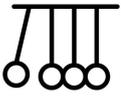


TURKEY'S UNHEARD VOICES

# **The Effects of the Iran–US/Israel War on the Iranian People and Social Expectations**

POLITICS

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## **Introduction: A Country in the Shadow of War**

Over many years, accumulating diplomatic crises, international debates surrounding Iran's nuclear program, and competition over the balance of power in the Middle East have gradually but steadily increased tensions in the region. Relations between Iran, the United States, and Israel had long been shaped by mutual distrust and harsh political rhetoric. Proxy wars in the region, economic sanctions, and diplomatic crises further deepened these tensions.

Developments in the final days of February 2026 led to the complete collapse of this fragile balance. Coordinated airstrikes by the United States and Israel against Iran suddenly escalated tensions to the level of open warfare. These attacks not only targeted military objectives but were also seen as a development that fundamentally shook the regional security balance.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps responded quickly to these attacks. Missile and drone strikes were launched against Israel and against U.S. military bases in the Gulf region. These reciprocal attacks revealed the risk of a rapid expansion of the conflict and left the region facing the possibility of a large-scale war.

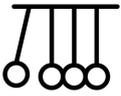
One of the most critical developments of the war was the death of Iran's religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, during these attacks. Considering the central role of the religious leader within Iran's political system, this event created a major rupture not only militarily but also politically.

While the Iranian people struggle to live under the threat of external bombardment, they are also confronting an ongoing economic crisis, political pressures, and social tensions that have persisted for years. In such an environment, war has become not only a conflict between states but also a major humanitarian crisis that directly affects the daily lives of millions of people.

## **The Effects of the War on the Iranian People**

The effects of the war on the Iranian people are too extensive to be explained through a single dimension. The destruction that has emerged is not limited only to the losses experienced on the military frontlines. The most significant effects of the war are visible in daily life, the economic system, the psychological well-being of society, and the relationship between the state and its citizens.

The most immediate impact of the war has appeared in the economic sphere. Iran's economy had already been under pressure for many years due to international sanctions and internal economic problems. However, with the outbreak of the war, this fragile structure has been shaken even further. The value of the Iranian rial has fallen rapidly, inflation has



reached an uncontrollable level, and the purchasing power of the population has significantly declined.

These developments are also clearly reflected in everyday life. Constantly changing prices in markets, rapid increases in the cost of basic necessities, and salaries losing their value even before they are received have made life extremely difficult for many people. For low-income groups, economically vulnerable segments of society, and those living on fixed salaries, this situation has almost turned into a struggle for survival.

Access to food, medicine, and basic necessities has become far more than an ordinary shopping activity for many families. The absence of medicines in some hospitals, supermarket shelves occasionally remaining empty, or prices rising to levels beyond people's reach have become common scenes of daily life. This situation creates both a deep sense of economic insecurity and a profound feeling of uncertainty within society.

The effects of the war are not limited to material losses. In Iranian society, the relationship between the state and the public has also become more complex during this period. Protests that began in January 2026 primarily due to economic problems quickly spread across the country and turned into large-scale demonstrations. The harsh response of security forces to these protests led to the deaths, injuries, permanent disabilities, and arrests of many people.

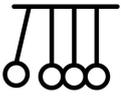
The fact that these events occurred shortly before the war has left a deep mark on the collective memory of society. For this reason, the state is no longer seen by many people solely as an authority that provides security. Some segments of society perceive the state as a structure capable of using force against its own citizens when necessary.

This situation also complicates calls for national unity during wartime. While the state calls for unity against an external enemy, some segments of society interpret these calls differently. On the one hand, people oppose foreign intervention in their country; on the other hand, they cannot forget the injustices and pressures they have experienced in domestic politics. This creates a deep dilemma within society.

The psychological effects of the war are also extremely severe. Living under the constant threat of airstrikes and not knowing what the future will bring creates great stress for people. In particular, children growing up with images of war and families living in a constant state of uncertainty may experience long-term psychological trauma.

Some families have been forced to migrate in search of safer areas, while others have begun to live in constant anxiety about the safety of their loved ones. This situation has created a widespread atmosphere of fear and uncertainty within society.

Frequent disruptions to the internet and communication networks have also made this process extremely difficult. The restriction of communication channels causes people to become disconnected both from the world and from one another. At the same time, the



difficulty of accessing reliable information leads to the rapid spread of rumors and both accurate and inaccurate information, further increasing the atmosphere of mistrust.

## **The Social Expectations of the Iranian People**

Despite all these difficulties, a strong desire for change can be observed within Iranian society. Social movements that have emerged in recent years demonstrate that the expectations of the public are being expressed in a more visible manner.

The “Jin, Jiyan, Azadi” movement, which began in 2022, brought demands for individual freedoms and human dignity to the forefront. Later, during the protests that took place in 2025 and 2026, demands for economic justice merged with these calls for freedom. As a result, the movement evolved into an expression of a broader desire for social change.

Although the young people, women, workers, and retirees who participated in the protests took to the streets for different reasons, they meet at a common point: the desire for a life consistent with human dignity. For this reason, the demands expressed today are not limited to minor reforms. Many people are calling for more fundamental changes.

The slogan “Reformists, conservatives—the game is over” shows that the public has largely lost confidence in the political groups within the existing system. At the same time, it reflects a strong societal belief that the options within the current system are no longer sufficient.

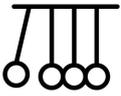
Another central element of public expectations is economic hardship. High inflation, unemployment, and the significant depreciation of the national currency have made daily life extremely difficult. However, many Iranians believe that these economic problems are not caused solely by economic factors.

Some segments of society argue that a significant portion of the country’s resources is spent on regional conflicts rather than domestic welfare. This perspective is clearly reflected in the slogan “Neither Gaza nor Lebanon, my life for Iran.” This slogan shows that the public draws a direct connection between foreign policy and their own living conditions.

People demand a future in which the prosperity brought by peace, rather than wars, is prioritized. They imagine a society in which their children are not forced to migrate to other countries, where merit is valued, and most importantly, where people can receive fair compensation for their labor.

Despite all forms of pressure, a sense of solidarity and resistance has also developed within society. Events such as the families of those who lost their lives in protests singing at their loved ones’ graves demonstrate that mourning can also transform into a form of resistance.

This situation is part of society’s effort to keep its collective memory alive. Mourning is not only an expression of loss but also a form of social memory that refuses to forget. This



sense of solidarity has become an important factor preventing hope within society from disappearing completely.

## Conclusion and Future Outlook

In conclusion, the Iran–US/Israel war marks a period in which the already existing economic crises, political pressures, and social traumas faced by the Iranian people have intensified further. The war has not only created new problems but has also exacerbated existing ones.

The Iranian population faces external military attacks on one hand and internal political pressures on the other. Nevertheless, the hope for building a better future within society has not been completely extinguished.

This hope manifests itself at times in protest slogans, in the support people give to one another, and in small acts of resistance. It demonstrates that society has not fallen entirely silent and that the desire for change remains alive.

The upcoming period will be extremely challenging for Iran in every respect. Achieving economic recovery, political reform, and social peace simultaneously does not appear to be easy. The power vacuum created by the death of religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei may lead to new political struggles.

However, the shape of Iran's future will largely depend on how the demands of its people are addressed. If these demands can be expressed through the internal dynamics of society without being overshadowed by scenarios of foreign intervention, a different future may become possible for the country.

Today, the Iranian people continue to live under the shadow of war and economic hardship. Yet despite all these difficulties, the hope for a freer, more just, and more dignified life has not been entirely lost. This hope can be found sometimes in a slogan, sometimes in a whisper, and sometimes in a song sung by a mother at the grave of a loved one.