

Send a clear message to Tehran: The proxy warfare must end

written by Asher Fredman | 26.06.2025

US President Donald Trump's declaration of a "complete and total ceasefire," which began on Tuesday, signals a pivotal moment in the Israel-Iran confrontation.

While both sides have declared victory, it is essential to recall that Israel's official war objective was the elimination of the existential threat posed by Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Israel decisively achieved this objective with remarkable precision and effectiveness, aided by the US Operation Midnight Hammer against Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan.

Although many in Israel and throughout the region would welcome a more moderate and peaceful government in Tehran, regime change was never an official goal of Operation Rising Lion.

Israel did strike targets associated with the Iranian regime and its mechanisms of repression, but not in a comprehensive or systematic manner. The overall strategy of Israel's operation, correctly or incorrectly, was never aimed at collapsing the regime.

Preventing Iran from rebuilding its nuclear and missile capabilities

Having achieved its primary military objectives, Israel must now clearly articulate its future strategy to prevent Iran from rebuilding its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities.

Jerusalem must state unequivocally that any Iranian attempt to reconstruct its nuclear infrastructure, missile arsenal, or any other existential threat will immediately be met with a decisive Israeli military response.

Israel should adopt a strategy similar to the one currently employed against

Hezbollah in Lebanon: actively conducting kinetic strikes to prevent attempts at reconstituting military threats.

This strategic clarity means that the potential for future military escalation between Israel and Iran remains ever-present. The Jewish state cannot afford to ignore or downplay any Iranian efforts to rebuild military threats, no matter how enticing temporary quiet might seem. Israel's home front will need to continue to display the remarkable resilience it has shown to date.

Moving forward, Jerusalem and Washington must send an unequivocal message to Tehran that the era of proxy warfare is over; aggression by Iranian proxies such as the Houthis will be treated as direct Iranian attacks and met with immediate retaliation against Iran itself.

Proxy warfare must not be allowed to continue

It may well be that the Islamic Republic will now dedicate additional efforts to trying to support Hamas, in order to bring about a situation where the terrorist group is able to remain in power in the Gaza Strip, and demonstrate the ability of the "resistance" to withstand Israel. But Israel cannot allow Hamas to remain the dominant power on the ground in Gaza.

Furthermore, Israel and the United States should intensify diplomatic, informational, and practical support for Iranian opposition groups. Genuine and lasting change can only emerge from within Iran, led by the Iranian people themselves.

Concurrently, the US should now work to accelerate the establishment of the envisioned Middle East security alliance, encompassing Israel and all of America's other allies and partners in the region. Such an alliance can help lay the foundation for enduring regional stability.

Ultimately, Israel's tremendous achievements – including the elimination of dozens of senior Iranian military, IRGC, and nuclear officials, and extensive destruction of hundreds of Iranian nuclear and military sites – position Operation Rising Lion as one of the most successful military operations in history. However, the Iranian regime, now publicly exposed in its vulnerabilities, will be driven by a powerful desire for revenge and to restore what it perceives as lost dignity.

Going forward, Israel's security will depend on unwavering vigilance and the readiness to act decisively – at any cost. Complacency and false quiet are not an option.

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