

Analysis of the Israel-Iran Conflict on State Sovereignty and Global Security

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Abstract

The conflict between Israel and Iran, which peaked in 2025-2026, represents one of the most significant escalations in contemporary geopolitics, affecting the international order. This study aims to analyze the implications of this conflict for the principle of state sovereignty and global security dynamics. Using normative research methods, this study examines international legal regulations, the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions, and the doctrines and opinions of international legal experts to evaluate the legality of Israeli military action against Iranian territory. The analysis focuses on the legal, political, and strategic consequences of significant airstrikes such as Operation Lion's Roar and the attack on the South Pars energy facility. The results show that Israel's unilateral military action has the potential to violate international legal norms, including the principle of the prohibition of the use of force without UN Security Council approval, thus threatening Iran's sovereignty and increasing the risk of a transboundary security crisis. This conflict also destabilizes the global security system by disrupting energy trade routes, such as the Strait of Hormuz, and triggering regional military escalations involving other state actors. This research provides a comprehensive understanding of how bilateral conflicts can have a broad impact on state sovereignty and global security, and emphasizes the need for more effective multilateral legal and diplomatic mechanisms to prevent the escalation of international conflicts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Israel and Iran is one of the most complex geopolitical conflicts in modern international relations. This conflict not only reflects ideological, political, and military rivalries but also raises fundamental issues in international law, particularly regarding the principle of the prohibition on the use of force, state sovereignty, and the principle of non-intervention.

Under international law, the use of military force by one state against another is essentially prohibited, except in certain circumstances, such as self-defense or upon authorization from the United Nations Security Council. However, in practice, military action is often carried out unilaterally under the pretext of national security, giving rise to

debate about its legality. This research begins with the assumption that Israel's military action against Iran constitutes a violation of international legal norms. Therefore, it is important to analyze in depth the nature of this violation and its implications for global stability and the effectiveness of the international legal system.(Dina Fitria Amalia,2026).

In modern international law, the principle of the prohibition on the use of force is a fundamental norm stipulated in the United Nations Charter. The literature demonstrates that the unilateral use of force without international legitimacy constitutes a serious violation of international law.

Anita Zahra Choirun Nisa emphasized that the Iran-Israel conflict is a clear example of how the principle of prohibiting the use of force is often violated in the practice of international relations.(Anita Zahra Choirun Nisa,2025). This conflict shows the tension between international legal norms and the political interests of states.

Other research shows that the pretext of self-defense is often widely used by states to legitimize military action, even though it does not always meet the requirements of international law. This demonstrates the flexible interpretation of international law, which ultimately undermines its effectiveness.

Studies in international humanitarian law highlight the importance of protecting civilians in armed conflict. In the context of the Middle East conflict, various studies have shown violations of basic principles of humanitarian law, such as the principles of proportionality and distinction. International humanitarian law (IHL) aims to protect parties not directly involved in the conflict, particularly civilians. In the context of the conflict in Israel and the Middle East region, various studies have shown violations of basic principles of IHL(Gatot Wiseso,2025).

Research in the Indonesian journal *Impresi* shows that armed conflicts involving Israel often result in civilian casualties and violations of the principles of distinction and proportionality. Furthermore, studies on human rights in armed conflict confirm that international conflicts often result in serious violations of basic human rights, such as the right to life and freedom from torture. Create a complete photo (Otto Paian Tampubolon, 2023).

Various academic papers and international legal reports have assessed that an Israeli military attack on Iranian territory, particularly one occurring in mid-2025, poses a significant risk of violating international law. Some international legal experts consider the use of force without a UN Security Council mandate or evidence of a direct threat to exceed the right of self-defense stipulated in the UN Charter, thus categorizing it as a crime of aggression or a violation of the UN Charter. Furthermore, attacks on civilian facilities such as schools or prisons have been viewed as violations of international humanitarian law because they violate the principle of distinction and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. International institutions such as the International Commission of Jurists have even issued statements declaring such attacks a threat to international peace and security (M. Dehshiri,2026).

Global reactions to this conflict have been varied but generally underscore the importance of the supremacy of international law in interstate conflicts. Several countries and UN experts have condemned Israel's actions (and those of its allies) as contrary to the UN Charter and the norm of non-aggression, emphasizing that unilateral action could encourage the normalization of the use of force outside the framework of international law. This criticism is not only academic, but also appears in official statements by several governments and international organizations warning that such violations have the potential to trigger a wider escalation of the conflict and undermine the already fragile global legal order.

The issue of Israel's violations of international law against Iran is crucial because this conflict not only impacts both countries but also tests the effectiveness of the modern international legal order. Norms in the United Nations Charter, such as the prohibition on the use of force without Security Council approval and the strict definition of the right of self-defense, are principles that underpin global peace. In the Israel-Iran case, several Israeli military attacks have been deemed by international legal experts as exceeding permissible limits, as they lack a UNSC mandate or sufficient evidence of a direct threat, thus casting doubt on the state's adherence to international law in general. The reaction of institutions such as the International Commission of Jurists has been that such attacks threaten international peace and security, demonstrating the relevance of the question of the legality of state actions to the maintenance of a rules-based international order.

This research is crucial because its global implications are far-reaching, not only in terms of violations of a country's rights and sovereignty, but also in terms of the risk of large-scale conflict escalation that could involve various international and regional actors. Criticism from various countries in Asia, the Middle East, and the Global South suggests that such unilateral actions undermine regional stability and could lead to the normalization of the use of force outside the framework of international law, undermine the credibility of the UN Charter, and erode the principle of the prohibition of aggression. These are clearly not merely theoretical issues, but are actually felt in the diplomatic arena, international politics, and global strategic security. Therefore, this research offers an important contribution to understanding how international law is tested amidst contemporary conflicts.

2. METHOD

This study uses a juridical normative method by analyzing international legal documents and academic literature to assess whether Israel's military actions against Iran violate international legal norms, including the prohibition on the use of force without UN authorization and the principles of humanitarian law. Data were collected through a literature review of the UN Charter, international conventions, journal articles, and reports from international institutions, then systematically analyzed to understand differences in legal interpretations and their implications, so that this study can explain the extent to which Israel's actions violate international law and their impact on the global rule of law.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In recent months, the conflict between Israel (backed by the United States) and Iran has escalated into an open military crisis, sparking intense debate about violations of international law. Israel's military operation, known as Operation Lion's Roar, on February 28, 2026, involved air and missile strikes against various targets in Iranian territory, including government centers and strategic infrastructure in Tehran and other cities, reportedly representing an unprecedented escalation of the conflict in relations between the two countries. These attacks have drawn criticism from international legal experts, who argue that the actions appear to fall short of the legal requirements for self-defense under the United Nations Charter, as they lack a formal mandate from the Security Council and evidence of a direct threat that meets the requirements of an imminent threat. Therefore, many analysts have characterized these actions as a violation of the prohibition on the use of force, a foundation of modern international law (Arab Center Washington DC, 2026).

Attacks on civilian facilities and critical infrastructure, such as the South Pars gas field, on March 18, 2026, expanded the conflict's impact beyond the military arena to become a serious threat to global economic and energy stability. Under international humanitarian law, actions that fail to distinguish between military and civilian targets

constitute a violation of the principles of distinction and proportionality. Furthermore, previous attacks—such as the Israeli strikes on Evin prison in June 2025—have drawn condemnation from human rights organizations and UN bodies, which have stated that targeting facilities with civilian populations constitutes a violation of international law and potentially constitutes a war crime. The global implications of this conflict are felt not only in the Middle East but also affect energy markets, international relations, and the credibility of the rule of international law as a whole, making it a severe test of international law enforcement mechanisms and multilateral diplomacy in the 21st century.

Beyond highlighting violations of international law through the use of force and attacks on civilian facilities, the Israel-Iran conflict also has serious global geopolitical and economic implications. The attack on the South Pars gas field in March 2026, for example, not only disrupted regional energy supplies but also impacted global gas and oil prices, which in turn put economic pressure on energy-importing countries. From the perspective of international humanitarian law, this action underscores the importance of the principles of distinction (the distinction between military and civilian targets) and proportionality, which are often violated in modern armed conflicts. The attack on Evin Prison and other airstrikes in 2025-2026 caused significant civilian casualties, leading international legal experts and human rights organizations to emphasize that such actions could potentially constitute war crimes or serious violations of international humanitarian law.

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Thus, various indications of violations of the basic principles of international humanitarian law in the Israel-Iran conflict demonstrate that the military escalation that has occurred not only has serious humanitarian consequences but also tests the effectiveness of international legal norms in regulating state behavior in armed conflict. Failure to adhere to the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution has the potential to exacerbate civilian suffering and extend the impact of the conflict to a wider region. Therefore, concrete steps are needed from the international community to de-escalate the

conflict while ensuring that international legal norms are respected and upheld by all parties involved.(Kombat justitia,2026)

A. The Israel-Iran conflict affects the sovereignty of countries involved in the Middle East

The conflict between Israel and Iran has fundamentally undermined the principle of state sovereignty, a key pillar of international law. State sovereignty encompasses a country's exclusive right to govern its internal affairs without external interference. However, in this conflict, this principle has been significantly eroded.

First, direct military action, such as cross-border airstrikes, constitutes a violation of territorial integrity. Israeli attacks on Iranian territory (and vice versa in retaliation) constitute intervention that violates the principle of non-intervention. Under international law, such actions are only justified under certain circumstances, such as self-defense or a UN Security Council mandate, the legitimacy of which in many cases in this conflict remains disputed.

Second, this conflict also demonstrates a violation of sovereignty through proxy wars. Iran and Israel are not only directly involved, but also through non-state actors such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and other militia groups in the Middle East. This has made countries like Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq indirect battlefields, thereby eroding their sovereignty due to external intervention.

Third, this conflict has given rise to a "shared sovereignty crisis," where affected countries are unable to fully control their own territories due to the involvement of foreign actors. In other words, the Israel-Iran conflict not only impacts the two countries but also extends the sovereignty crisis to other countries in the region.

1) Analysis of Regional and Global Security

The Israel-Iran conflict has broad implications for regional and global security, which can be analyzed in the following dimensions:

a) Escalation of Regional Conflict

This conflict demonstrates a recurring pattern of retaliation that has the potential to escalate into a broader, open conflict. Prolonged tensions are pushing the Middle East region toward greater instability. In fact, this conflict has the potential to draw the involvement of major powers such as the United States, Russia, and China, thereby increasing the risk of a broader global conflict(Jorry S. Koloay,2024)

b) Threats to Global Stability

The Israel-Iran conflict is no longer local but has acquired global dimensions. This tension could alter the configuration of world power and expose the vulnerability of the international system to prolonged conflict.(Triya Andriyani,2026)

c) Disruption to Global Energy Security

Iran holds a strategic position in global energy trade, particularly in relation to oil and gas distribution channels. A conflict involving Iran has the potential to disrupt global energy trade routes, including the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's vital waterways.

From the above explanation, it can be seen that the Israel-Iran conflict has had a significant impact on the international legal system, particularly in terms of weakening the effectiveness of the basic norms and principles that have long been the foundation of the global order. The unilateral use of military force without authorization from the United Nations Security Council represents a violation of the principle of the prohibition of the use of force as stipulated in the UN Charter and reflects a crisis in state compliance with international law.

B. Implications of the Use of Military Force in the Conflict for State Sovereignty and Global Security

The use of military force in the Israel-Iran conflict demonstrates complex and multidimensional implications for the principle of state sovereignty and global security stability. Within the framework of international law, the unilateral use of force by one state against another without authorization from the United Nations Security Council constitutes a violation of the basic principles stipulated in Article 2 paragraph (4) of the UN Charter, which expressly prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of a state. (Adil Ahmad Haque,2026). In the context of this conflict, the cross-border military operations carried out by Israel against Iran represent a violation of territorial sovereignty, as they are carried out without the consent of the state concerned or adequate international legal legitimacy.

The use of military force is also not fully justified through claims of self-defense as stipulated in Article 51 of the UN Charter. In international legal doctrine, the right of self-defense can only be invoked in the event of an actual armed attack or an imminent threat. However, in practice, the use of force in this conflict tends to be based on a preventive approach (pre-emptive strike), which remains a matter of debate in international law and has not yet gained universal recognition(United Nations,1945). This shows the tendency of states to broaden the interpretation of the concept of self-defense, which could ultimately threaten the stability of international legal norms themselves.

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From the perspective of state sovereignty, the implications of the use of military force are not only felt by the directly targeted state but also extend to other states through indirect conflict mechanisms or proxy wars. Iran and Israel are known to have alliance networks with non-state actors in the Middle East, such as militia groups in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. The involvement of these actors has turned their territories into arenas of conflict, thereby reducing the state's ability to exercise effective control over its territory.(Barry Buzan,1991).This phenomenon indicates an erosion of state sovereignty in the form of a weakening of the central government's authority due to external intervention.

Thus, it can be concluded that the use of military force in the Israel-Iran conflict not only directly violates state sovereignty, but also triggers global security instability, expands the conflict to the regional and international levels, and weakens the effectiveness of the international legal system as an instrument for regulating relations between countries.

4. CONCLUSION

The Israel-Iran conflict has had a significant impact on state sovereignty due to the use of cross-border force in violation of the principles of non-intervention and territorial integrity. Its impact extends through proxy conflicts, weakening state control in the region. Globally, this conflict has increased tensions and risks triggering a broader international

conflict, particularly with the involvement of state, non-state, and major power actors. Furthermore, disruptions to energy distribution have the potential to trigger a global economic crisis. This conflict also demonstrates the weakness of international law enforcement due to the influence of political interests, necessitating the strengthening of multilateral cooperation and international legal mechanisms.

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