

US bombs a wedding in Iran, killing four, amid escalating crisis in the US military

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The US military fired a missile at a house hosting a wedding Tuesday in Kuhestak, in Sirik County on Iran's southern coast, killing at least four people, including a 4-year-old child, and wounding dozens, Iranian officials said Wednesday. The Iranian Red Crescent asked the International Criminal Court to investigate.

The dead were Amir Ali Karimi, the 4-year-old child; Mohammad Malahi, 16; and Kolsoum Malahi and Zarkhatoun Taheri, both 43, the office of the governor of Hormozgan province said Wednesday. Iranian health officials counted 68 wounded at the wedding, Press TV reported Wednesday. The attack was one of dozens the US military said it carried out Tuesday along the coast between Chabahar and Bandar Abbas.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said, in remarks reported Wednesday by Al Jazeera: "The truth of this unlawful war of choice—and the true face of the war crime—is in Sirik, where a wedding ceremony was brutally bombed as part of America's desperate struggle to conceal its failure."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said through his spokesman Wednesday that he was "deeply alarmed by reports of civilian casualties, including in a strike that reportedly hit a wedding ceremony in Iran," and called for "an immediate cessation of military action."

The US military killed seven people in missile strikes Tuesday night in Khuzestan province, Iran's official news agency reported Wednesday, and four members of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace force in Kermanshah, the *New York Times* reported Wednesday. Iran fired ballistic missiles at Jordan and drones at bases in Kuwait and Bahrain; the *Times* reported Wednesday that a US official said every American service member was accounted for.

Asked Monday by Libbey Dean, NewsNation's White House correspondent, whether the use of nuclear weapons against Iran was ruled out, US President Donald Trump

replied: "I would never say that, but yes, there's no reason for it... So now I defeat 'em and now I should use a nuclear weapon on top of 'em?" He objected only that a nuclear attack was unnecessary, never that it would be a crime.

Investigative reporter Seymour Hersh reported June 10 that at "a recent secret meeting in the White House," Trump "began speculating, albeit vaguely, about a nuclear option that could perhaps bring a quicker end to the war."

Trump threatened Tuesday that a still bigger attack on Iran was "waiting in the wings," after which "there will be very little left of the Islamic Republic of Iran." What this means, other than the use of nuclear weapons, was left to the imagination.

Since the United States and Israel began the war on February 28 with the assassination of Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, at least 3,527 people have been killed in Iran, Al Jazeera's tally found August 28. Pentagon figures acknowledge 18 US troops have been killed and 758 wounded.

Despite six months of on and off bombing and missile strikes, the US military has failed to bring down the Iranian government or to achieve the supposed aims the Trump administration has set for the war, such as destroying Iran's nuclear capabilities, destroying its missiles and reopening the Strait of Hormuz. That failure has triggered a rapidly escalating crisis in the US military.

Army Secretary Dan Driscoll resigned Monday, the culmination of a protracted political conflict with Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who fired the Army's chief of staff, General Randy George, on April 2. Hegseth blocked the promotion of seven Army officers to major general this week, overriding a board of the Army's senior leaders, and has fired over 80 generals and admirals or blocked their promotions since taking office, the *New York Times* reported Tuesday.

Driscoll's resignation followed report by the

Washington Post Sunday that Admiral Daryl Caudle, who heads the Navy, and the commanders of US forces in Europe, the Asia-Pacific and Latin America had formally objected, in classified August 14 deployment orders, to keeping ships and troops in the Iran war into next year. Only about one destroyer in four was ready to deploy, Caudle's assessment found, according to the *Post*. The very fact that such a secret assessment was leaked to the press is an indication of the intensity of the conflict within the Pentagon.

The extent of the supply and logistical crisis confronting the US Navy was spelled out Tuesday in the *Times*. It reported that Iranian missiles can reach every Middle East harbor deep enough to take an aircraft carrier: on the war's opening day Iran destroyed the Navy's logistics base in Bahrain, and the region's other deep harbors are now covered by Iranian missiles and drones, "making them inaccessible." Supply ships now sail 2,200 miles to Diego Garcia or 3,700 miles to Singapore.

About 20 ships, with roughly 20,000 Marines and sailors aboard, are being held off Iran with no return date set, the *Times* reported, pointing out that "this is not sustainable."

The carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, docked Wednesday at Laem Chabang, Thailand, its first stop in any port for 265 days on station in the Arabian Sea. Families have reported a sailor's attempt to jump overboard, suicidal crew members, shortages of food and plumbing that did not work, during a deployment that began in November. Asked about Trump's remark in August that the deployment had been "not nearly long enough," the ship's captain, Dan Keeler, told the Associated Press Wednesday: "The president speaks for himself. That is what I think about that."

ABC News reported Tuesday that Driscoll had repeatedly taken his warnings about Hegseth's "widespread and seemingly indiscriminate firing of senior military officers" to White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles.

Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the senior Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, said Monday that Driscoll's departure "leaves the Army without its top civilian and uniformed leaders, and a military service whose leadership ranks have been gutted by Secretary Hegseth." Reed objected that the purge has weakened the military. He did not ask that the war be ended.

The US military has used up nearly four-fifths of its Terminal High Altitude Area Defense interceptors in the war, CNN reported August 4, and about two-thirds of its

Patriot interceptors, according to a Center for Strategic and International Studies estimate cited by *Defense News* August 3.

In the post-World War II period, major crises of the US military have been accompanied by the removal of its top leaders. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara resigned in November 1967, nearly three years into the Vietnam escalation; Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld resigned in November 2006, nearly four years into the Iraq war. In the six months since the Iran war began, the Army secretary has resigned, four top commanders have filed formal objections and Hegseth is purging the officer corps.

On Tuesday the House passed, 370-48, a stopgap spending bill that funds the government through December 11, including the Pentagon at its current rate of \$839 billion a year. The bill leaves out the supplemental the administration requested in June, \$87.6 billion in all and about \$67 billion of it for the Pentagon.

The 176 Democrats who voted for the bill effectively voted to fund the war, as they did before it began. On January 22, 149 House Democrats voted for the \$839 billion military appropriations bill, and on February 2, 26 days before the assault on Iran began, 21 House Democrats supplied the margin for the stopgap that kept the government funded.

While supporting the Trump administration's murder of Iran's leadership early in the war, the Democrats have criticized the conduct of the war on tactical grounds. Their essential criticism is that the administration has failed to secure the interests of American imperialism in the Middle East. All factions of the US political establishment support the aim of subjugating Iran to US domination.



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