

Iran targets Islamic State in revenge for Tehran attacks, fires missiles into Syria

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Tehran: In apparent revenge to Islamic State attack in Tehran on June 7, Iran's Revolutionary Guard launched missiles into eastern Syria targeting terrorists and warning that it would similarly retaliate on anyone else carrying out attacks in the Islamic Republic.

Iran fires missiles into Syria in revenge for Tehran attacks

Five Islamic State-linked attackers stormed Iran's parliament and a shrine to revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on June 7, killing at least 17 people and wounding more than 50.

The launch of surface-to-surface medium range missiles by Iran's Revolutionary Guard into Syria's Deir ez-Zor province comes as Islamic State militants fleeing a U.S.-led coalition onslaught increasingly try to fortify their positions there.

Activists in Syria said they had no immediate information on damage or casualties from the strikes, launched from Iran's Kurdistan and Kermanshah provinces. Social media was awash in shaky mobile phone footage from those areas, allegedly showing the missiles rise in an orange glow before heading toward their targets.

Sunday's assault marked an extremely rare direct attack from the Iran amid its support for embattled Syrian President Bashar Assad. Iran's Revolutionary Guard, a hard-line paramilitary force, has seen advisers and fighters killed in the conflict.

A Guard statement carried on Sepahnews website said it targeted "terror bases" many "terrorists" were killed and their weapons had been destroyed in the strike. The statement said that the missiles were "in retaliation" for the June 7 attacks on Tehran claimed by ISIS.

"Medium-range missiles were fired from the provinces of Kermanshah and Kurdistan, and a large number of terrorists were killed and weapons destroyed," the statement said.

It said the attack targeted "a command base.... of the terrorists in Deir ez-Zor."

The Guard warned Islamic State militants and their "regional and international supporters" that similar retaliatory attacks would target them as well if another assault in Iran occurs.

Activists in Syria did not immediately have information about the Iranian-claimed strikes. Deir el-Zour is home to both Islamic State militants and civilians.

That June 7 attack in Tehran marked the first to hit Iran, shocking its residents who believed the chaos engulfing the rest of the Middle East would not find them in the Shiite-majority nation.

Iran has described the attackers as being "long affiliated with the Wahhabi," an ultraconservative form of Sunni Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia. However, it stopped short of directly blaming the kingdom for the attack, though many in the country expressed suspicion Iran's regional rival had a hand in the attack.

The attack also came as emboldened Sunni Arab states "backed by U.S. President Donald Trump" are hardening their stance against Iran.

- (With AP inputs)