



In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

No. 2848000

16 March 2026

Excellency,

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to draw your attention, and that of the members of the Security Council, to the recent statement by the U.S. Secretary of War, made in clear defiance of all principles and norms of international law:

Pete Hegseth, the Secretary of War of the United States of America, stated at a Pentagon press briefing on Friday, 13 March 2026: “*We will keep pressing. We will keep pushing, keep advancing—no quarter, no mercy for our enemies.*” This statement was made despite the fact that, under the rules of international humanitarian law, ordering that no quarter will be given, threatening an adversary therewith, or conducting hostilities on this basis is absolutely prohibited. This prohibition has long been codified in multiple international instruments, including the Hague Convention IV, to which the United States is a party. It has also attained undisputed customary status, and its breach is considered a war crime under international legal instruments.

The above statement follows his previous press briefing of 5 September 2025, in which he stated that the Department of War would conduct its operations with “*maximum lethality, not tepid legality,*” as well as his remarks of 2 March 2026—delivered days after the commencement of the ongoing aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country—where he reiterated that the United States military would be bound by “*no stupid rules of engagement.*”


In the current circumstances, in which the United States and the Israeli regime direct attacks against civilians and civilian objects in the Islamic Republic of Iran on a daily basis, nothing more clearly reveals the criminal mindset underlying the conduct of hostilities by United States leaders than the Secretary of War’s express declaration that no quarter will be given. This statement also engages the international responsibility of the United States, as well as the individual international criminal responsibility of its Secretary of War.



The Islamic Republic of Iran urges the Secretary-General and the Security Council to undertake appropriate measures, in accordance with their responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to hold U.S. officials involved in the perpetration of this and other war crimes accountable and to prevent the further normalisation of violations of international law.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.


Amir Saeid Iravani
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Cc:
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