



## Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 5/2/26 – 5/4/26 Update

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The United States, Israel, and Iran reached a two-week ceasefire agreement on April 7, which President Donald Trump extended indefinitely on April 21. JINSA continues to release regular updates about the conflict. The update below includes information since [JINSA's last update](#) as of May 4 at 11:30 am ET.

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

Days left in Israel-Lebanon ceasefire: **10**, following April 23 three-week extension

Iranian missiles and drones launched since ceasefire: **224** (7 on May 1–4)

Hezbollah attacks since ceasefire: **At least 64** (at least 15 on May 1–4)

Ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since ceasefire: **At least 315** (at least 41 on May 1–4)

- **Note:** Some of these ships are local fast boats, tugboats, or landing craft, rather than commercial vessels.

Total blockade-eligible ships rerouted by U.S. forces: **49** (at least 5 between May 1–4)

Total blockade-eligible ships that [evaded the blockade](#): **At least 20** (3 between May 1–4)

- **Note:** The blockade line that the Pentagon announced crosses where the Gulf of Oman opens into the Arabian Sea, beyond the Strait of Hormuz itself. Some of the ships that evaded the blockade are small vessels with limited utility to the Iranian regime.

### 1. Overview

- On May 4, Iran [launched](#) four cruise missiles at the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), with an Emirati statement claiming that air defenses intercepted three and one landed in the sea. Emirati officials indicated that a [fire](#) occurred at the Fujairah oil industry zone after the attack.
- The United States began “Project Freedom” on May 4, which U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) outlined as an effort “[to restore](#) freedom of navigation for commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.”
  - » Two senior American officials cited by *The Wall Street Journal* on May 3 [noted](#) that Project Freedom is a mechanism to coordinate maritime travel through the Strait of Hormuz and, at this time, it does not entail U.S. naval escort of ships in the Strait.
  - » President Donald Trump reportedly [rejected](#) a more aggressive plan to use military force to open the Strait that CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper had presented to him.

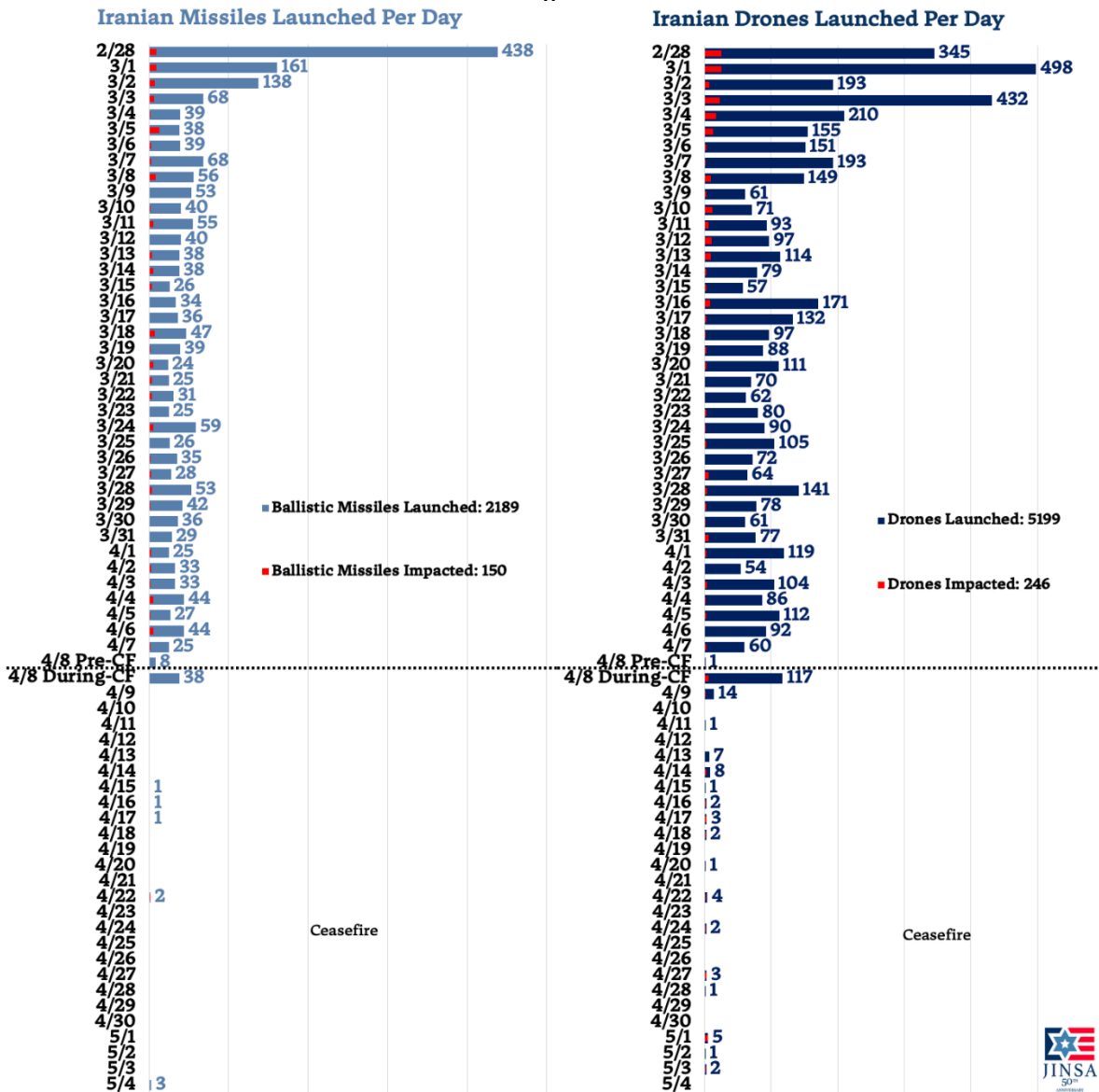
- On May 4, Iran [released](#) a new map of the area in the Strait of Hormuz that it claimed to control, which extended between Kuh-e Mobarak in Iran to south of Fujairah in the U.A.E. and from Iran's Qeshm Island to Umm Al Quwain in the U.A.E.



Source: [Iran International](#)

- CENTCOM [announced](#) on May 3 that U.S. forces have redirected a total of 49 ships since the blockade entered into force on April 13.
  - JINSA-reviewed data from the Kpler analytics firm found that at least three blockade-eligible ships appeared to cross the blockade since May 1, for a total of 20 such vessels. However, as JINSA observed in its recent report [Turning Tides](#), none have been energy tankers, and some are small cargo ships of little utility.
- On May 1, which marked the 60-day deadline to receive congressional support for conflict under the War Powers Act, President Trump [wrote](#) to House Speaker Mike Johnson and Senate Pro Tempore Senator Chuck Grassley that “the hostilities that began on February 28, 2026, have terminated.”
- On May 1, the State Department bypassed congressional review to [expedite approval](#) for the immediate sale of weapons valued at a total of over \$8.6 billion to Israel, Qatar, Kuwait, and the U.A.E.
  - The deals include Advanced Precision Kill Weapons System (APKWS) for [Israel](#), [Qatar](#), and the [U.A.E.](#), Patriot interceptors for [Qatar](#), and an Integrated Battle Command System for [Kuwait](#). It remains unclear when the transfers will occur.
- Washington told European allies, including the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia, to expect long delays in the delivery of weaponry due to the war depleting U.S. stockpiles, according to an [article](#) in *The Financial Times* on May 1.

- On April 30, Tehran [presented](#) a [14-point response](#) to a U.S. proposal to end the Iran war, which President Trump [stated](#) on May 3 was “not acceptable” and included “things I can’t agree to.”
- On May 3–4, launched its first attack against the U.A.E. in 25 days and its first projectile attack against shipping in roughly two weeks.
  - » On May 3, Iran [fired](#) two drones against an Emirati-owned crude oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, and on May 2, an Iranian drone had [targeted](#) Iraqi Kurdistan.
  - » Iran also [claimed](#) to launch at least two missiles that hit U.S. Navy vessels on May 4, but CENTCOM denied that any U.S. vessels were struck.



## 2. Diplomatic Engagement

### Iran

- According to Iranian state media on May 2, Tehran’s 14-point framework sent on April 30 that responded to a U.S. proposal to end the war [included](#) the following demands:

- » The settlement of all issues and the termination of the war within thirty days;
- » Commitments against renewed military action against Iran;
- » American forces no longer located on Iran's borders;
- » The cessation of the U.S. naval blockade;
- » The lifting of freezes on assets;
- » Reparations paid to Tehran;
- » The removal of sanctions;
- » The cessation of military operations in Lebanon;
- » A new governing framework for the Strait of Hormuz.
- President Trump [stated](#) on May 3, regarding Iran's 14-point proposal, "It's not acceptable to me. I've studied it, I've studied everything—it's not acceptable."
  - » Iranian state media [noted](#) on May 3 that Tehran was evaluating the U.S. response to its proposal.
    - A spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry noted, "At this stage, we do not have nuclear negotiations."
- On May 4, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei [claimed](#) that "at this stage, our priority is to end the war" and that the United States "must commit to a reasonable approach and abandon its excessive demands regarding Iran."
- A senior U.S. official [told](#) *Axios* on May 4 that, while diplomacy between the two sides remains active, both camps remain far apart.
  - » The source was quoted as saying: "It's either we're looking at the real contours of an achievable deal soon, or [President Trump] is going to bomb the hell out of them."
- President Trump [posted](#) to Truth Social on May 2 that his representatives are having "very positive discussions" with Iran that "could lead to something very positive for all."

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

- On May 2, the Pentagon [announced](#) that the United States military will be withdrawing 5,000 troops from its bases in Germany over the next six to 12 months following rising tensions between President Trump and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, particularly German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who claimed the Iranian government was embarrassing the United States during talks to end the war.
- On May 3, Israel's Defense Ministry [announced](#) that it secured the purchase of two additional F-35I and F-15IA fighter jet squadrons, adding a fourth and second squadron of the military aircraft to its arsenal, respectively.
  - » With the purchase, the Israeli military will eventually have a fleet of 100 F-35Is and 50 F-15IAs.
  - » That same day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [stated](#), "These aircraft reinforce Israel's overwhelming air superiority, a superiority that was proven in Operation Rising Lion and now in Operation Roaring Lion."
  - » He also noted that "Our pilots can reach anywhere in the skies of Iran, and they are prepared to do so—if required."

## Iran

- On May 3, President Trump [spoke](#) with reporters on the possibility of resuming military strikes on Iran, stating it could happen “If they misbehave, if they do something bad, but right now, we’ll see,” adding, “But it’s a possibility that could happen, certainly.”
- On May 1, President Trump [announced](#) that CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper briefed him on potential options for resuming military operations against the Iranian government.
  - » Vaguely describing to reporters what the United States could do next, he asked, “Do we want to go and just blast the hell out of them and finish them forever, or do we want to try and make a deal? Those are the options.”
  - » President Trump reportedly [rejected](#) one of Admiral Cooper’s more aggressive plans for opening the Strait of Hormuz that would include U.S. forces targeting Iranian fast boats and returning to war if Iran resumes attacks against Gulf nations.
- On May 1, a munition dropped during the recent conflict finally [exploded](#) while Iranian forces were sweeping for unexploded ordnance in Zanzan, killing 14 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members and wounding two others.

## Lebanon

- On May 4, Israeli troops [discovered](#) primed rocket launchers aimed at Israeli troops and territory, and captured a weapons cache containing rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, assault rifles, and other weapons while raiding a Hezbollah rocket-launching site in southern Lebanon.
- On May 3, Prime Minister Netanyahu [confirmed](#) that “A few weeks ago, I ordered the establishment of a special project to counter the drone threat,” endangering Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, adding that “It will take time—but we are on it.”
- On May 3, combat engineers within the Israeli military [demolished](#) an 80-meter-long Hezbollah-controlled tunnel in the eastern part of southern Lebanon.
- On May 2, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) [acknowledged](#) that its troops damaged a Catholic convent in the southern Lebanese village of Yaroun, stating, “After identifying religious indicators in the complex, the forces acted to prevent further damage.”
  - » Denying claims that its forces “destroyed” the religious building, Israel’s Foreign Ministry [wrote](#) on X, “Hezbollah has repeatedly used civilian homes and churches for its terror activities. In recent weeks, it also fired toward Israel from the vicinity of the monastery compound in Yaroun. IDF operations in the area targeted Hezbollah infrastructure while taking measures to ensure the monastery and other religious sites remained unharmed.”
- On May 2, the IDF revealed that its forces [bombed](#) over 120 Hezbollah sites, including the group’s command centers and weapon arsenals, as well as eliminated several Hezbollah operatives, in southern Lebanon over the weekend.
  - » On May 1, the IDF [destroyed](#) around 50 Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon, while also killing Hezbollah fighters.

## 4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping and Blockade Status

- On May 4, the U.S. military officially [launched](#) “Project Freedom,” to safely “guide” commercial ships that are stranded in the Strait of Hormuz across the tense waterway.
  - » President Trump [announced](#) Project Freedom on Truth Social on May 3, stating, “For the good of Iran, the Middle East, and the United States, we have told these Countries [states outside the region and not engaged in the war] that we will guide their Ships

safely out of these restricted Waterways, so that they can freely and ably get on with their business.”

- President Trump added that these ships “will not be returning until the area becomes safe for navigation, and everything else.”
- He reiterated that “The Ship movement is merely meant to free up people, companies, and Countries that have done absolutely nothing wrong — They are victims of circumstance.”
- He stated, “This is a Humanitarian gesture on behalf of the United States, Middle Eastern Countries but, in particular, the Country of Iran,” adding, “If, in any way, this Humanitarian process is interfered with, that interference will, unfortunately, have to be dealt with forcefully.”
- » CENTCOM Commander Adm Cooper [stated](#) on May 3, “Our support for this defensive mission is essential to regional security and the global economy as we also maintain the naval blockade.”
  - CENTCOM [noted](#) that military support would involve “guided-missile destroyers, over 100 land and sea-based aircraft, multi-domain unmanned platforms, and 15,000 service members.”
- » On May 4, the Joint Maritime Information Center, the U.S.-led task force, [announced](#) that the United States has established a new “enhanced security area” for ships to travel in the waterway.
  - Warning against traveling the usual transit paths in the waterway due to potential mines, the task force also called for ships in the Strait to coordinate with the Omani government as maritime traffic increases.
- » *Axios* [reported](#) on May 4, citing an American official, that American forces in the Middle East received authorization to target “immediate threats” to vessels traveling through the Strait of Hormuz, including the locations of Iran’s missiles and fast boats.
- » CENTCOM [indicated](#) that day that two U.S.-flagged merchant vessels had sailed through the Strait of Hormuz as part of Project Freedom.
- On May 3, several Iranian small craft [attacked](#) the *Minoan Falcon* bulk carrier in the Strait of Hormuz. No casualties were reported.
  - » Since the attack, commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has almost entirely stopped.
  - » In the over 25 hours since the attack, just seven commercial vessels have transited the Strait, JINSA’s review of Kpler shipping data found.
- On May 4, Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry [confirmed](#) that U.S. forces evacuated the 22 crew members from the Iranian-flagged *Touska* container vessel and released them to Pakistani custody as a “confidence-building measure,” after capturing the ship in April near Iran’s Chabahar port.
  - » Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry noted that the crew members will return to Iranian custody later that day and that authorities will transport the *Touska* to Pakistani waters for repairs before being returned to its owners.
- CENTCOM [announced](#) on May 3, that 49 vessels in total—an increase of five vessels from JINSA’s last update on May 1—had complied with U.S. orders to turn back toward Iranian ports since the blockade took effect.
  - » JINSA’s review of data from the Kpler analytics firm found that three blockade-eligible bulk carriers crossed the blockade line since JINSA’s last update on May 1. However,

one of the ships, the *SeaMelody*, traveling towards Bandar Imam Khomeini, Iran, is transmitting a message that it is carrying food.

- » The other two ships—the Marshall Islands-flagged *Star Laura* and the Liberian-flagged *Star Despoina*—traveled outbound from Iran with a stated destination of Brazil, and towards Iran from Pakistan, respectively.
  - The *Star Laura*, as JINSA recently [documented](#), is the fifth blockade-eligible ship that has crossed the blockade line with a recorded destination of Santos, Brazil, since the blockade entered effect.
- » JINSA has tracked 20 blockade-eligible vessels violating the blockade, none of which have been energy tankers, and several of which are very small cargo ships with no ability to transport energy or large weapons.
- » Moreover, as JINSA's *Turning Tides* report [underscored](#), “the naval blockade, other U.S. interdiction operations, and the broader U.S. economic warfare campaign ... have a preventative effect that is not reflected in any shipping data.”
- On May 3, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent [claimed](#) that “we are suffocating the regime, and they are not able to pay their soldiers. This is a real economic blockade, and it is in all parts of government — all hands on deck.”
- *Axios*, citing data from unnamed Pentagon officials, [reported](#) on May 1 that the U.S. naval blockade on Iranian ports has cost Iran \$4.8 billion in lost revenue from oil as approximately 31 tankers holding an estimated 53 million barrels of oil remain stuck in the Persian Gulf.
- On May 2, the Treasury Department [warned](#) that any shipping companies paying tolls to Iran to travel through the Strait of Hormuz may be subject to U.S. sanctions.
- Kuwait exported [zero barrels](#) of crude oil during April, marking the first month with no such exports since the Gulf War, according to Tanker Trackers.

## 5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

### *Maritime*

- On May 4, CENTCOM [denied](#) claims that the IRGC struck a U.S. warship with two missiles.
- On May 4, South Korea's HMM shipping company spokesperson [stated](#) that the engine room of one of its bulk carriers transiting the Strait of Hormuz caught fire, with the incident under investigation after authorities in Seoul announced they were reviewing intelligence that a South Korean-flagged vessel had been struck.
- On May 3, an [empty crude tanker](#) belonging to Emirati state-owned oil firm Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) [reported](#) being attacked by two drones, with at least one hitting the vessel.
- On May 3, multiple small watercraft [attacked](#) a bulk carrier, the Liberian-flagged *Minoan Falcon*, traveling northbound through the Strait of Hormuz, according to the U.K. Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency.

### *Lebanon*

- On May 4, two Israeli soldiers operating in southern Lebanon were moderately [injured](#) after exchanging fire with Hezbollah fighters.
- Between May 3–4, Hezbollah launched several drone attacks against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon and northern Israeli communities.
  - » The Israeli Air Force [intercepted](#) a drone launched from Lebanon before it crossed into Israeli territory, triggering sirens in Yiron.

- » At least two [interceptors were](#) fired at an apparent Hezbollah drone over southern Lebanon. The results of the interceptions are under review.
- » Hezbollah [fired](#) an anti-tank guided missile at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, causing no injuries.
- » Hezbollah [fired](#) an unspecified number of rockets at an IDF position in southern Lebanon. One rocket was intercepted while the others impacted in open areas with no reported casualties.
- » In a separate incident, Hezbollah [launched](#) an unspecified number of rockets and explosive-laden drones at IDF soldiers in southern Lebanon. The projectiles landed near the Israeli troops but did not result in any casualties.
- » Hezbollah [launched](#) an unspecified number of rockets at the northern Israeli border town of Avivim. At least one rocket was intercepted by the IDF, while the results of additional interceptor impacts were under review.
- On May 2, Hezbollah launched several projectiles at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon and northern Israeli communities.
  - » Hezbollah [fired](#) an unspecified number of rockets at IDF troops in southern Lebanon, without resulting in any casualties.
  - » Hezbollah [launched](#) at least four drones aimed at northern Israeli border communities, alerting sirens in the Galilee Panhandle and Golan Heights. The drones were all intercepted by the IDF before reaching Israeli territory.

#### *Iraq*

- On May 2, a drone was [intercepted](#) before reaching an unspecified target in Koya, Iraqi Kurdistan.

#### *U.A.E.*

- On May 4, Iran fired four cruise missiles at the U.A.E., with the Emirates intercepting three of the projectiles and the fourth falling into the sea, according to the U.A.E. Defense Ministry. However, a [fire](#) occurred at the Fujairah oil industry zone after the attack.
  - » The attack follows an [earlier situation](#) in which authorities gave citizens the all clear after sending out alerts about an attack on the country.

#### *Internal Dynamics and Repression*

- According to *Iran International*, the Iranian rial [fell](#) to its lowest-recorded value on unofficial markets on May 4, trading at 1.9 million rials per one U.S. dollar.
- On May 2, Iran [hanged](#) two individuals—Yaghoub Karimpour and Nasser Bakarzadeh—found guilty of passing intelligence to Israel, including information on the Natanz nuclear site.

## 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, [at least 47 people have been killed in Israel](#), while over 7,795 have been [injured](#). At least 17 of these [casualties](#) include Israeli soldiers who have been killed while fighting Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.
  - » Two soldiers were moderately [wounded](#) in southern Lebanon during a firefight with Hezbollah operatives on May 4.
- 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 20 [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 2,696 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 8,264 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](#).
  - » U.A.E.: 13 people have been [killed](#), and at least 224 have been [injured](#).

## 7. Threats and Condemnation from Iranian Officials

- On May 4, a statement from the joint command of the Iranian military [cautioned](#) the U.S. Navy against moving into the Strait of Hormuz, noting, “We have repeatedly said the security of the Strait of Hormuz is in our hands and that the safe passage of vessels needs to be coordinated with the armed forces.”

- On May 4, Ebrahim Azizi, a member of Iran’s parliament who is the head of its Committee for National Security and Foreign Policy, [posted](#) on X, “Any American interference in the new maritime regime of the Strait of Hormuz will be considered a violation of the ceasefire.”

## 8. International Response

- At a meeting of the European Political Community on May 4, French President Emmanuel Macron [stated](#), “What we want above all is a coordinated reopening by the United States and Iran—that is the only solution for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.”
  - » He added, “We are not going to take part in any military operation in a framework that to me seems unclear.”
- On May 4, after a ship affiliated with Emirati state-owned oil firm ADNOC was targeted while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, Emirati presidential adviser Anwar Gargash [posted](#) on X, “These attacks underscore that the Iranian threat to the security and stability of the region persists and cannot be ignored.”
  - » He also noted, “The UAE’s stance remains steadfast in rejecting aggression and upholding freedom of navigation in this vital international passage.”
- In a statement on May 3, seven OPEC+ members—Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman—[announced](#) that they would “implement a production adjustment of 188 thousand barrels per day from the additional voluntary adjustments announced in April 2023.”
  - » The statement did not mention the U.A.E.’s departure from OPEC and OPEC+ on May 1.
- In a May 3 phone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul [stressed](#) that Germany “supports a negotiated solution,” adding, “As a close US ally, we share the same goal: Iran must completely and verifiably renounce nuclear weapons and immediately release the Strait of Hormuz, as [U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio] also demands.”

## 9. JINSA Resources

- Yoni Tobin, [Turning Tides: U.S. Blockade Enforcement Exceeds Iranian Evasion](#), May 1, 2026
- Hussein Aboubakr Mansour, [The UAE’s OPEC Exit: Strategic Implications for the Gulf Order](#), April 29, 2026
- Ari Cicurel, [Iron Dome Deployment to U.A.E. Showed Abraham Accords Defense Potential](#), April 28, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [The Iranian People: America’s Most Powerful Weapon](#), April 26, 2026
- Hussein Mansour, [The Emirati Moment: The U.A.E.’s Strategic Cycle and the Iran War](#), April 24, 2026
- Blaise Misztal and Yoni Tobin, [Lebanon Ceasefire Cannot Become Iranian Leverage](#), April 17, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [In Defense of the War, And How to Finish It](#), April 17, 2026