

Iran says U.S. warships will be destroyed if they threaten Iranian vessels



Tehran, April 23 (RHC)-- Iran will not hesitate to retaliate against the U.S. Navy if it attacks any Iranian vessel, Tehran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander has warned, responding to a similar threat by Donald Trump.

"I have ordered our naval forces to destroy any American naval force in the Persian Gulf that threatens the security of Iran's military or non-military ships," Major-General Hossein Salami said on Thursday, as cited by Tasnim News Agency.

Salami was responding to US President Donald Trump, who said that he had issued an order on Wednesday to "destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea."

Last week, the U.S. Navy accused Iranian warships of maneuvering in a "dangerous and provocative" manner near its own vessels in the Persian Gulf. Tehran rejected these claims, saying its patrol boats had to intercept and monitor the American ships because they were violating maritime protocols while navigating in the area.

The tensions between the US and Iran escalated dramatically in January after one of Iran's top military commanders, Major General Qassem Soleimani, was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq. Washington had been accusing Soleimani of plotting terrorist attacks against American military personnel and diplomats.

Tehran responded to the airstrike by launching missiles at two military sites in Iraq, which housed U.S. troops. The attack left no fatalities on the ground, with analysts saying back then that the strikes were probably a show of force and not intended to kill soldiers.

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