



# Katz: Israel sought Khamenei strike

Defence Minister Katz says Israel would have killed Iran’s Khamenei if possible during 12-day war

● Katz states military “searched a lot”

● Assassination attempts halted after ceasefire agreement

AFP | Jerusalem

Defence Minister Israel Katz told media that Israel would have killed Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during the war between the two countries if the opportunity had presented itself.

“If he had been in our sights, we would have taken him out,” Katz told Israel’s public radio station Kan Thursday evening, adding that the military had “searched a lot”.

“Khamenei understood this, went very deep underground, broke off contact with the commanders... so in the end it wasn’t realistic,” Katz told Kan.

He told Israeli television Channel 13 Thursday that Israel would cease its assassination attempts because “there is a difference between before the ceasefire and after the ceasefire”.

Katz had said during the war that Khamenei “can no longer be allowed to exist”, just days after reports that Washington vetoed



An Iranian man walks under a banner of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran

Israeli plans to assassinate him. But on Kan, Katz advised Khamenei to remain inside a bunker.

“He should learn from the late Nasrallah, who sat for a long time deep in the bunker”, he said, referring to Lebanese militant group Hezbollah’s former leader Hassan Nasrallah, who Israel killed in a Beirut air strike in September 2024.

The movements of the su-

preme leader, who has not left Iran since he took power, are subject to the tightest security and secrecy.

Katz said Thursday that Israel maintained its aerial superiority over Iran and that it was ready to strike again.

“We won’t let Iran develop nuclear weapons and threaten (Israel) with long-range missiles”, he said.

In his Channel 12 interview,

Katz admitted that Israel does not know the location of all of Iran’s enriched uranium, but that its air strikes had destroyed the Islamic republic’s uranium enrichment capabilities.

“The material itself was not something that was supposed to be neutralised,” he said of the enriched uranium.

The impact of Israeli and US strikes on Iran’s nuclear programme has been a subject to

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Defence Minister Israel Katz revealed that Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei went “very deep underground” and cut off contact with commanders to evade an Israeli assassination attempt during the recent 12-day war

debate.

A leaked US intelligence assessment estimated the programme to have set Iran back a few months, while Katz and other Israeli and US public figures said the damage would take years to rebuild.

Israel and Iran each claimed victory in a 12-day war that ended with a ceasefire on June 24.

The war erupted on June 13 when Israel launched a bombing campaign that it said aimed to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon -- an ambition Iran has consistently denied.

# Trump says saved Iran leader from ‘ignominious death’

● Threatens more strikes if Iran enriches uranium

● Cancels sanctions relief talks

● Calls Khamenei “ungrateful”

AFP | Washington



A billboard praising US President Donald Trump by the Friends of Zion Museum is displayed in Tel Aviv

LY where he was sheltered, and would not let Israel, or the U.S. Armed Forces, by far the Greatest and Most Powerful in the World, terminate his life.”

“I SAVED HIM FROM A VERY UGLY AND IGNOMINIOUS DEATH, and he does not have to say, “THANK YOU, PRESIDENT TRUMP!”

Trump said that he had been working in recent days on the possible removal of sanctions against Iran, one of Tehran’s long-term demands.

“But no, instead I get hit with a statement of anger, hatred, and disgust, and immediately

dropped all work on sanction relief, and more,” Trump added, exhorting Iran to return to the negotiating table.

Iran’s foreign minister on Wednesday denied it is set to resume nuclear talks with the United States, after Trump said at a NATO summit in The Hague that negotiations were set to begin again next week.

‘Beat to hell’

Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff had expressed hope “for a comprehensive peace agreement.”

Asked earlier in a White House

press conference whether he would consider fresh air strikes if last week’s sorties were not successful in ending Iran’s nuclear ambitions, Trump said: “Sure. Without question. Absolutely.”

Trump added that Khamenei and Iran “got beat to hell” in the hostilities involving the United States and Israel and that “it was a great time to end it.”

He had said during the press conference that he would be “putting out a little statement” on Khamenei’s comments, which appeared to be the Truth Social post.

In the post, he accused Khamenei of “blatantly and foolishly”

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Trump claimed he knew Khamenei’s exact hiding location during the conflict but chose not to authorize his assassination - only to later blast the Ayatollah for not thanking him

saying Iran won the 12-day war with Israel, adding: “As a man of great faith, he is not supposed to lie.”

The war of words come as a fragile ceasefire holds in the conflict between Israel and Iran.

Speculation had however swirled about the fate of Khamenei.

In a televised speech on Thursday -- his first appearance since the ceasefire -- Khamenei hailed what he described as Iran’s “victory” over Israel, vowed never to yield to US pressure and insisted Washington had been dealt a humiliating “slap”.

“The American president exaggerated events in unusual ways, and it turned out that he needed this exaggeration,” Khamenei said, rejecting Trump’s claims Iran’s nuclear program had been set back by decades.



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01



Our new partnership with @IAEAorg is a key step to help countries explore nuclear energy as part of a diversified, resilient power mix.

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02



Substantive meeting with de facto authorities in Goma. I stressed that we seek full humanitarian access, protection of civilians, and respect for international law. Our aid is reaching millions, but we need every route open to reach those in greatest need.

@UNReliefChief

03



The @UN Charter is not optional. It is the bedrock of international relations. We cannot & must not normalize violations of its most basic principles. Now more than ever, we must respect & re-commit to international law — in words & deeds. #CharterDay

@antonioguterres

04



Under relentless fire, Ukraine is passing reform after reform. This is why the Commission defends the opening of the first cluster of negotiation. Ukraine has delivered – now we must too. Because the accession process is based on merit. And Ukraine merits moving forward.

@vonderleyen

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