

Iran Football Team Defends World Cup Participation Amid Political Tensions



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TEHRAN, March 13 — The Iran national football team has affirmed that it cannot be excluded from the 2026 FIFA World Cup, stressing that the competition is governed solely by FIFA, not by any individual country.

In a statement posted on social media Thursday, the team said its qualification for the tournament

was secured through strong performances and decisive victories during the qualifying campaign.

“The World Cup is a historic international event, and its governing authority is FIFA – not any individual or country,” the statement said, adding that Iran’s national squad was among the first teams to qualify for the prestigious tournament.

The statement emphasized that no party has the authority to exclude Iran from the competition. It also suggested that any host country unable to ensure security for participating teams could face questions about its ability to host the global event.

The message was reposted by Iran’s head coach Amir Ghalenoei, reinforcing the team’s position.

The comments came amid regional tensions following recent military strikes involving the United States and Israel against Iran, which had raised uncertainty about the team’s participation.

However, FIFA President Gianni Infantino said earlier this week that US President Donald Trump had assured him Iran’s team would be welcome to compete in the tournament.

Iran has been placed in Group G of the World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19. Iran is scheduled to open its campaign against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15.