



## Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 4/21/26 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 21 at 10:00 am ET.

Days left in U.S.-Israel-Iran ceasefire: **1**

Days left in Israel-Lebanon ceasefire: **5**

Iranian missiles and drones launched since ceasefire: **197** (1 on April 20-21)

Hezbollah attacks since ceasefire: **4** (0 on April 20-21)

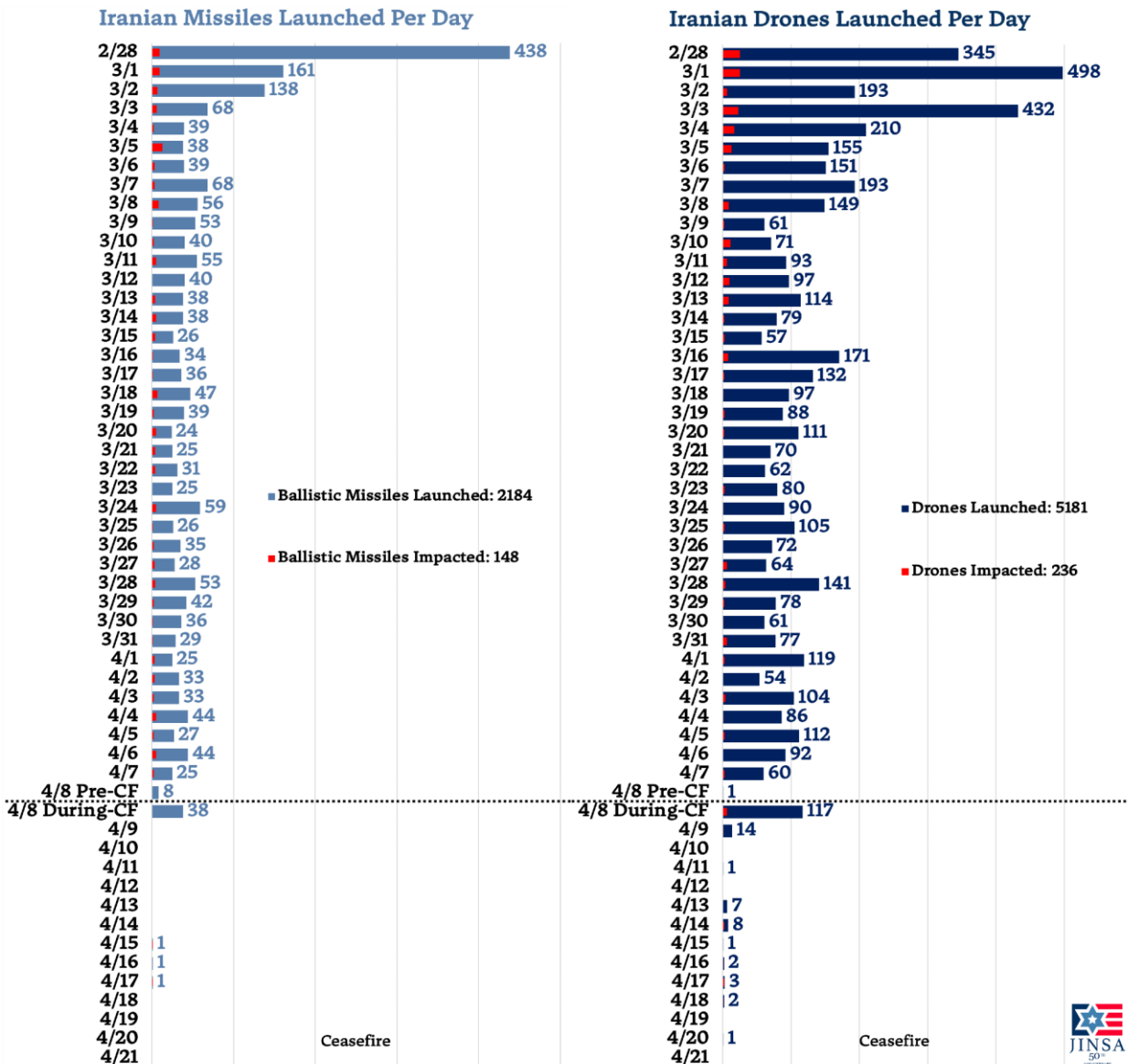
Ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz since ceasefire: **At least 190** (at least 17 on April 20–21)

- Note: The blockade line that the Pentagon announced crosses where the Gulf of Oman opens into the Arabian Sea and is at a different location than the Strait of Hormuz itself.

### 1. Overview

- With the U.S.-Israel-Iran ceasefire set to expire on April 22 at 8:00 PM EDT, Middle Eastern officials told the Associated Press that the United States and Iran [plan](#) to hold talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, although neither side confirmed the timing of the negotiations.
  - » On April 20, Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei [approved](#) Iran's participation in a second round of negotiations.
- On April 21, President Donald Trump told CNBC that he [opposes extending](#) the ceasefire with Iran, stating, "I don't want to do that. We don't have that much time."
- During an April 20 interview with PBS News, President Trump [stated](#) that if the ceasefire is not renewed, "lots of bombs [will] start going off." Asked what he wants out of negotiations with Iran, President Trump responded, "Very simple—Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon."
  - » In the interview, President Trump also said he disagrees with Energy Secretary Chris Wright's recent comment that gas prices may not return below \$3/gallon until late 2026 or early 2027. The president stated, "I think [gas prices will] come roaring down [if the war] ends."
- On April 20, President Trump [declared](#) in a Truth Social post that "Israel never talked me into the war with Iran, the results of Oct. 7th, [adding] to my lifelong opinion that IRAN CAN NEVER HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON, did."

- Iran has not launched any projectiles since it claimed to launch drones at U.S. Navy vessels on April 20 in response to the U.S. seizing an Iranian oil tanker that was attempting to sail through the U.S. blockade.
  - » 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 5,181 drones, 2,184 ballistic missiles, and 59 cruise missiles since the war began.



## 2. Diplomatic Engagement

### Iran

- Regarding an extension of the current ceasefire between the United States and Iran, President Trump [told](#) CNBC on April 21 that “I don’t want to do that. We don’t have that much time.”
  - » Declaring that U.S. strikes on Iranian government targets will continue if a deal is not reached, President Trump added that “I expect to be bombing because I think that’s a better attitude to go in with. But we’re ready to go. I mean, the military is raring to go.”

- In a Truth Social post on April 20, President Trump [stated](#) that “The DEAL that we are making with Iran will be FAR BETTER than the JCPOA [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action].”
  - » He noted that the JCPOA “was a guaranteed Road to a Nuclear Weapon, which will not, and cannot, happen with the Deal we’re working on.”
  - » President Trump added that if an agreement is reached with Iran, “it will guarantee Peace, Security, and Safety, not only for Israel and the Middle East, but for Europe, America, and everywhere else.”
  - » In a Truth Social post on April 21, President Trump [requested](#) that Iran release from custody eight women who are reportedly scheduled to be hanged by the regime in the coming days.
- In a separate Truth Social post on April 20, President Trump [noted](#) that “THE BLOCKADE, which we will not take off until there is a ‘DEAL,’ is absolutely destroying Iran.”
- U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, and White House advisor Jared Kushner reportedly [traveled](#) to Islamabad today for the second round of talks with Iran.
  - » A Pakistani source participating in the talks [noted](#) on April 21 that “Things are moving forward and the talks are on track for tomorrow.”
- CNN [reported](#) on April 20 that some of President Trump’s aides oppose his approach of using press interviews and social media to discuss U.S.-Iran negotiations.
- Last night, on April 20, Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei [approved](#) Iran joining a second round of negotiations.
  - » Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran’s Parliamentary Speaker and lead negotiator, [posted](#) on X on April 20 that “Trump, by imposing a siege and violating the ceasefire, seeks to turn this negotiating table ... into a table of surrender or to justify renewed warmongering. We do not accept negotiations under the shadow of threats, and in the past two weeks, we have prepared to reveal new cards on the battlefield.”
  - » According to a source cited in an April 20 *Axios* article, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) [pressured](#) Tehran’s negotiators to refuse a second round of negotiations until the United States ended the blockade, leading to delays in confirmation from the Iranians regarding their participation in a second round of talks.
- Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in a phone call that alleged U.S. ceasefire violations are [preventing](#) diplomatic progress, Iran’s foreign ministry said in an April 20 press release.
- Ahead of talks in Islamabad, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [posted](#) to X on April 20, writing that “Honoring commitments is the basis of meaningful dialogue. Deep historical mistrust in Iran toward US gov conduct remains, while unconstructive and contradictory signals from American officials carry a bitter message; they seek Iran’s surrender. Iranians do not submit to force.”
- On April 20, *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported, citing insider sources, that the U.S. negotiating team is [expected](#) to call on Beirut to repeal a law prohibiting contact with Israeli citizens during ongoing Israel-Lebanon negotiations.

### 3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

#### *Iran*

- On April 21, President Trump, referring to U.S. strikes on Iran in June 2025, [wrote](#) on Truth Social that “Operation Midnight Hammer was a complete and total obliteration of the Nuclear Dust sites in Iran. Therefore, digging it out will be a long and difficult process.”

- In an April 20 Truth Social post, President Trump [insisted](#), “Israel never talked me into the war with Iran, the results of Oct. 7th, added to my lifelong opinion that IRAN CAN NEVER HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON, did.”
  - » President Trump also noted in the post that “the results in Iran will be amazing - And if Iran’s new leaders (Regime Change!) are smart, Iran can have a great and prosperous future!”
- During an Israeli Memorial Day ceremony on April 21, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [claimed](#) that “the ayatollah regime in Iran planned another Holocaust ... It sought to destroy us with nuclear weapons and thousands of ballistic missiles. Had we not acted decisively, the names Natanz, Fordo, and Isfahan might have joined Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Treblinka.”
  - » Prime Minister Netanyahu added that this did not occur “because together with our great ally, the United States, we dismantled that machinery of destruction in advance. We removed an immediate existential threat.”
- Prime Minister Netanyahu [declared](#) during a separate Memorial Day ceremony on April 20 that the Israeli military “hasn’t finished the work” in Iran and that the United States and Israel “are carrying the entire Western civilization on their backs.”

#### *Lebanon*

- The Israeli Air Force [struck](#) Hezbollah fighters operating in the Bint Jbeil area and near the Litani River in Qaaqaait al-Jisr on April 20, who were violating the ceasefire and posing a direct threat to Israeli troops.
- Lebanon’s Energy Minister Joe Saddi [assured](#) on April 20 that the Israeli military’s map showing a “naval forward defense area” off the coast of Lebanon “doesn’t change anything about the fact that there is a maritime border agreement,” which was established between the two countries in 2022.

#### *Yemen*

- Large airstrikes [impacted](#) Yemen’s Mukayras District on April 21, Sky News Arabia reported that day. The strikes were reportedly conducted by the U.S. military and targeted a Houthi missile launching site.

## 4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping and Blockade Status

- U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [announced](#) on April 21 that it had seized the sanctioned tanker M/T *Tifani*, which is linked to Iran, “without incident” in international waters near Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean. It said the seizure was part of “global maritime enforcement efforts to disrupt illicit networks and interdict sanctioned vessels providing material support to Iran.”
  - » The vessel, capable of carrying 2 million barrels of crude, was close to fully loaded and had signaled Singapore as its destination, according to Kpler data.
- On April 21, President Trump said in an [interview](#) with CNBC that U.S. forces “caught a ship” the previous day “that had some things on it,” adding those items were not “very nice.” He said the unspecified items were a “gift from China” and suggested that Iran had “probably done a little bit of restocking,” without commenting further on the matter. It was unclear which vessel he was referring to.
- CENTCOM [stated](#) on April 20 that 27 vessels in total—an increase of two from the day prior—had complied with U.S. orders to turn back toward Iranian ports since the U.S. blockade took effect.
  - » Lloyd’s List Intelligence [reported](#) on April 20 that at least 26 Iranian shadow fleet vessels have bypassed the U.S. naval blockade.

## 5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

### Lebanon

- On April 20, Hezbollah [confirmed](#) that its forces were behind an attack the previous day against a convoy of eight Israeli armored vehicles in southern Lebanon, in which at least one was struck by “a series of explosive devices planted earlier” by its fighters.

## 6. 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, [46 people have been killed in Israel](#), while over 7,794 have been [injured](#). [Fifteen 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, 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 2,294 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 7,544 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](#).

## 7. Threats, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian Officials

- Ali Shirazi, a senior official in Iran’s law enforcement command, violently [threatened](#) President Trump over the assassination of Iran’s former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, stating on April 21, “You killed our Imam. Do you know what the retribution for killing an Imam is? It is cutting you into pieces in front of the axis of resistance.”
- On April 21, Ali Abdollahi, the commander of Iran’s Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters, [stated](#) that Iran’s military is “united and coordinated,” and that it is “prepared to deliver decisive, determining and immediate responses to enemy threats and actions.”
- Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, Iran’s judiciary chief, [declared](#) on April 21 that “The United States’ blockade of Iran’s ports and coasts, as well as its attack on our commercial ship in the Sea of Oman, violates the ceasefire and constitutes a war crime, and we will certainly respond to these measures.”
- Nabih Berri, Lebanon’s Parliament Speaker and a staunch Hezbollah ally, [said](#) on April 21 that should Israel “maintains its occupation, whether of areas, positions, or by drawing yellow lines, it will smell the scent of resistance every day.”

## 8. International Response

- European Union (EU) foreign ministers weighed in on the war in Lebanon and broader relations with Israel ahead of an April 21 meeting of the bloc’s diplomatic heads in Luxembourg.
  - » Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot [stated](#) that Israel’s actions in Lebanon are “totally unacceptable” and called for at least a partial suspension of the European Union’s Association Agreement with Israel.
  - » Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares [announced](#) that Spain, Slovenia, and Ireland have formally requested that the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement be discussed at the meeting.
- On April 21, following a meeting of the Council of the Arab League at the ministerial level, Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Raggi [noted](#), “We all condemned Iran’s threats to close the Strait of Hormuz and stressed that Tehran must be held responsible for compensating the damage and economic losses caused by these threats.”
  - » He added, “The ministers also rejected and condemned Iran’s continued funding, arming, and mobilizing of militias loyal to it in several Arab countries, in ways that serve its own agenda at the expense of regional stability.”
- On April 20, Reuters [reported](#) that the EU will expand the criteria of its Iran sanctions to include individuals and entities responsible for blocking the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iraq [reopened](#) the Rabia border crossing with Syria after more than a decade to accelerate overland fuel exports and revive cross-border trade amid disruptions to global shipping.

## 9. JINSA Resources

- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [In Defense of the War, And How to Finish It](#), April 17, 2026
- Blaise Misztal and Yoni Tobin, [Lebanon Ceasefire Cannot Become Iranian Leverage](#), April 17, 2026
- Rena Gabber and Jonah Brody, [Epic Fury Reveals Vulnerabilities in the Axis Behind Iran](#), April 16, 2026
- 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
- Giran Ozcan and Jonah Brody, [Iran's Kurdish Coalition and the Future of the Opposition](#), March 18, 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