United States: Iranian drone carrier Shahid Bagheri destroyed in Bandar Abbas

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The United States has declared that it destroyed the **IRIS Shahid Bagheri**, a large Iranian ship adapted to operate drones and helicopters, during an attack that is part of the American military campaign against Iran's naval, missile, and infrastructural assets. According to the Pentagon and the United States Central Command, the ship was hit in the area of **Bandar Abbas**, near the strategic **Strait of Hormuz**.

Images released by the United States Central Command show the vessel in flames after a series of strikes. The Associated Press also reported that the U.S. military announced it had attacked the ship and set it on fire, while Iran did not immediately provide a detailed confirmation of the loss.

https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/2029725370371424476?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etw
uniti-distrutta-portaerei-iraniana-nello-stretto-di-hormuz

During a briefing on March 5, U.S. Secretary of Defense **Pete Hegseth** and Admiral **Brad Cooper**, commander of **CENTCOM**, argued that the American operation against Iran is not expanding in objectives but is continuing with intensity. Reuters reports that Cooper stated that the United States has hit **over 2,000 targets** in Iran and destroyed **30 Iranian warships**, including an Iranian drone carrier.

According to the U.S. version, in the final stages of the operation — called **Epic Fury** — the bombings targeted Iran's ability to launch offensive missiles, produce armaments, and rebuild its naval capabilities. Hegseth stated that Washington will continue to strengthen its military presence in the region with additional squadrons, defensive capabilities, and bombers.

What was the Shahid Bagheri

The **Shahid Bagheri** was one of the most symbolic platforms of the **Pasdaran** navy. Iran and international agencies reported, at the time of its inauguration on **February 6, 2025**, that it was a commercial ship converted into a military unit capable of launching and recovering drones and helicopters at sea. The ship featured a runway of about **180 meters** and was presented as a significant expansion of Iran's deterrence capability.

AP and Reuters described the ship as the **first Iranian drone carrier**, obtained from the transformation of a merchant vessel and capable of carrying multiple squadrons of drones, helicopters, and cruise missiles. Reuters also located the ship in satellite images near Bandar Abbas still between late January and early February 2026.

A symbolic and operational blow

The destruction of the Shahid Bagheri, if confirmed in all details, represents both an **operational** and **symbolic** blow for Tehran. The ship was indeed one of the most visible projects of the Iranian naval evolution towards the use of unmanned systems at sea, in a region crucial for global energy balances like the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

The episode is part of a phase of strong escalation of the conflict. AP reports that U.S. and Israeli attacks against Iran have already produced significant military and political effects in the region,

while the American Congress unsuccessfully discussed a resolution to limit the president's war powers.

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Drone carriers and the future of fleets

The Shahid Bagheri was also an example of the growing attention of military navies towards units capable of operating **unmanned aircraft** directly from the sea. These platforms are considered useful for surveillance, long-range attack, and support for hybrid missions, and are also being watched with interest by other naval powers. Iran had presented the ship precisely as a tool to extend its operational capability beyond national coasts.

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