



Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 4/16/26 Update

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The United States, Israel, and Iran reached a two-week ceasefire agreement on April 7. JINSA continues to release regular updates about the conflict. The update below includes information since [JINSA's last update](#) as of April 16 at 10:00 am ET.

Days left in ceasefire: **6**

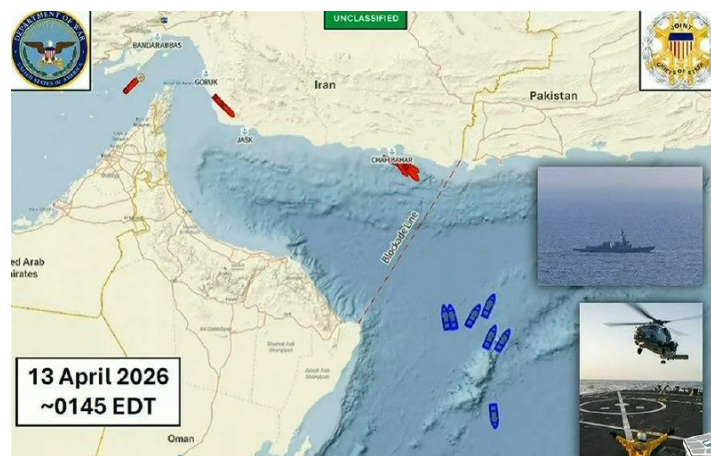
Iranian missiles and drones launched since ceasefire: **190** (5 on April 15–16)

Ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz since ceasefire: **At least 75** (18 on April 15–16)

- Note: The blockade line announced by the Pentagon (depicted below) is at a different location than the Strait of Hormuz itself, located where the Gulf of Oman opens into the Arabian Sea.

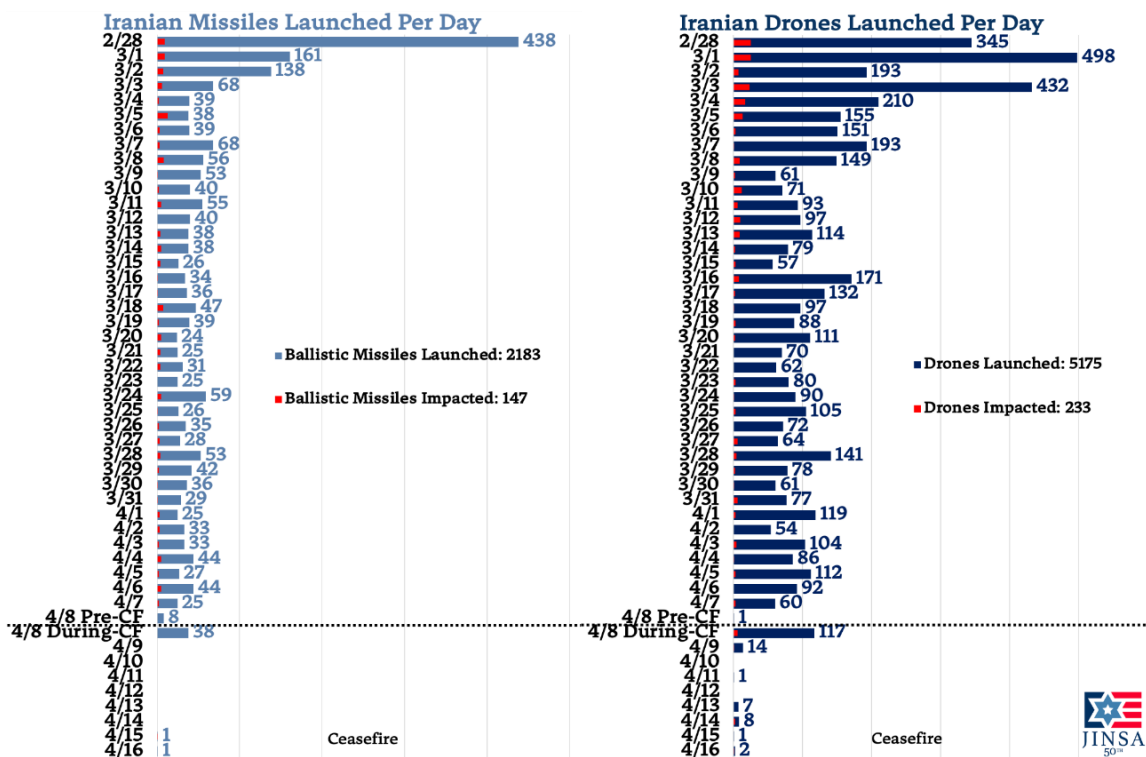
1. Overview

- The U.S. Navy's blockade has caused 13 ships to [turn back](#) to port, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine [said](#) during a Pentagon press conference on April 16. Gen Caine warned that if ships “do not comply with this blockade, we will use force.”
 - » According to Gen Caine, the military is enforcing a “blockade of Iran’s ports and coast-line” in which U.S. forces will “actively pursue any Iranian-flagged vessel or any vessel attempting to provide material support to Iran.” This includes “dark fleet vessels carrying Iranian oil,” he said, meaning “vessels or those illicit or illegal ships evading international regulations, sanctions or insurance requirements.”
 - » He added that enforcement would extend “inside Iran’s territorial seas and in international waters,” and that “in addition to this blockade, the joint force through operations and activities in other areas of responsibility like the Pacific area of responsibility.”



Source: [U.S. Department of Defense](#)

- According to data from Lloyd’s List Intelligence released on April 16, 81 percent of the large cargo ships with more than 10,000 deadweight tonnage that [traveled](#) through the Strait of Hormuz since April 13 had Iranian ownership, flag, port calls, or other affiliations.
 - » Of the 27 large cargo ships that Lloyd’s List tracked sailing through the strait, 15 used the route that Iran mandated to collect transit fees, and no ships traveled through the normal shipping corridor.
- According to *Axios* reporting on April 15, the United States and Iran [made](#) headway on April 14 towards a “framework agreement” for an end to the war.
- On April 15, the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Asset Control [sanctioned](#) over two dozen entities working for Mohammad Hossein Shamkhani, an Iranian oil shipping magnate and the son of Ali Shamkhani, the former Iranian Minister of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics, killed in a February 28 strike.
- On April 15, the U.S. Senate [voted](#) to block two resolutions that would ban weapons sales to Israel, including a \$295 million sale of bulldozers and a \$152 million sale of 1,000-pound bombs to the Israeli military.
- Iran launched three attacks against Kurdish opposition groups on April 16 and has conducted 12 attacks against Iraqi Kurdistan since the ceasefire began.
 - » Over the first two days of the ceasefire, Iran launched 131 drones and 38 ballistic missiles at Israel and Gulf nations.
 - » Iran has launched roughly 5,175 drones, 2,183 ballistic missiles, and 59 cruise missiles since the war began.



2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- In an April 15 briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt [shared](#) that the next round of negotiations, if they occur, would “very likely” take place in Pakistan.
 - » She described talks with Iran as “productive and ongoing.”
 - » A Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman [stated](#) that the dates for the second round of negotiations have not been determined.
- An unnamed U.S. official cited by *Axios* [noted](#) on April 15 that, “We want to make a deal. And parts of their [Iran’s] government want to make a deal. Now the trick is to get the whole of government over there to make the deal.”
 - » A U.S. official and source informed about the talks shared with *Axios* that if a framework for a deal is reached, a ceasefire extension would be necessary to allow time for negotiations for a comprehensive agreement.
- Reuters reported on April 15, citing a source informed by Tehran, that Iran proposed that it would [allow](#) vessels to travel through Oman’s side of the Strait of Hormuz without any interference from Iran, on the condition that an agreement is reached with the United States to prevent the resumption of hostilities.
- On April 15, a Pakistani delegation, including the country’s army chief, interior minister, and other top security officials, [arrived](#) in Tehran to continue diplomatic discussions and potentially set up another round of U.S.-Iranian negotiations following talks in Islamabad on April 11.
 - » Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is also [slated](#) to visit Saudi Arabia and Turkey in the coming days as part of mediation efforts, Pakistan announced on April 15.

Lebanon

- Israeli and Lebanese delegations are [planning to meet](#) as soon as next week in Washington, Israel’s *Israel Hayom* outlet reported on April 16, following U.S.-mediated bilateral talks held there this week.
 - » Reportedly, the two sides are progressing towards a deal, though many details remain unclear. *Israel Hayom* [reported](#), citing U.S. and Israeli officials, that Lebanon is no longer insisting that Israeli forces withdraw from its country.
- On April 15, President Donald Trump [announced](#) that Israeli and Lebanese leaders would speak on Thursday for the first time in roughly 34 years, posting on Truth Social that he was “trying to get a little breathing room between Israel and Lebanon.” President Trump’s post did not specify which leaders would be involved from the mix of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, and Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam.
 - » However, President Aoun [informed](#) Secretary of State Marco Rubio on April 16 that he would not speak with Prime Minister Netanyahu, according to Lebanese outlet LBCI.
 - » Reuters later [reported](#), citing Lebanese officials, that Aoun will refuse to speak to Netanyahu for “the near future.”
 - Aoun’s public stance may be due to domestic considerations. German media [re-reported](#) this week that Israel helped foil a plot to overthrow Lebanon’s government, and large pro-Hezbollah demonstrations have [taken place](#) in Beirut’s streets in recent weeks.
- In a press statement on April 15, a senior American official [responded](#) to reports that the United States has pressured Israel to reach a ceasefire with Lebanon, saying, “This is not

something we have asked for, nor is it part of the peace negotiations with Iran, but the president would welcome the end of hostilities in Lebanon as part of a peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon.”

- » Israel's *Channel 12* reported on April 15 that the Israeli security cabinet is [considering](#) a U.S. proposal for a one-week ceasefire in Lebanon, with the possibility of resuming fighting if a new deal is not reached during the ceasefire. A senior Israeli official speaking to the network shared, “Our assessment is that within a few days, we will have no choice but to fully cease fire in Lebanon.”
- During an April 16 phone call between Iranian parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and his Lebanese counterpart Nabih Berri, Ghalibaf [stated](#) that Iran has “been striving to compel our enemies to establish a permanent ceasefire in all the conflict zones, in accordance with the agreement. For us, a ceasefire in Lebanon is just as important as a ceasefire in Iran.”
 - » Ghalibaf also [posted](#) on X on April 16 that a ceasefire in Lebanon would be the outcome of “the resistance and steadfast struggle of the great Hezbollah and the unity of the Axis of Resistance.”

3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

Iran

- Describing the U.S. blockade in an April 15 press conference, Gen Caine [stated](#) that the blockade is being enforced by over 10,000 U.S. forces using “over a dozen ships, and dozens of aircraft.”
- On April 15, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent [highlighted](#) the blockade on Iranian imports’ impact on Chinese ties to Iranian oil, noting that “we believe (that with) this blockade ... there will be a pause of Chinese buying.”
 - » He addressed two Chinese banks, telling them “that if we can prove that there is Iranian money flowing through your accounts, then we are willing to put on secondary sanctions.”
 - » Secretary Bessent also [emphasized](#) on April 15 that “We have told countries that if you are buying Iranian oil, that if Iranian money is sitting in your banks, we are now willing to apply secondary sanctions.”
- On April 15, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu [declared](#) that Israel’s “objectives with the United States are aligned,” adding that “we want to see Iran’s enriched material removed, and we want to see the elimination of its enrichment capability inside Iran. And of course, we want to see the reopening of [key shipping] straits.”
 - » He added that regarding negotiations, “it is too early to say how this will end, or even how it will progress. In light of the possibility that the war may resume, we are prepared for any scenario.”
 - » While Israeli forces continue operating in Lebanon to dismantle Hezbollah, particularly the group’s stronghold in Bint Jbeil, Prime Minister Netanyahu noted that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will “continue reinforcing the security zone and to extend it eastward, toward the slopes of Mount Hermon,” highlighting Israel’s dedication to protecting the Druze population in that area.

Lebanon

- On April 16, Israeli troops operating in Bint Jbeil [discovered](#) a Hezbollah arsenal of at least 130 weapons, including Kalashnikov rifles and pistols, as well as Hezbollah flags, inside a Lebanese school.

- According to Lebanese state media, the Israeli military [struck and destroyed](#) the Qasmiyeh Bridge on the Litani River on April 16, which a Lebanese official claimed to be the last crossing connecting the rest of Lebanon to the country's southern territory.
 - » The IDF struck the bridge on March 23, claiming Hezbollah used the crossing to transport weapons and fighters closer to Lebanon's border with Israel.
- On April 16, the IDF [bombed](#) the road connecting Beirut to Damascus, targeting a vehicle in the Dahr al-Baidar area, and prompting its closure.
- On April 16, Israel's *N12* [reported](#) that the IDF deployed the Artillery Corps' new "Roem" cannon for the first time while fighting Hezbollah this week in southern Lebanon.
 - » According to the report, the cannon can fire 6-8 shells per minute and has a range of up to 40 kilometers.
- On April 15, the IDF [demolished](#) around 70 Hezbollah sites in the town of Bint Jbeil in southern Lebanon within a minute.
 - » Before the attack, Israeli troops raided a Hezbollah combat compound in a neighborhood close to Bint Jbeil, where soldiers discovered RPGs, grenades, anti-aircraft missiles, and assault rifles, and killed Hezbollah operatives.

4. Iranian and Proxy Operations

- On April 16, a Hezbollah rocket [impacted](#) in Kiryat Shmona, causing a vehicle to catch fire, but no casualties.
- Overnight on April 16, Hezbollah [fired](#) a rocket at the Haifa Bay area, with the Israeli military permitting the projectile to strike an open area.
 - » An IDF missile boat also [intercepted](#) a drone launched from Lebanon overnight.
- A Hezbollah rocket attack on April 15 [injured](#) five Israeli soldiers, including one seriously, while the troops were operating in southern Lebanon.
- On April 15-16, Iran [targeted](#) Iraqi Kurdistan with at least one missile and three drone attacks.
 - » On April 16, a drone struck a camp outside Erbil belonging to the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), causing material damage but no casualties.
 - » On April 16, a drone targeted the headquarters of an unspecified Iranian Kurdish political party in the Alana Valley, causing no casualties.
 - » On April 16, a missile struck a position belonging to the Kurdistan Toilers' Party in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, causing no casualties.
 - » On April 15, a drone targeted the Dijla district on the outskirts of Erbil, with no reported casualties.

5. Estimated Casualties of Iranian Operations

- Thirteen U.S. service members have died during Operation Epic Fury.
 - » An Iranian drone attack [killed](#) six U.S. servicemembers at Port Shuaiba in Kuwait on March 1: Maj. Jeffrey O'Brien, 45; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Marzan, 54; Capt. Cody Khork, 35; Sgt. 1st Class Nicole Amor, 39; Sgt. 1st Class Noah Tietjens, 42; and Sgt. Declan Coady (posthumously promoted from specialist), 20.
 - » A U.S. servicemember, Sgt. Benjamin Pennington, 26, was [killed](#) in a March 8 Iranian attack targeting U.S. troops at the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.

- » Six U.S. servicemembers were [killed](#) when a KC-135 aerial refueling aircraft crashed over western Iraq on March 12: Major John A. Klinner, 33; Captain Ariana G. Savino, 31; Technical Sergeant Ashley B. Pruitt, 34; Captain Seth R. Koval, 38; Captain Curtis J. Angst, 30; and Technical Sergeant Tyler H. Simmons, 28.
- At least 399 members of the U.S. military have been [injured](#) thus far in the war.
 - » Ten have been seriously [wounded](#), and at least 354 of the injured have reportedly returned to duty.
 - » At least 15 Americans were [hurt](#) in an Iranian drone strike on Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait on April 6, most of whom were lightly injured.
 - » In the March 27 Iranian attack on a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia, at least 15 U.S. servicemembers were [injured](#), including two who were seriously wounded.
- Since the war began, [44 people have been killed in Israel](#), while over 7,791 have been [injured](#). [Thirteen of](#) these casualties include Israeli soldiers who have been killed while fighting Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.
- Since the war's outbreak, numerous other casualties have been reported:
 - » Iran: Through April 7, at least 3,636 people, including at least 1,221 military personnel, have been [killed](#), with at least 26,500 [wounded](#). *Iran International* reports that over 4,700 security personnel have been [killed](#), including members of the Basij, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and police forces.
 - » Azerbaijan: Four civilians have been [injured](#).
 - » Bahrain: Three people have [been killed](#), including a [Moroccan contractor](#), and at least 46 people [have been injured](#), including five [Emirati soldiers](#).
 - » Iraq: At least 118 people have been [killed](#), [including](#) 17 [people](#) in Iraqi Kurdistan.
 - » Jordan: At least 31 people have [been injured](#).
 - » Kuwait: Two [Kuwaiti navy sailors](#), two [Kuwaiti interior ministry officers](#), two [Kuwaiti civilians](#), and an [Indian national](#) have been killed; over 90 Kuwaiti military [personnel have been injured](#), and eight [civilians](#), including two [medical staff](#), have been wounded.
 - » Lebanon: At least 2,167 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 7,061 have been [wounded](#)—figures that do not distinguish between Hezbollah operatives and civilians.
 - » Oman: At least [three people](#) have been killed, and at least 15 have been [wounded](#).
 - » Qatar: Around 20 people have been [wounded](#), and seven were [killed](#) on March 22 in a helicopter crash in Qatari territorial waters due to a technical issue.
 - » Saudi Arabia: Three people have been killed, including a Saudi [national](#) and two [foreign nationals](#), and at least 23 others [have been injured](#).
 - » Syria: At least four people have been [killed](#) in Syria, and several others have been [injured](#).
 - » United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.): Thirteen people have been [killed](#), and at least 224 have been [injured](#).

6. Threats, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian Officials

- On April 16, Mohsen Rezaei, Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's military advisor, threatened the U.S. naval blockade, [stating](#) that "These ships of yours [the United States] will be sunk by our first missiles."
 - » He added that an American ground offensive in Iran would be "great" as Iran "would take thousands of hostages" and hold them for ransom.

» Rezaei also stated that he personally is not supportive of an extension of the ceasefire.

- On April 16, the Iranian daily newspaper *Donya-e-Eqtasad* [shared](#) that Iran has paused exports of petrochemicals, giving priority to domestic needs and conserving the supply of raw materials, as directed by a senior official at the National Petrochemical Company.

7. International Response

- During the first month of the war, Germany [approved](#) arms deals to Israel worth \$7.8 million, less than the value of approved arms exports in previous months.
- On April 15, YouTube [announced](#) that it had suspended Explosive Media, a pro-Iranian government account, on March 27 for posting LEGO-style videos made with artificial intelligence criticizing President Trump, his administration, and the war with Iran.
- During a phone call on April 15, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi reportedly [encouraged](#) Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi to work toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

8. JINSA Resources

- Jonathan Ruhe and Yoni Tobin, [Blockade Iran's Military, Not Just Its Export Revenue](#), April 15, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel, [Operation Epic Fury: A Work in Progress](#), April 10, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Jonathan Ruhe, [Iran's Next Move Is the Bomb—If the Regime Survives](#), *RealClearDefense*, April 9, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, [Trump Risks Losing the Plot—and the War—in Iran](#), *The Dispatch*, April 7, 2026
- Ari Cicurel, [Finishing the Job: Targeting Iran's Repression Machine](#), April 7, 2026
- Jonah Brody, [Greece and Cyprus in the War Against Iran](#), April 6, 2026
- JINSA Iran Policy Project, [End States, Not End Dates: Defining Success for Operation Epic Fury](#), April 1, 2026
- Blaise Misztal, [How This War Will End, If It Ends Now](#), April 1, 2026
- Meriem Mokhtari, [The Triple Betrayal: Operation Epic Fury, The Gulf's Public Discourse, and U.S. Stakes](#), March 31
- Jonathan Ruhe, [Strengthening U.S. Force Posture at Israeli Bases](#), March 31, 2026
- Yoni Tobin and Sarah Havdala, [From the Ceasefire's Ashes: War Returns to Israel's Northern Front](#), March 30, 2026
- Svante E. Cornell, [Turkey on Iran: Gains, Risks, and Strategic Restraint](#), March 30, 2026
- Hussein Aboubakr Mansour, [If Tehran Survives](#), March 27, 2026
- Ari Cicurel, [The Eroding Shield: Air Defense Against Iran](#), March 26, 2026
- Jonah Brody and Rena Gabber, [The Axis Behind Iran: How China, Russia, and North Korea Sustain Tehran's Military Threat](#), March 25, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, [Scared Strait: Ending Iran's Threat to Hormuz and the Gulf](#), March 19, 2026
- VADM Herman Shelanski, USN (ret.), IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and Blaise Misztal, [Webinar - Iran's Threat to Global Shipping: What Can Be Done?](#) March 19, 2026
- Hussein Mansour, [If Tehran Falls: How Iran's Collapse Reshuffles Arab Gulf Relations](#), March 16
- Infographic: [Operation Epic Fury—What is the Aim Point?](#), March 13, 2026