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A broken promise can only incense the GCC further: credibility matters



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Iran's pledge to halt attacks is undermined by ongoing threats, deepening Gulf mistrust and driving global anxiety as oil prices surge. - REUTERS

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IRAN'S declaration that it would halt attacks on neighbouring countries was initially presented as a sign of restraint amid a rapidly escalating Middle Eastern conflict.

Yet for the members of the [Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\)](#), [the statement was never truly convincing](#). A promise that is violated even as it is being issued cannot be regarded as a genuine commitment.

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In reality, the so-called pledge from Tehran not to attack neighbouring states was already being undermined [by continued threats and military activity in the Gulf region](#).

For the GCC states — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman — this contradiction has only deepened mistrust toward Iran.

The Gulf monarchies did not initiate the war between [Iran on one side and the United States and Israel on the other](#).

Yet despite their attempts to remain outside the conflict, [Iranian missiles and drones](#) have repeatedly threatened the security of the region.

Air defence systems across the Gulf have remained on [constant alert](#), intercepting projectiles that could have struck civilian areas or vital infrastructure.

The consequences of these actions are already being felt far beyond the Middle East.

Energy markets have reacted sharply to the escalating uncertainty.

Brent crude oil has surged [past USD 110 per barrel](#), marking the first time oil prices have crossed this threshold since the [global energy shock of 2022](#).

This development is not merely symbolic.

It reflects the deep anxiety in global markets over the possibility that [the conflict could spread further across the Gulf region](#), where some of the world's most critical energy infrastructure is located.

The Persian Gulf remains the heart of global oil production and export.

Any instability in this region immediately reverberates through international markets.

Oil traders understand that even a [temporary disruption in Gulf shipping routes or energy facilities](#) could send prices significantly higher.

Thus, the surge in oil prices is a direct reflection of the geopolitical risks created by the current war.

At a time when the global economy is already facing fragile growth, higher energy prices threaten to trigger another wave of inflation.

[Developing economies](#) in Asia, Africa and Latin America will be particularly vulnerable.

Higher fuel costs raise transportation prices, [increase the cost of food production](#) and put pressure on national budgets already strained by post-pandemic recovery efforts.

In other words, the consequences of instability in the [Gulf extend far beyond the region itself](#).

They affect the entire global economy.

Against this backdrop, Iran's conduct [appears especially reckless](#).

To announce a halt to attacks while the region remains under the shadow of missiles and drones only adds to the uncertainty.

For the GCC states, such declarations do little to inspire confidence.

If anything, they raise more troubling questions.

Is Tehran truly able to control its [military forces](#)?

Or are different factions within Iran's complex security structure acting independently of political leadership?

Both possibilities are deeply concerning.

If Iran [cannot control its commanders](#), then any pledge of restraint becomes meaningless.

If it can control them but chooses not to enforce discipline, then the declarations themselves amount to little more than diplomatic manoeuvring.

Neither scenario reassures the Gulf states. The stakes are extraordinarily high.

The GCC region contains not only vast oil reserves but also [critical desalination facilities that supply the overwhelming majority of freshwater](#) consumed by Gulf populations.

A single strike on such infrastructure could create humanitarian crises alongside economic disruption.

This is why the Gulf monarchies view Iran's behaviour with such alarm.

The contradiction between Tehran's words and actions suggests that the region cannot rely on verbal assurances alone.

Compounding the uncertainty is the leadership transition now unfolding in Iran.

Following the death of the [long-serving Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei](#), authority appears to be consolidating around his son, [Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei](#).

The emergence of Mojtaba Khamenei as the central figure within Iran's political system has raised significant concerns across the region.

Reports that members of his immediate [family were killed](#) during the opening phase of the conflict add another layer of unpredictability.

Personal grief can have powerful political consequences.

A leader who has suffered such losses may be more inclined toward even more massive retaliation rather than restraint.

For the GCC states, this possibility makes Iran's promises even harder to trust.

If strategic decisions in Tehran are influenced by personal anger or internal political pressures, the [risk of escalation](#) increases dramatically.

The result is a region trapped between diplomatic rhetoric and military reality.

On paper, [Iran claims it will halt attacks](#) on neighbouring states.

In practice, the security environment of the Gulf continues to deteriorate.

Oil prices are rising rapidly.

Air defence systems remain active. Markets are bracing for further instability.

These developments illustrate a fundamental truth about international politics.

Credibility cannot be created by declarations alone.

It must be demonstrated through consistent behaviour.

At the moment, Iran has yet to demonstrate that consistency.

Until Tehran shows sustained restraint — not merely through statements but through actions — its assurances will continue to ring hollow across the Gulf. Equally the United States and Israel must cease and desist on all attacks.

And as the surge in global oil prices already demonstrates, the consequences of this credibility gap extend far beyond the Middle East.

In the fragile geopolitics of the Persian Gulf, a promise broken at the moment it is made does not calm tensions.

It intensifies them — with economic repercussions now being felt across the entire world.

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