

Iran's Hassan Rouhani calls Israel a 'cancerous tumor'

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Iran's President Hassan Rouhani. (Source: Reuters)

Tehran: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has called Israel a "cancerous tumor" established by Western countries to advance their interests in the Middle East.

Iran's leaders frequently condemn Israel and predict its demise, but Rouhani, a relative moderate, rarely employs such rhetoric.

Addressing an annual Islamic Unity Conference on Saturday, Rouhani said "one of the ominous results of World War II was the formation of a cancerous tumor in the region." He went on to refer to Israel as a "fake regime" set up by Western countries.

Rouhani says the United States cultivates close ties with "regional Muslim nations" to protect Israel, an apparent reference to Iran's archrivals Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Iran supports militant groups like Hezbollah and Hamas that are pledged to Israel's destruction.

- AP