



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Le Premier ministre

Declaration by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Government on the Middle East

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Prime Minister of Luxembourg

Luxembourg, Chamber of Deputies

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Courtesy translation of the Verbatim of the Prime Minister's address

Mr Speaker,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Members of Parliament,

The rules-based international order is under increasing strain. Peace can never be taken for granted. The world has entered a new military conflict since Saturday, with direct repercussions not only for the Middle East but also for Europe. In the immediate neighbourhood of the European Union — in Ukraine, in Gaza, and now in Iran and across the Gulf region — war is underway. The situation is serious. It challenges many of the principles our country stands for.

Luxembourg and Europe remain firmly committed to the principles of the United Nations Charter, wherever conflict may arise. Luxembourg has always stood on the side of diplomacy, peace and international law. Luxembourg also stands for freedom and human rights. For this reason — perhaps more than ever — we are in favour of a strong Europe. A Europe that defends peace, freedom, democracy and prosperity. This new military conflict in and around Iran raises a number of difficult questions, including about international law.

Had all diplomatic avenues on Iran's nuclear programme — mediated by Oman between Iran and the United States — truly been exhausted? How imminent was the threat of an Iranian attack on Israel? How much support have the Iranian people sought in order to finally live in freedom? We do not know, because Europe was neither involved in these discussions nor consulted on the timing or the justification of the attacks carried out against Iran last Saturday. This conflict in the Middle East is only just beginning. It is now in its fourth day, and many signs suggest that it may last for some time. We are concerned about the risk of further escalation across the region. At the same time, we know that for decades the Iranian regime has ignored and violated international law and has posed a threat to its neighbours and to the international community. This is reflected in its pursuit of nuclear weapons, the repression of its minorities, the crushing of all political opposition, and its support for terrorist organizations in other countries.

These developments require our full attention. This is a regional conflict with an international dimension. Since the outbreak of the conflict on Saturday, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and I have held a number of discussions — both here at home and with international partners — to determine what action we should take. For that reason, the Government held an extraordinary Cabinet meeting yesterday morning. Because this conflict — and I want to emphasize this once again — affects us all, directly and indirectly: first and foremost on a human level, but also economically and geopolitically. The Government's first priority is to guarantee the security of the country and of its people, both at home and abroad.

We stand by all Luxembourg nationals and residents who are currently stranded in the region. As early as Saturday, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and I issued the necessary instructions to provide them with the best possible assistance. The Minister for Foreign Affairs will outline the options currently being considered to support our citizens in the region. Ensuring security at home is also one of our priorities. Our security services — in particular the police and the intelligence service — have been placed on alert and remain in close contact with our partners in order to identify and prevent potential threats.

The situation is serious and uncertain. But the reality is that the Iranian regime has, for decades, been a source of repression internally, and of instability externally. Its own people have been oppressed, tortured, imprisoned and killed. In recent weeks and months alone, major protests have been brutally suppressed. The nuclear programme and the financing of terrorist militias in Lebanon, Gaza, Yemen and elsewhere pose a threat to our partners and allies in the region. And let us not forget that Iranian drones are also being used by Russia every day in its war against Ukraine.

Luxembourg and the European Union therefore stand on the side of the Iranian people. We support their right to self-determination, freedom and fundamental rights. These are principles rooted in international law. The current situation may represent a fragile moment of hope for the Iranian people. The death of Iran's leader may be a necessary condition for change, but it is certainly not the only one. It is still too early to predict how the situation will evolve within Iran — a country of nearly 90 million people with a complex social and political structure. History in the region has shown that externally imposed regime change does not automatically bring stability or peace. Unfortunately, I would say. A vacuum can quickly be filled — and not always by forces that favor freedom and reform. What we already know, however, is that the current situation will have far-reaching consequences for Iran, the wider region, and for Europe.

The Middle East plays not only a crucial role in global energy supply. The Strait of Hormuz is also one of the world's most important maritime routes for trade. If the Middle East is engulfed in conflict, the consequences will be immediate: higher energy prices, rising inflation, pressure on the purchasing power of our citizens, and difficulties for many businesses, especially those with high energy needs. Maintaining open trade routes and a stable global economic environment are directly linked to jobs and prosperity here at home.

For that reason, Luxembourg — as a country committed to dialogue and peace — calls for military restraint from all sides in this conflict. We strongly condemn any attack against the territory of our partners and friends in the region. We express our full solidarity with countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. We are currently conveying this message to a number of heads of state and government and to foreign ministers in the region. These countries are on the front line of the current escalation. Over recent years, they have also played a central role in diplomatic efforts, with some acting as mediators with Iran even in recent days. They must not become victims of this conflict.

We also stand in solidarity with our European partners — including our friends in Cyprus and any EU country that is attacked or at risk of being attacked. I conveyed this message of solidarity earlier today in a conversation with the President of Cyprus. Even though the situation has its own particular dynamics, it is yet another reminder — after Ukraine and Greenland — of the importance of a united and sovereign Europe. This is also the message I will convey tomorrow to the President of the European Council, Mr António Costa, when he visits Luxembourg.

Mr Speaker,

What we see today is a world marked by instability, insecurity and uncertainty. But this does not mean that we should — or can — limit ourselves to the role of spectators. It is our responsibility to draw the right lessons and to prepare for a world that is undergoing profound change.

That is precisely the challenge the Government is addressing. As the world becomes a harsher place, we must invest more in our security, both at home and abroad. Because no European country can carry sufficient weight alone, we must strengthen a common European foreign policy. Because we remain dependent on fossil fuels, we must accelerate the expansion of renewable energy. And because global trade is becoming more uncertain, we must strengthen our partnerships with other regions of the world.

These are the steps Luxembourg can take. And these are the steps the Government is taking. But the future of Iran must not be decided in Washington, in Jerusalem, in Brussels or in Luxembourg.

The future of Iran lies in the hands of the Iranian people — and of the Iranian people alone. Standing up for freedom and peace is always worth the effort, both at home and abroad. And that is exactly what we will continue to do, especially in these uncertain times.

Thank you.