

Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius dies and is succeeded by co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, an unprecedented political arrangement in the Roman Empire

English King Henry VIII's divorce request is denied by Pope Clement VII

Alexander Graham Bell receives a patent for the telephone in the US



Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen announces his team was the first to reach the South Pole on December 14, 1911, 34 days before British explorer Robert Falcon Scott

# US likely **responsible** for strike on Iran school: New York Times

● School once part of IRGC compound

● Pentagon confirms investigating incident

● White House denies certain knowledge

AFP | Washington

The United States is most likely responsible for a strike that reportedly killed scores of people at an elementary school in southern Iran, according to a New York Times investigation.

The February 28 strike hit an elementary school in the Iranian town of Minab and killed at least 150 people, according to Iranian officials.

Neither Israel nor the United States has claimed responsibility for the attack, which was in close proximity to sites controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

The US Department of Defense has said it is investigating the incident.

The New York Times reported on Thursday that US military statements indicating forces were attacking naval targets near the Strait of Hormuz, where an IRGC base is located, "suggest they were most likely to have carried out the strike."



The site of a strike on a girls' school in Minab, in Iran's southern Hormozgan province (file photo)

An analysis of social media posts from the time of the attack, as well as photos and videos from witnesses, indicated that the Shajare Tayyeb elementary school was struck at the same time as a Revolutionary Guards' naval base sites, the Times said.

Two unidentified US officials told Reuters that military investigators "believe it is likely" that US forces were responsible for the strike.

AFP has been unable to reach the location to independently verify the toll or the circumstances of the attack.

General Dan Caine, the top US military officer, said on Wednesday that the United States was carrying out strikes along southern Iran at the time.

A map he presented, the Times reported, indicated an area including Minab had been targeted by strikes in the first 100 hours of the operation.

Caine noted that Israel had mainly been operating further north in Iran.

The school was at one point part of the IRGC's naval base, according to satellite images from 2013 reviewed by the Times.

However, the paper said publicly available historical satellite imagery "shows the structure bears the hallmarks of a school, including a sports field and other recreational areas that were added over time."



Historical satellite imagery showed the building had sports fields and playground facilities, reinforcing evidence that the structure functioned as an elementary school despite its proximity to an IRGC naval base

"Given the U.S.'s intelligence capabilities, they should have known that a school was in the vicinity," Beth Van Schaack, a former State Department official who teaches at Stanford University's Center for Human Rights and International Justice, told the Times.

The Norway-based rights group Hengaw said the school was holding its morning session at the time of the attack and reportedly had about 170 students present.

Asked Wednesday whether the United States was involved in the strike, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt replied: "Not that we know of."

## Iran police chief says ordered to open fire at looters during wartime

AFP | Tehran

Iran's police chief Ahmad Radan said yesterday that officers had been authorised to shoot at suspected looters amid the war with Israel and the United States.

"Because we are in wartime conditions, I have issued orders to shoot at potential thieves," Radan told state TV, adding that any thieves would be "swiftly neutralised".

He also said that authorities had taken measures to maintain order online.

"We will not allow a group of paid agents to undermine the unity that the people achieved with the blood of thousands of martyrs by spreading agitation," said Radan.

## US cannot provide enough missiles for Gulf states and Ukraine: EU commissioner

AFP | Paris

The United States is not in a position to provide enough missiles to the Gulf states and Ukraine to defend themselves, EU defence and space commissioner Andrius Kubilius said yesterday.

"It's very clear that after the Iranian crisis ... it became more urgent for us in Europe to ramp up production of air defence and anti-ballistic missiles," Kubilius said in Warsaw.

"Americans really will not be able to provide enough of those missiles, both for the Gulf countries, for American army itself, and also for Ukrainian needs."

Kubilius said Europe was facing a "huge challenge" in developing anti-missile defence, stressing that Ukraine's needs were "immense".

He said "for the winter season alone" Ukraine needed around 700 Patriot, PAC-2 and PAC-3 missiles, which is "more or less equal to the number of missiles that American manufacturers are capable of producing in a year".

At a joint press conference with Polish defence minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, Kubilius emphasised that "the situation (in Europe) is really critical".

"It is clear that we are going to have to develop our missile production very quickly and very urgently," he added.

# UN rights chief says US must probe school strike 'very quickly'

AFP | Geneva

The United Nations rights chief stressed yesterday the need for "impartial investigations" into a strike on a school in Iran, urging the US to move "very quickly" with its announced probe.

UN rights chief Volker Turk condemned "this absolutely tragic incident".

"What we have asked for is obviously prompt, transparent and impartial investigations, which we understand has been announced by the United States," he told reporters in Geneva.

"We need this to happen very quickly and we need to also make sure that there is accountability as well as redress for the victims," he insisted.

Turk, who said he hoped to go to Washington later this month, said there were "significant concerns about the respect for international humanitarian law, especially the conduct of hostilities... (and what) measures of precaution, of distinction, of proportionality are taken".

When it comes to a school, he



Mourners dig graves during the funeral for children killed in a reported strike on a primary school in Iran's Hormozgan province in Minab (file photo)

said, that was "clearly a civilian institution that should never be attacked".

"Then there are questions around the type of weapons that were used, as well as the timing," he said, pointing out

that the attack "happened in the morning", at a time when children were likely to be in school.

"These factors need to be taken into account," he said.

There is "a horrible, tragic lesson to be learnt when girls

are killed in this way", the rights chief said.

He added that he hoped "there will be not only guarantees of non-recurrence but a review of all the standard operating procedures when it comes

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to this type of issues".

Turk said his office so far had few details, since it did not have a presence inside Iran, with the ongoing internet shutdown making it even harder to get information.

"The onus is now really on those who conducted these strikes to conduct this type of investigation," he said.

"We expect accountability to be served."