

Iran voiced support Tuesday for Pope Leo XIV after the pontiff declared he had “no fear” amid an escalating public dispute with U.S. President Donald Trump during ongoing tensions between Washington and Tehran.

Iranian parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf praised the pope in a post on X, describing his stance as “fearless” and commending his criticism of what he called war crimes by Israel and the United States. Ghalibaf said the pope’s message would inspire those unwilling to remain silent in the face of civilian deaths.

The comments come as Trump faces criticism for his sharp remarks about the pontiff. Over the weekend, Trump described Pope Leo XIV as “weak on crime” and “terrible for foreign policy,” and suggested his election may have been influenced by his American background.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Monday, Trump said he would not apologize. “There’s nothing to apologize for. He’s wrong,” he said.

The pope, speaking to reporters aboard the papal plane en route to Africa, responded that he was not intimidated. He said he had “no fear” of the Trump administration and would continue to speak out on the message of the Gospel, according to AFP.

The dispute intensified after an AI-generated image circulated on Trump’s social media account before being removed. The image appeared to depict Trump in a Christ-like pose, though the president later said he believed it portrayed him as a doctor.

Iran’s endorsement of the pope underscores the unusual alignment as geopolitical tensions continue to rise between the United States and Iran.