-Israel ceasefire agreement.[58] Hezbollah would have naturally led an Axis-wide response to a potential US or Israeli strike on Iran in the past. The defeats that Israel has imposed upon the Axis of Resistance since 2023 appear to have enabled the strikes against the Iranian military and nuclear sites.

The Houthis’ Political Bureau stated that it stands with Iran “in its legitimate right to respond to the aggression against it.”[59] The Houthis are the only Axis of Resistance member that has targeted Israel since Israel’s air campaign. The Political Bureau called on the Muslim world “to emerge from the state of silence and inaction” as Israel “threatens everyone and excludes no one.”[60] The IDF reported that Israeli air defense systems detected a missile launched from Yemen on June 13 at 12:32 ET that fell in the Hebron area of Israel.[61] The Houthis have regularly struck Israel with drones and missiles since November 2024.[62] Houthis have not confirmed or

commented on this launch at the time of writing. The Houthis recently threatened to resume attacks targeting US interests following a potential US or Israeli attack on Iran.[63] CTP-ISW has observed that the Houthis retain the ability to resume their attacks on international shipping or US targets at any time and for any reason.

US Response to Israeli Strikes

US President Donald Trump warned that "even more brutal" attacks on Iran will follow if Iran does not commit to a nuclear deal with the United States.[64] Iran subsequently announced that it has withdrawn from the US-Iran nuclear talks.[65] Trump noted on social media that the Israeli strikes took place one day after the expiration of his 60-day ultimatum to Iran to agree to a nuclear deal.[66] Trump said Iran now has a "second chance" to commit to a deal and that he hopes that Iran will return to the "negotiating table." [67] An unspecified US official said that US Special Envoy to the Middle East and lead US negotiator Steve Witkoff still wants to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on June 15 for the previously scheduled sixth round of talks.[68] Iranian state media announced on June 13 that the US-Iran nuclear talks are suspended indefinitely.[69]

Senior Iranian officials had continued to signal in the days leading up to the Israeli strike that Iran intended to reject the US demand for zero uranium enrichment. An Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-affiliated newspaper stated on June 11 that Iran is "ready to leave the negotiating table" if Iran's demands are not met. These demands are a reference to Iran's demand to maintain domestic uranium enrichment capabilities.[70] Iran had signaled interest in recent days in an interim deal with the United States, possibly because Iran calculated that reaching an interim or framework deal with the United States at the meeting would delay or prevent US or Israeli strikes on Iran. Such a calculation will have undoubtedly changed in light of Israel's strikes.

Unspecified US officials told the Associated Press that the US Navy ordered the USS *Thomas Hudner* destroyer to deploy to the eastern Mediterranean Sea.[71] The Navy also ordered a second unspecified destroyer to move toward the Middle East. Western media reported that Iran summoned the Swiss ambassador to Iran to deliver a warning to the United States that Iran will hold the United States accountable for its cooperation and coordination with Israel and for giving Israel a "green light" to attack Iran.[72] Trump confirmed on June 12 that the United States was aware of the planned Israeli attack before it occurred but emphasized that the United States had no military involvement.[73] Trump said that the United States would defend itself and Israel from an Iranian retaliatory attack.[74] The deployment of the USS *Thomas Hudner* to the region is part of the US effort to defend US assets and Israel.



[1] <https://x.com/IDF/status/1933369064124031170>

- [2] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1933611199431913674> ;
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- [3] <https://x.com/IDF/status/1933369064124031170>
- [4] <https://x.com/IDF/status/1933369064124031170> ; https://apnews.com/article/iran-nuclear-iaea-uranium-7f6c9962c1e4199e951559096bcf5cc0?taid=683ae0271dc7320001739354&utm_campaign=TrueAnthem&utm_medium=AP&utm_source=Twitter
- [5] <https://x.com/IsraeliPM/status/1933329728246534596>
- [6] <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-iran-strike-conflict/card/israeli-operation-likely-won-t-be-over-for-many-days-official-says-VLPlNDNuYrpxTyJxm7l2> ;
<https://x.com/sentdefender/status/1933318523469931001>
- [7] https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israels-attacks-hit-more-than-irans-nuclear-program-they-are-aimed-at-hobbling-tehran-307cabf9?mod=WSJ_home_mediumtopper_pos_2
- [8] <https://x.com/ayatsubzero/status/1933378577434882195> ;
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- [14] <https://x.com/TheGoodISIS/status/1933539314148823467>
- [15] <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/statement-on-the-situation-in-iran>
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- [22] https://x.com/detresfa_/status/1933529719414120542
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- [26] <https://www.irna dot ir/news/85861286>
- [27] <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-T6ppQ6bj8P7BUrQoN85uj9/> ;
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- [34] <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1933611199431913674>
- [35] <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-israel-drone-attack-retaliation-strikes-on-nuclear-sites-and-commanders/>
- [36] <https://www.axios.com/2025/06/13/iran-strikes-israel-missiles-tel-aviv>;
<https://t.me/moriahdoron/22824>
- [37] <https://www.axios.com/2025/06/13/iran-strikes-israel-missiles-tel-aviv>;
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