



By: TA | AP Brief

# US and Israel launch an attack on Iran



The U.S. and Israel launched an attack Saturday on Iran, with the first apparent strike happening near the offices of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iranian media reported strikes nationwide, and smoke could be seen rising from the capital.

President Donald Trump said in a video posted on social media that the U.S. had begun “major combat operations in Iran.”

He claimed Iran has continued to develop its nuclear program and plans to develop missiles to reach U.S. and appealed to the Iranian people to “take over your government – it will be yours to take.”

It wasn't immediately clear whether the 86-year-old Khamenei was in his offices at the time of the strike.

He hasn't been seen publicly in days as tensions with the United States have grown.

The attack comes as the United States has assembled a **vast fleet of fighter jets and warships** in the region to try to pressure Iran into a deal over its **nuclear program**.

Iran has said it hasn't **enriched** since June, but it has blocked international inspectors from visiting the sites America bombed during a 12-day war then.

Satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press have shown **new activity** at two of those sites, suggesting Iran is trying to assess and potentially recover material there.

Iran currently has a self-imposed limit on its ballistic missile program, limiting their range to 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles). That puts all the Mideast and some of eastern Europe in their range.

There is no public evidence of Iran seeking to have intercontinental ballistic missiles, though Washington has criticized its space program as potentially allowing it to one day.

## The attack as being done to remove threats

Roads to Khamenei's compound in downtown Tehran had been shut down by authorities as other blasts rang out across the capital. Neighboring Iraq closed its airspace, according to the Ministry of Transport.

Targets in the Israeli campaign included Iran's military, symbols of government and intelligence targets, according to an official briefed on the operation, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss nonpublic information on the attack.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz described the attack as being done “to remove threats.” He did not immediately elaborate.

Trump wanted a deal to constrain Iran's nuclear program, and he sees an opportunity while the country is **struggling at home** with growing dissent following nationwide protests.

Iran had hoped to avert a war, but maintains it has the right to enrich uranium and does not want to discuss other issues, like its long-range missile program or support for armed groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

### Witnesses heard the first blast by Khamenei's office

It wasn't immediately clear if Iran would immediately strike back, but it had warned that American military personnel and bases spread across the region would be targets for any retaliation.

Several hospitals in Israel launched their emergency protocols, including moving patients and surgeries to underground facilities.

In Tehran, witnesses heard the first blast by Khamenei's office. Iranian state television later reported on the explosion, without offering a cause. Sirens sounded across Israel at the same time as it closed its airspace.

The Israeli military said that it had issued a “proactive alert to prepare the public for the possibility of missiles being launched toward the state of Israel.”

More explosions struck Iran’s capital after Israel said it was attacking the country. Authorities have offered no casualty information from the strikes.

Meanwhile, Iran shut down its airspace and mobile phone services were cut.

The warning to pilots came out as explosions rang out across Tehran.