



2 April 2026

H.E. António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General
Office of the Spokesperson
for the UN Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Re: Iran’s Ongoing War Against Israel and the United States

Your Excellency:

The ECLJ writes this letter in support of Israel’s Operation Roaring Lion against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits Member States “from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”¹ This prohibition applies to *threats* of use of force as well as *actual use of force* by one state against another state.

Iran has been consistently violating both prohibitions in relation to Israel. For decades, Iranian officials have made threats to annihilate the State of Israel, and, through its terrorist proxies, Iran has been attacking Israel. Further, Iran has been on the path to building nuclear weapons, developing long-range ballistic missiles, and has consistently refused to halt its plan to develop such weapons or its rhetoric to destroy Israel.

Iran possesses the ability to destroy Israel and the intent to do it. The international community is well-aware of Iran’s ongoing threats against Israel. In June 2025, for example, Iran’s (now deceased) Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated that the Iranian “armed forces will act with determination and destroy the despicable Zionist regime.”² In February 2025, Ebrahim Jabbar, a high-ranking General in Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard, said that “Iran would launch ‘Operation True Promise 3’ at the ‘right time’ on a scale ‘sufficient to destroy Israel’[.]” and that

¹ U.N. Charter art. 2(4).

² *Iran’s Supreme Leader Vows to ‘Destroy’ Israel*, DPA (June 13, 2025, 3:11 PM), <https://www.yahoo.com/news/irans-supreme-leader-vows-destroy-191134502.html>.

the operation can “raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground.”³ And in April 2024, (former) Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was quoted as saying that an Israeli attack on Iran would “result in there being nothing left of the Zionist regime[.]”⁴

This intent is further demonstrated by Iran’s ongoing support of the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas, the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah, and the Yemeni Houthis (among others) in their fight against Israel and the United States.⁵ Iran has been prominently supporting these groups in a variety of ways, including financially and militarily.⁶ The October 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on southern Israel, which resulted “in 1,183 fatalities and over 4,000 wounded[.]”⁷ leaves no doubt. In fact, following the October 7 attack, documents seized by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) indicated “that Hamas coordinated with Iran for about two years in preparation for a strategic operation against Israel, with the leaderships of Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran preparing both strategically and tactically for a defining event against Israel.”⁸

Moreover, in addition to attacking Israel through its proxies, since 1979, Iran “has killed and maimed American citizens and service members through its own forces and proxy militias.”⁹ Between October 2023 and November 2024, for example, “Iran and its proxies conducted more than 180 attacks against U.S. forces in the Middle East, wounding more than 180 U.S. service members and killing three service members.”¹⁰

In response to Iran and its proxies both ongoing and threat of future attacks, Israel has an inherent right to self-defense. Article 51 of the UN Charter codifies this existing inherent right. Further, while the existence of an armed attack is generally considered a condition precedent to trigger the right to self-defense,¹¹ customary international law also recognizes a state’s right to preemptive

³ Aveek Banerjee, *Iran Threatens to Raze ‘Tel Aviv To The Ground’, Israel Says ‘We Are Ready’* (Feb. 22, 2025, 3:05 PM), <https://www.news18.com/world/iran-threatens-to-raze-tel-aviv-to-the-ground-israel-says-we-are-ready-9236881.html>.

⁴ *Iranian President Threatens Israel’s Annihilation If Major Attack Occurs*, THE TIMES OF ISR. (Apr. 23, 2024, 11:36 PM), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-president-threatens-israels-annihilation-if-major-attack-occurs/> (internal citations omitted)

⁵ OFFICE OF DIR. NAT’L INTEL. *Iran’s Nuclear Weapons Capability and Terrorism Monitoring Act of 2022—Assessment Regarding the Regional and Global Terrorism of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, at 3 (July 2024), <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ODNI-Unclassified-Assessment-Regarding-the-Regional-and-Global-Terrorism-of-the-Islamic-Republic-of-Iran-202407.pdf>.

⁶ Clayton Thomas, CONG. RSCH. SERV., IF 12587, *IRAN-SUPPORTED GROUPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND U.S. POLICY* (last updated Sept. 26, 2024), https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF12587/IF12587.3.pdf.

⁷ *7 Oct. Parliamentary Commission Report 2d Edition*, ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GRP. FOR UK-ISR. 9 (Mar. 2026),

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67bf0490d422da027d74c55c/t/69ba6cbe190f9704cd62d455/1773825214807/Second+Edition+7+October+Parliamentary+Commission+Report.pdf>.

⁸ *Captured Documents Show Iranian Support for Hamas in the Gaza Strip*, THE MEIR AMIT INTEL. AND TERRORISM INFO. CTR. 7 (Nov. 17, 2024), https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/app/uploads/2024/11/E_235_24-3.pdf;

See also Avi Ashkenazi, *Hamas-Iran Alliance: Captured Documents Exposer Decades-Long Terror Funding*, JERUSALEM POST (Nov. 19, 2024, 12:13 PM), <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-829802>.

⁹ Press Release, The White House, *The Iranian Regime’s Decades of Terrorism Against American Citizens* (Mar. 2, 2026), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/releases/2026/03/the-iranian-regimes-decades-of-terrorism-against-american-citizens/>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Michael N. Schmitt, *Russia’s “Special Military Operation” and the (Claimed) Right of Self-Defense*, LIEBER INST. (Feb. 28, 2022), <https://lieber.westpoint.edu/russia-special-military-operation-claimed-right-self-defense/>.

self-defense in anticipation of an armed attack. Opinion varies as to how imminent an attack must be before a defending state may engage in anticipatory self-defense, particularly in light of how the speed of military engagement has increased significantly over the years.

First, “the right of ‘interceptive self-defence’ attaches once an adversary has embarked ‘upon an apparently irreversible course of action, thereby crossing the legal Rubicon.’”¹² Second, under the traditional approach, an armed response is also permitted when an armed attack is *imminent* (leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation), thus allowing for a preemptive strike.¹³ A threat is imminent if there is “‘a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack.’ In other words, the enemy must be at the gates in a tangible sense.”¹⁴ Third, under a more relaxed approach (more appropriate for technologically modern conflicts), “States may act when the ‘last window of opportunity’ to defend itself is about to close.”¹⁵ “The last window of opportunity can only present itself when the other side has decided to attack, and a failure to act might forfeit the chance to mount an effective defense.”¹⁶

Given that Iran has been indirectly attacking Israel through its terrorist proxies, the legality of Israeli operation need not be justified under the customary rules of anticipatory self-defense. The condition precedent to trigger the right to self-defense was already there due to indirect armed attacks by Iran through its proxies. Accordingly, Israel is justified in responding in self-defense. However, even if the phrase “armed attack” in Article 2(4) is considered to only refer to a direct attack by a state using its armed forces, Israel is still justified in conducting the current military operation in anticipatory self-defense.

It is the third level of imminence, i.e. the last window of opportunity, that should govern modern armed conflicts due to the advanced nature of modern weaponry.¹⁷ Today, states cannot afford to wait for the visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces, in order to repel an impending attack. The last window of opportunity may vary in different situations. Here, while one may argue the level of imminence of a direct armed attack by Iran against Israel, one cannot dispute the inevitability of such an attack. Given Iran’s previous direct and indirect attacks against Israel, its continued threats of aggression, its unwavering support of terrorist proxies that continue to attack Israel, and its work on nuclear weapons capabilities and long-range ballistic missiles, the recent Israeli and American military operations were necessary to prevent an impending armed attack by Iran while a window of opportunity was still open.¹⁸

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*; Geoffrey Corn & Dennis Gyllensporre, *International Legality, the Use of Military Force, and Burdens of Persuasion: Self-Defense, the Initiation of Hostilities, and the Impact of the Choice Between Two Evils on the Perception of International Legitimacy*, 30 PACE L. REV. 484, 506 (2010).

¹⁴ Michael N. Schmitt, *supra* note 11.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

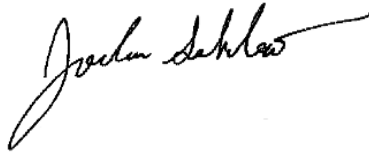
¹⁷ John Yoo, *Iran and the Laws of War*, CIVITAS INST., THE UNIV. OF TEX. AT AUSTIN (Mar. 23, 2026), <https://www.civitasinstitute.org/research/iran-and-the-law-of-war>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

Finally, Iran continues to pursue building nuclear weapons¹⁹ and repeatedly defies Security Council mandates.²⁰ Even after the destruction of two nuclear enrichment facilities last year, Iran immediately began rebuilding them.²¹

With Iran's track record, Israel and the U.S. had a limited window of opportunity in which they could effectively destroy Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities with less overall destruction.²² Waiting for Iran to assemble nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them would have closed that window.²³ Waiting to attack until after Iran was finished building such weapons would have required greater force to achieve the same goal and greater loss of military and civilian life.²⁴ Finally, the extent of harm a nuclear attack would cause would be catastrophic.²⁵ All of these considerations taken together supported military action by the U.S. and Israel now, rather than later.²⁶

Respectfully submitted,



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¹⁹ *National Intelligence Estimate: Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities*, NAT'L INTEL. COUNCIL (Nov. 2007), https://web.archive.org/web/20101122022043/http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/20071203_release.pdf.

²⁰ Press Release, U.N. Sec. Council, Security Council Demands Iran Suspend Uranium Enrichment by 31 August, or Face Possible Economic, Diplomatic Sanctions (July 31, 2006), <https://web.archive.org/web/20120112132238/https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8792.doc.htm>.

²¹ Hannah Kaviani, *Expert Tells RFE/RL Iran Accelerating Construction of Underground Nuclear Site After US Strikes*, RADIO FREE EUR. RADIO LIBERTY (Nov. 11, 2025, 2:59 PM), <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-pickaxe-mountain-nuclear-uranium-enrichment/33587304.html>.

²² John Yoo, *supra* note 17.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*