



By: TA | AP Brief

# Iran closes its airspace to commercial aircraft for hours



Iran closed its airspace to commercial flights for hours without explanation early Thursday as tensions remained high with the United States over Tehran's bloody **crackdown on nationwide protests**.

The closure ran for over four hours, according to pilot guidance issued by Iran, which lies on a key East-West flight route.

International carriers diverted north and south around Iran, but after one extension, the closure appeared to have expired and several domestic flights were in the air just after 7 a.m.

Iran previously shut its airspace during the 12-day war against Israel in June and when it exchanged fire with Israel during the Israel-Hamas war.

However, there were no signs of current hostilities though the closure immediately rippled through global aviation because Iran is located on a key East-West route for airlines.

"Several airlines have already reduced or suspended services, and most carriers are avoiding Iranian airspace," said the website SafeAirspace, which provides information on conflict areas and air travel. "The situation may signal further security or military activity, including the risk of missile launches or heightened air defense, increasing the risk of misidentification of civil traffic."

Iran in the past has misidentified a commercial aircraft as a hostile target.

In 2020, **Iranian air defense** shot down Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 with two surface-to-air missiles, killing all 176 people on board.

Iran for days adamantly dismissed allegations of downing the plane as Western propaganda before finally acknowledging it.

The airspace closure came as some personnel at a key **U.S. military base in Qatar** were advised to evacuate.

The U.S. Embassy in Kuwait also ordered its

personnel to "temporary halt" going to the multiple military bases in the small Gulf Arab country.

## The change in tone

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on Iran at the request of the United States on Thursday afternoon.

U.S. President Donald Trump made a series of vague statements Wednesday that left unclear what American action, if any, would take place against Iran.

In comments to reporters, Trump said he had been told that plans for executions in Iran have stopped, without providing many details.

The shift comes a day after Trump told protesters in Iran that "help is on the way" and that his administration would "act accordingly" to respond to the Islamic Republic's deadly crackdown.

## **The security forces' crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,615**

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also sought to tone down the rhetoric, urging the U.S. to find a solution through negotiation.

Asked by Fox News what he would say to Trump, Araghchi said: "My message is: Between war and diplomacy, diplomacy is a better way, although we don't have any positive experience from the United States. But still diplomacy is much better than war."

The change in tone by the U.S. and Iran came hours after the **chief of the Iranian judiciary** said the government must act quickly to punish the thousands who have been detained.

Activists warned that hangings of detainees could come soon. The security forces' crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,615, the U.S.-based Human Rights

Activists News Agency reported.

The **death toll** exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.