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News / World / Israel 'targets' Iran and Syria: What we know so far about the crisis in Middle East

Israel 'targets' Iran and Syria: What we know so far about the crisis in Middle East

Here are the key developments on the Israel-Iran conflict today.

By: **Express Web Desk**

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This file photo shows a view of a damage building after a fire broke out at Iran's Natanz Nuclear Facility, in Isfahan, Iran. (Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran/WANA (West Asia News Agency) via Reuters)

Conflicts in the Middle East deepened on Friday as Israel “launched attacks” on targets in Syria and Iran. Although Iran has said that three drones over the central city of Isfahan had been shot down and that there are no reports of a missile attack, a US official had confirmed about the strike.

Meanwhile, Israel carried out a missile strike targeting an air defense unit in its south and causing material damage, Syria's state-run SANA news agency quoted a military statement as saying.

Here are the key developments

■ **Why now?** Israel's latest strike follows Iran's retaliatory drone and missile attack on Israel on Saturday after it blamed Tel Aviv for an air strike on the Iranian embassy compound in Damascus on April 1. For context, Israel has accused Iran of supporting the Palestinian Hamas militant group which carried out the October 7 attack on the Jewish nation and triggered months of Israeli invasion and offensive in Gaza.

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■ **Did Israel confirm the strike?** No. The Israeli military told *CNN* that they “don’t have a comment at this time.”

■ **Ground report from Iran:** An Iranian official said that three drones over the central city of Isfahan had been shot down and that there are no reports of a missile attack for now. Iranian state TV said that shortly after midnight on Friday “three drones were observed in the sky over Isfahan. The air defense system became active and destroyed these drones in the sky.” Senior army commander Siavosh Mihandoust was quoted by state TV as saying air defense systems had targeted a “suspicious object”, reported *Reuters*.

■ **What is the US saying?** A senior American official said that Israel had informed the US that it would be retaliating against Iran in the coming days, but “We didn’t endorse the response,” reported *CNN*. It had said that the retaliation would be limited in scope and that “nuclear and civilian locations were clearly not” among the targets.

■ **No damage to nuclear sites in Iran:** The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) took to X to confirm that there was no damage to Iran’s nuclear sites in an alleged attack by Israel on Iran. “DG @rafaelmgrossi continues to call for extreme

restraint from everybody and reiterates that nuclear facilities should never be a target in military conflicts. IAEA is monitoring the situation very closely,” it wrote.

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■ **Flights diverted:** Several flights, including those of Emirates and FlyDubai, were diverted around western Iran from around 4.30 am local time, said media reports, adding that no explanation was given for this though local warnings to aviators suggested the airspace may have been closed. Later, Iran initially grounded commercial flights in Tehran and the west and central regions of the country, only to resume normal services after a while. The Associated Press reported that videos on social media showed loudspeakers informing customers of an incident at Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran.

■ **Israel targets Syria too:** Israel carried out a missile strike in Syria too on Friday. The state-run SANA news agency, quoting a military statement, said that Tel Aviv targeted an air defense unit in its south and caused material damage. That area of Syria is directly west of Isfahan, some 1,500 kilometers away, and east of Israel.

■ **Stay put, US tells employees in Israel:** The US Embassy in Jerusalem restricted US government employees from travel outside Jerusalem, greater Tel Aviv and Beersheba, “out of an abundance of caution.” In a statement on its website, the embassy warned US citizens of a “continued need for caution and increased personal security awareness as security incidents often take place without warning.”

■ **Australia asks citizens to evacuate from Israel:** A message issued by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), “There’s a

high threat of military reprisals & terrorist attacks against Israel & Israeli interests across the region. The security situation could deteriorate quickly. We urge Australians in Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories to depart if it's safe to do so," it said, adding, "Military attacks may result in airspace closures, flight cancellations & diversions & other travel disruptions. Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport may pause operations due to heightened security concerns at any time, & at short notice."

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