



March 2, 2026

Permanent Missions to the United Nations
New York, New York

Re: Emergency Special Session on the US-Israeli War Against Iran

Your Excellency,

I write on behalf of DAWN to urge your government to formally request an emergency special session of the UN General Assembly to declare the United States and Israeli military assault on Iran a war of aggression in violation of the UN Charter and to demand the immediate cessation of all hostilities. The Security Council is unable to make that determination because the United States, as a permanent member and a party to the conflict, will veto any resolution. The General Assembly should act in its place.

DAWN is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., dedicated to promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights for the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa, and to reforming US foreign policy toward the region.

In the early hours of Saturday, February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched coordinated military strikes against Iran without authorization from the UN Security Council, without a declaration of war, and during active diplomatic negotiations. The Omani Foreign Minister had stood in Washington the previous day and [described](#) a breakthrough in nuclear talks. The strikes were announced by President Trump via social media at 2:30 a.m. EST. They reportedly killed Iran's Supreme Leader, dozens of senior officials, and hundreds of civilians, and they continue.

The US and Israel's launching of the war is unlawful. Under [Article 2\(4\)](#) of the UN Charter, all member states are prohibited from using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state. There are only two explicit exceptions: self-defense under [Article 51](#) in response to an armed attack, or authorization by the Security Council under [Chapter VII](#). Neither applies here. Article 51 permits self-defense only "if an armed attack occurs," and Iran had not attacked the United States or Israel. Even under the doctrine of anticipatory self-defense, the war is unlawful. The customary international law standard established by the [Caroline case](#) requires a necessity that is "instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation." A weeks-long military buildup, combined with three rounds of diplomacy that the Omani mediator described as a breakthrough the day before the strikes, cannot satisfy that standard. The United States' own Pentagon briefers [acknowledged](#) to congressional staff on March 1 that Iran was not planning to strike US forces or bases unless Israel attacked Iran first, directly undercutting the White House's claim of imminent threat. No Security Council

resolution [authorized](#) these strikes. The United States did not seek one. The assault constitutes an act of aggression within the meaning of [Resolution 3314](#), which defines aggression as "the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State." The Nuremberg Tribunal, established by the United States itself, [called](#) the crime of aggression "the supreme international crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

The UN Security Council is paralyzed because the United States will veto any resolution condemning its own actions. This is precisely the situation for which this General Assembly created Resolution 377(V) in 1950. Under that resolution, when the Security Council fails to exercise its responsibility because of a lack of unanimity among its permanent members, the General Assembly shall convene in emergency special session within 24 hours to consider the matter and make appropriate recommendations. The procedure requires a request supported by a majority of member states, 97 of 193. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, 141 states fulfilled that obligation and voted in emergency special session to condemn the aggression and demand immediate withdrawal. The General Assembly has also convened under this procedure in response to Gaza. The mechanism exists for moments precisely like this one.

Your Excellency's government is a party to the UN Charter. The obligations that charter creates do not become optional when it is a powerful state that violates them. A legal order that constrains Russia in Ukraine but exempts the United States in Iran is not international law—it is the law of power. Every member state that declines to act when the Charter is violated by a veto-wielding power makes that charter less binding for everyone, including for themselves. The obligation to act collectively in the face of a breach of the peace belongs to every member state equally.

DAWN calls on your government to vote to convene an emergency special session of the General Assembly under Resolution 377(V) and to vote in favor of a resolution declaring the US-Israeli assault on Iran a violation of the UN Charter, constituting a war of aggression under international law, and demanding the immediate cessation of all hostilities.

I am available to discuss any aspect of this letter.

Respectfully submitted,

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