



Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 4/23/26 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 23 at 10:00 am ET.

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

Days left in Israel-Lebanon ceasefire: **3**

Iranian missiles and drones launched since ceasefire: **203** (6 on April 22)

Hezbollah attacks since ceasefire: **9** (At least 3 on April 22-23)

Ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz since ceasefire: **At least 195** (at least 12 on April 22–23)

- 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

- In an April 23 Truth Social Post, President Donald Trump [announced](#) that he ordered the U.S. Navy to “shoot and kill” vessels laying mines in the Strait of Hormuz, noting that U.S. minesweepers are actively “clearing the Strait.”
 - » During a classified briefing for members of the House Armed Services Committee held on April 21, senior Pentagon officials reportedly [assessed](#) that fully clearing the Strait of Hormuz of mines would take up to six months.
- Amid conflicting reports on the length of the U.S.-Iran ceasefire extension, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt [announced](#) on April 22, “the president has not set a firm deadline to receive an Iranian proposal, unlike some of the reporting we’ve seen today.”
- U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [revealed](#) on April 23 that since the U.S. military enacted the maritime blockade on Iranian ports, its forces have redirected 31 vessels away from the blockade line.
 - » Amid the blockade, the U.S. military [confirmed](#) that overnight on April 23, American troops seized the Guyana-flagged oil tanker *Majestic X* in the Indian Ocean, traveling near Sri Lanka and Indonesia.
 - » The ship, according to CENTCOM, was transporting Iranian oil.
- JINSA-reviewed data from the Kpler analytics firm indicated that two Iran-linked ships crossed the U.S. blockade line in the past 48 hours, with one passing through on April 22 and another on April 23.

- The second round of talks between Israel and Lebanon is scheduled to [begin](#) at approximately 4:00pm ET today, April 23, at the U.S. State Department headquarters in Washington, D.C.
 - » The current 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon is slated to expire on April 26, and Lebanon is reportedly [seeking](#) a one-month ceasefire extension.
 - » Israel's *Channel 12* outlet [reported](#) on April 22 that Hezbollah leaders have requested that the Iranian regime restart its attacks on U.S. assets and forces, in order to pressure Israel to stop its operations against Hezbollah.

2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt [stated](#) on April 22 that President Trump has yet to set a firm deadline for Iran to submit a deal to the United States. Israel's *Channel 12* outlet reported on April 22 that the United States has [given](#) Iran only a three-to-five-day extension for the temporary ceasefire.
- Following President Trump's post on Truth Social yesterday calling for Tehran to call off the executions of eight women, Press Secretary Leavitt [clarified](#) on April 22 that President Trump's red lines focus on the nuclear file.
 - » She stated, "Humanitarian issues are of a great concern to this president, but with respect to the negotiations that are ongoing, he has made his red lines very clear: Iran can never obtain a nuclear bomb to threaten the United States and our allies, and they must turn over the enriched uranium that's in their possession."
- In a statement posted on X on April 22, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's Speaker of the Parliament and lead negotiator, [wrote](#), "A complete ceasefire only makes sense if it is not violated by the maritime blockade and the hostage-taking of the world's economy, and if the Zionist warmongering across all fronts is halted," adding that "reopening the Strait of Hormuz is impossible with such a flagrant breach of the ceasefire."
 - » He noted, "They did not achieve their goals through military aggression, nor will they through bullying. The only way forward is to recognize the rights of the Iranian nation."
- On April 22, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [noted](#) that "Breach of commitments, blockade and threats are main obstacles to genuine negotiations."

Lebanon

- Negotiations between the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors to the United States will [begin](#) at 4:00pm ET on April 23, in Washington, D.C., according to a Lebanese embassy source. Reportedly, Lebanon will request Israel to extend the ceasefire by one month.
- Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam [told](#) *The Washington Post* in an April 23 interview that Lebanon's government will not be "intimidated" by Hezbollah.
 - » Salam said that his government has made "bold decisions" to disarm Hezbollah, stressing, "it's high time to recognize that a state cannot have two armies." He also stated, "disarmament is a process; it's not something that's going to happen overnight. But what's more important is that we have shown seriousness."
- Ahead of the second round of talks between Israeli and Lebanese representatives, France's foreign minister, Jean-Noël Barrot, [claimed](#) in an April 23 interview that "Without France's intervention, there would likely not be a ceasefire in Lebanon today, and likely no discussion between Israelis and Lebanese."

- » Additionally, while the United States and Israel have made it clear that the U.S.-Iran ceasefire is separate from the conflict in Lebanon, Barrot asserted that the agreement “covers Lebanon.”

3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

- In a classified briefing on April 21, a Pentagon official [told](#) the House Armed Services Committee that operations to clear mines from the Strait of Hormuz could take six months, according to *The Washington Post*. The White House disputed this reporting.
 - » The official also reportedly stated that the Iranian Navy could have placed at least 20 mines in and around the Strait of Hormuz.
- The Israeli Defense Ministry [announced](#) on April 23 that it has ordered \$200 million in aerial munitions from Israel’s Elbit Systems weapons manufacturer for “bolstering readiness for near-term combat scenarios and preparing for an intense security decade.”

Iran

- According to *Iran International*, citizens inside Iran [reported](#) multiple explosions on the morning of April 23 in west and east Tehran, including the Pardis region. While the origins of the explosions remain unknown, reports to *Iran International* claimed “the sounds resembled air defense systems being activated.”

Lebanon

- On April 23, Israeli military spokesman Col. Avichay Adraee [reiterated](#) that as Israeli operations continue in southern Lebanon, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) urges residents of southern Lebanon to stay away from the military’s forward defense line and that approaching the Litani River area, Wadi al-Salhani, and Saluki is prohibited due to safety concerns.
 - » Israel’s military is reportedly [planning](#) to demolish roughly 20 villages used by Hezbollah for military activity, with local residents prohibited from returning to those areas indefinitely.
- On April 22, the IDF [announced](#) that its soldiers operating in southern Lebanon captured a member of Hezbollah’s Radwan Force who was preparing to attack troops stationed in the area. After the fighter surrendered, troops transported him to Israel for interrogation.
- On April 22, Hezbollah [stated](#) that its fighters intercepted four Israeli surveillance drones operating over Mansouri in southern Lebanon.
- On April 22, the IDF [announced](#) that a Hezbollah operative operating at a rocket launching site in Sejoud in southern Lebanon was killed in an airstrike to “prevent a direct threat to the communities of northern Israel.”
- The IDF [announced](#) on April 22 that it is investigating Lebanese claims that two journalists working in southern Lebanon were injured in an Israeli strike in the at-Tiri area, with the pro-Hezbollah daily *Al-Akhbar* newspaper [confirming](#) on April 23 that its reporter, Amal Khalil, was killed in the strike.
 - » The IDF claimed that the attack started as a strike on a vehicle leaving a Hezbollah-controlled building. When the operatives fled the attack scene and found refuge in the building, the IDF struck that infrastructure, noting that “The terrorists crossed the forward defense line and approached the forces in a manner that posed an immediate threat.”

4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping and Blockade Status

- On April 23, President Trump [posted](#) on Truth Social, “I have ordered the United States Navy to shoot and kill any boat, small boats though they may be ... that is putting mines in the waters of the Strait of Hormuz. There is to be no hesitation.”

- » He added, “our mine ‘sweepers’ are clearing the Strait right now. I am hereby ordering that activity to continue, but at a tripled up level!”
- » In a separate post on April 23, President Trump [noted](#) that the United States has “total control over the Strait of Hormuz. No ship can enter or leave without the approval of the United States Navy. It is “Sealed up Tight,” until such time as Iran is able to make a DEAL!!!”
- Data from the analytics firm Kpler, reviewed by JINSA, indicated that two Iran-linked ships crossed the U.S. blockade line in the past 48 hours, one on April 22 and one on April 23.
 - » On April 23, the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier *Locarno*, which left the Iranian port city of Chabahar on April 19, crossed the blockade line heading south into the Arabian Sea. It recorded its destination as Santos, Brazil.
 - JINSA has [previously noted](#) that another Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier with the same declared Chabahar-Santos route crossed the blockade line on April 18.
 - » On April 22, the *Fahimi 25134*, a small Iranian-flagged cargo ship, departed Iran’s Chabahar port and passed the blockade line shortly thereafter. The ship’s destination is unknown, and it was last tracked off the coast of Pakistan.
- The U.S. military [announced](#) on April 23 that U.S. forces seized the Guyana-flagged oil tanker *Majestic X* in the Indian Ocean between Sri Lanka and Indonesia. According to the Pentagon, the ship was transporting Iranian oil.
 - » The Pentagon [stated](#) that the U.S. military “will continue global maritime enforcement to disrupt illicit networks and interdict vessels providing material support to Iran, wherever they operate.”
 - » The vessel—reportedly bound for Zhoushan, China—had previously been named *Phoenix* and was [sanctioned](#) by the United States in 2024 for smuggling Iranian crude oil in violation of U.S. sanctions.
- Iranian parliament deputy speaker Hamidreza Hajibabaei [said](#) on April 23 that Tehran has received its first revenue from tolls imposed on the Strait of Hormuz, with the funds deposited into the Central Bank account, according to Iran’s Tasnim news agency.
- CENTCOM [stated](#) on April 22 that 31 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.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

Maritime

- The two container ships [seized](#) by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on April 22 near the Strait of Hormuz—the Greek-owned, Liberian-flagged *Epaminodes* and the Emirati-owned, Panamanian-flagged MSC *Francesca*—were being taken toward the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas on April 23, according to sources cited by Reuters.
 - » A retired U.S. naval officer who [reviewed](#) videos of the ship seizures told CNN on April 22 that the operation “looks staged” and like a “publicity stunt.”

Lebanon

- On April 23, the IDF [intercepted](#) a suspected Hezbollah drone flying over southern Lebanon.
- On April 23, Hezbollah [fired](#) an anti-tank guided missile at Israeli troops stationed in southern Lebanon, with the IDF reporting the missile struck near the forces but caused no injuries.

- On April 22, Hezbollah [claimed](#) responsibility for launching a drone attack on an IDF Humvee and Israeli soldiers operating in Qantara in southern Lebanon.

Internal Repression

- On April 23, President Trump [wrote](#) on Truth Social that “Iran is having a very hard time figuring out who their leader is! They just don’t know!,” adding that “The infighting is between the “Hardliners,” who have been losing BADLY on the battlefield, and the “Moderates,” who are not very moderate at all (but gaining respect!), is CRAZY!”
- A report by *The New York Times* published on April 23 [shared](#) that, unlike the absolute authority wielded by former Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei relies heavily on a circle of senior commanders in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
 - » The report highlighted that Mojtaba Khamenei suffered from severe injuries during the war, including burns to his lips and face that impede his ability to speak. He has also undergone surgery on one of his hands and three surgeries on his leg, while awaiting being fit with a prosthetic.
 - » According to the report, citing knowledgeable Iranian officials, while Mojtaba Khamenei remains “gravely wounded, he is mentally sharp and engaged.”
- After President Trump [thanked](#) Iran for halting the execution of eight women protesters at his request on April 22, the Iranian judiciary’s Mizan Online dismissed his statement that he convinced Iran, noting that “Trump’s empty hand in the field has led him to fabricate achievements from false news.”
- On April 23, Iran [executed](#) a man convicted of links to the Iranian opposition group Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) and Israel’s intelligence service, according to Iran news outlet *Mizan*.
 - » Mizan identified the man as Soltanali Shirzadi Fakhr and stated he had been an MEK member for an extended period of time and was found guilty of collaborating with Israel.

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 400 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](#). [15 of these casualties](#) include Israeli soldiers who have been killed while fighting Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.
 - » A seven-year-old girl who was critically wounded during an Iranian ballistic missile attack on the southern Israeli town of Arad in March was finally [released](#) from the hospital on April 23.
- 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 119 people have been [killed](#), [including](#) 18 [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 2,475 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 7,658 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.): 13 people have been [killed](#), and at least 224 have been [injured](#).

7. Threats, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian Officials

- On April 23, Iran's head of judiciary Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje'i [commended](#) the country's "show of strength" in the Strait of Hormuz, noting that it is "a source of pride."
- On April 22, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [upheld](#) Iran's actions in the Strait of Hormuz, stating that they are aimed at "safeguard[ing] its security and national interests against threats and aggression."

8. International Response

- On April 23, German Chancellor Frederick Merz noted in a statement welcoming the cease-fire extension that, "Once an end to hostilities has been achieved, we stand ready—alongside our partners and in accordance with international law and national procedures—to contribute to the free navigation of the Strait of Hormuz."
- On April 23, the Alliance of Political Forces of Iranian Kurdistan [issued](#) a statement asking "nations, the United Nations, and international bodies to take a position against these attacks [on Kurdistan Region bases] by the Islamic Republic."

- The British and French defense ministers are [convening military strategists](#) from over 30 countries on April 22–23 as part of the U.K. and French-led multinational coalition for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.
 - » U.K. defense minister John Healy stated on April 22, “I am confident that, over the next two days, real progress can be made.”
 - » Italy [announced](#) on April 22 that it is prepared to send a naval “group consisting of two minesweepers, an escort vessel and a logistics vessel” to the Strait of Hormuz as part of the multinational coalition’s efforts.
- After a press briefing in Berlin on April 23, a demonstrator [threw](#) a red liquid on Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, son of former Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Pahlavi seemed to be unharmed by the incident.
- On April 23, Panama [condemned](#) Iranian forces for illegally seizing a Panamanian-flagged vessel owned by Italy’s MSC Francesca company on April 22, stating that the incident “represents a serious attack on maritime security and constitutes an unnecessary escalation.”
- On April 23, the United Nations (U.N.) Under Secretary General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, [noted](#) that the United Nations is considering options for a presence in Lebanon after the mandate of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) ends.
 - » He added that Lebanon is “very clear that they would want to keep a UN presence.”
- On April 23, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [shared](#) that Ukraine finalized deals with the U.A.E., Saudi Arabia, and Qatar to boost their drone interception capabilities. Ukraine will send these countries technology, assist with training, launch joint production lines, and help them create a streamlined military system.
- On April 22, International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol [warned](#) that the war in Iran and the Strait of Hormuz closure have prompted the world to face the “biggest energy security threat in history.”

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