

La'o Hamutuk

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PRESS RELEASE

Criminal aggression by the United States of America and Israel against Iran:

Call for De-escalation, Respect for International Law and Preservation of Global Stability

La'o Hamutuk expresses our deep concern about the intensification of military conflict in the Middle East involving Israel, the United States and Iran. This evolution, according to available public information and analysis under international law, has exacerbated the regional and global security situation, and had serious humanitarian and economic impacts. The U.S. attack on Iran is a crime, a violation of international law, a violation of the UN charter and against the United States' own Constitution.

This conflict once again represents a violation of the rules-based international order and the integrity of the collective security system under the United Nations Charter. International law must be applied with coherence, impartiality and consistency to all parties, regardless of political alliances or strategic interests.

Timor-Leste, as a country that benefitted from international law and solidarity and the multilateral system in its process of gaining sovereignty and building a state, has a moral and historical responsibility to defend the international order based on law, equal sovereignty and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

International Legal Obligations and Limitations on the Use of Force

According to Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, states have an obligation not to threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of other states. This principle is a fundamental pillar of international stability and security.

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter recognizes the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense in the event of an armed attack. However, the exercise of this right must strictly respect the principles of necessity and proportionality, and requires objective justification, sufficient evidence and transparency.

Article 8bis of the Rome Statute defines the crime of **Aggression** as "the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations."

Actions that violate boundaries set in international law weaken the collective security system and create a dangerous precedent for legitimizing the use of unilateral force.

International Humanitarian Law and Civil Protection

As a result of this attack, more than 500 people in Iran have lost their lives, as well as other people in Israel, U.S. military forces, and elsewhere in the region. Enough!

All parties have an obligation to respect International Humanitarian Law, including:

- Strict distinction between military targets and civilian populations and objects;
- Strict respect for the principle of proportionality;
- Adoption of effective preventive measures to reduce risks of harming the civilian population and essential infrastructure.

Civilian protection as an obligation to security and human dignity must be placed at the center of political and military considerations. Violations of these norms can lead to international irresponsibility and undermine the credibility of the global order.

Multilateralism and Collective Responsibility

The United Nations system is key to preventing conflict escalation and promoting diplomatic solutions. Strengthening multilateral diplomacy and respect for the United Nations Charter are the foundations of global security.

Weakening the multilateral system leads to international legal uncertainty and increases the risk of systemic confrontation between powers. A small country like Timor-Leste is more reliant on the rules-based international order and the protection of equal sovereignty.

La'o Hamutuk recommends:

1. All parties, especially the U.S. and Israel, to immediately cease military operations and reduce tensions;
2. To return to good faith diplomatic dialogue, mediated by multilateral mechanisms;
3. To fully respect the United Nations Charter, the Rome Statute and international humanitarian law;
4. For the Government of Timor-Leste to reaffirm its principal pro-peace and pro-international law positions, and prepare preventive measures to protect the population from global economic impacts.

Global peace and security cannot be built through military intensification. Force must not replace law. A rules-based international order is a fundamental guarantee of global stability and the protection of small nations.

La'o Hamutuk reaffirms that diplomacy, dialogue and justice are the foundation for sustainable solutions and the preservation of human dignity.