



Iran War Update: 5/25/26 – 5/26/26

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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 26 at 11:00 am ET.

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

Days left in Israel-Lebanon ceasefire: **35**, following May 15 45-day extension

Iranian missiles and drones launched since ceasefire: **At least 314** (at least 4 on May 24–26)

Hezbollah attacks since ceasefire: **At least 151** (at least 14 on May 24–26)

Ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since ceasefire: **At least 385** (at least 12 between May 24–26)

- Note: Many of these ships are local fast boats, tugboats, or landing craft, not commercial vessels. Numerous ships in the area are also transmitting false locations.

Total blockade-eligible ships disabled or rerouted by U.S. forces: **At least 104** (0 between May 24–26)

Total blockade-eligible ships that [evaded the blockade](#): **At least 6** (0 between May 24–26)

- Note: JINSA is revising down its blockade evasion estimates after the U.S. military revealed over the weekend that it has permitted a total of 26 ships to pass the blockade for humanitarian reasons.
- 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 26, the United States resumed Project Freedom to help commercial shipping safely sail through the Strait of Hormuz, according to a [report](#) in *The Wall Street Journal*. U.S. Navy vessels guided a Greek tanker carrying two million barrels of crude oil.
 - » The Navy indicated that it plans to help roughly a dozen vessels travel through the Strait over the coming days.
- On May 26, Israeli media [reported](#) that Israeli forces had begun a ground operation in areas north of the Yellow Line in southern Lebanon. Israel had not previously conducted major ground operations north of the Yellow Line.

- » The expanded operation reportedly [aims](#) to drive Hezbollah militants farther north in Lebanon and decrease the threat of attacks by Hezbollah's explosive unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) currently facing northern Israel.
- Israel's Channel 12 [reported](#) on May 26 that Iran has restarted limited production of "critical" military capabilities, including missiles and missile launchers, drones, and new anti-aircraft systems, using components that remain intact and production lines that were not damaged or have been reconstituted.
 - » Israeli officials estimate that Iran will be able to reconstitute its offensive drones within a few months, adding that the rate of missile production could increase within roughly a year or less.
- On May 25, U.S. forces [conducted](#) what U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) called "defensive strikes" against two Iranian boats that were laying mines in the Strait of Hormuz and a surface-to-air missile site in Bandar Abbas that [targeted](#) U.S. aircraft.
- On May 25, President Donald Trump [stated](#) that under a potential deal, Iran's enriched uranium will either be "immediately" relinquished to the United States to be destroyed, or "preferably" destroyed in Iran or "at another acceptable location" under U.S. oversight.
- President Trump also [posted](#) on Truth Social on May 25 that "Negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are proceeding nicely," adding that "It will only be a Great Deal for all or, no Deal at all — Back to the Battlefield and shooting, but bigger and stronger than ever before."
 - » President Trump also wrote that he is "mandatorily requesting that all Countries" he spoke with on May 24 regarding the negotiations—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and Bahrain—"immediately sign the Abraham Accords." This "should start with the immediate signing by Saudi Arabia and Qatar," according to President Trump.
 - According to *Axios* reporting, during discussions on May 24, President Trump [told](#) leaders from these countries that he expects them to join the Abraham Accords following the conclusion of the Iran war—a demand that was met with surprise and silence.
 - » He noted that "it would be an Honor to have them [Iran] also be part of this unparalleled World Coalition."
- On the evening of May 25, Israeli forces [conducted](#) over 100 strikes against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon.
- On May 24, Israeli media reports [indicated](#) that Israel intends to retain operational control of Lebanese territory up to 10 kilometers north of the Lebanon-Israel border. This will include establishing an additional 20 permanent security outposts, in addition to the five outposts already in place.
- Internet access monitoring group NetBlocks [reported](#) on May 26 that after 88 days, internet connectivity was partially restored in Iran, ending modern history's longest nationwide internet blackout.

2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- On May 26, *The Jerusalem Post* [reported](#), without citing sources, that "in the ongoing U.S.-Iran ceasefire negotiations, Iran may consider transferring its 60 percent enriched uranium to China."
- President Trump [posted](#) on Truth Social on May 25 that, when speaking on May 24 to the leaders and senior officials of Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt,

Jordan, and Bahrain, he had stated that “after all the work done by the United States to try and pull this very complex puzzle together, it should be mandatory that all of these Countries, at a minimum, simultaneously, sign onto the Abraham Accords.”

- » He added that “It may be possible that one or two have a reason for not doing so, and that will be accepted, but most should be ready, willing, and able to make this Settlement with Iran a far more Historic Event than it would, otherwise, be.”
- » President Trump noted that “The Abraham Accords have proven to be, for the Countries involved ... a Financial, Economic, and Social BOOM, even during this time of Conflict and War, with the current Members never even suggesting leaving, or taking so much as even a pause.”
- » President Trump stated that the expansion of the Abraham Accords “should start with the immediate signing by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and everybody else should follow suit,” noting that “If they don’t, they should not be part of this Deal in that it shows bad intention.”
- » He noted that the leaders he spoke with “would be honored, as soon as our Document is signed, to have the Islamic Republic of Iran as part of the Abraham Accords.”
- According to reporting from *The Wall Street Journal* on May 25, disagreements over the Iranian nuclear program and sanctions relief have [hampered](#) progress in negotiations for an agreement.
 - » Mediators cited by *The Wall Street Journal* noted that Washington is looking for clear commitments up front on Iran’s nuclear program, and Tehran is seeking greater details on the lifting of sanctions and freezes on assets.
- Iranian lead negotiator and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi were in Doha, Qatar, on May 25 for [discussions](#) with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani regarding a possible agreement with the United States.
 - » The talks centered on Iran’s highly enriched uranium stockpile and the Strait of Hormuz.
 - » Iran’s Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati also joined the Iranian delegation in Qatar to talk about the possible release of frozen assets in a final deal.
- On May 25, *Israel Hayom* [reported](#) that Qatar has given Iran financial assistance for several weeks, according to two Gulf sources and a Western intelligence official. This is reportedly part of a broader Qatari effort to mediate between the United States and Iran by offering financial incentives to Iran.
 - » According to *Israel Hayom*, during the recent visit to Qatar by Araghchi and Hemmati, the two Iranian officials and Qatari officials spoke by phone with Trump administration special envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff.
 - » Furthermore, *Israel Hayom* reported that Qatar and Iran “are conducting secret negotiations on a broader arrangement that would include, among other things, Qatari assistance in developing the giant gas field shared by the two countries.”
- Pakistan’s lead negotiator Chief of Defense Forces Asim Munir and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif were in Beijing, China, on May 25 for [discussions](#) with Chinese leadership regarding an end to the Iran war.
- On May 25, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei [claimed](#) that “it is correct to say that we have reached a conclusion on a large portion of the issues under discussion ... but to say that this means the signing of an agreement is imminent—no one can make such a claim.”

- On May 24, Secretary of State Marco Rubio [claimed](#), “nuclear talks are highly technical matters. You can’t do a nuclear thing in 72 hours on the back of a napkin.”
 - » He added, “So right now, we have seven or eight countries in the region that are endorsing this approach, and we’re prepared to move forward on this approach.”

Lebanon

- Senior military officials from Lebanon and Israel are scheduled to meet at the Pentagon on May 29 to discuss next steps, and Israeli and Lebanese political officials are slated to meet in early June at an unspecified location, *The New York Times* [reported](#) on May 26.
- On May 24, Secretary of State Marco Rubio [criticized](#) Hezbollah’s “reckless call to overthrow Lebanon’s democratically elected government” and accused it of “actively trying to drag Lebanon back into chaos and destruction.”
 - » He [noted](#) that “if Hezbollah is going to launch missiles or launches missiles at them, Israel has every right to respond to that, or to prevent that from happening ... That’s always been understood. It’s being understood during the ceasefire.”

3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

- The United States plans to [support](#) a larger Israeli operation against Hezbollah amid a sharp increase in cross-border attacks, according to a senior U.S. official cited by *The Times of Israel* on May 25. That operation may have begun on May 26, as IDF troops are advancing and [conducting](#) raids north of the Yellow Line area in southern Lebanon, while also [launching](#) broad airstrikes across central Lebanon.
 - » The U.S. official stated that Hezbollah “broke the ceasefire on March 2,” and is attempting to derail Israel-Lebanon negotiations as a successful agreement would pose “an existential threat” to the group.
 - » Previously, *Walla News* [reported](#), citing an unnamed Israeli official, that on the evening of May 23, Israel’s political echelon gave the IDF “the ‘green light’ to intensify the responses against Hezbollah’s continued launches of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles in violation of the ceasefire agreement.” The official further stated that “there will be several ways to intensify the IDF’s response.”
- Amid a surge in Hezbollah drone attacks on IDF positions in southern Lebanon, the military began [deploying](#) specialized protective netting to units to defend against explosive drones, according to a May 26 article from Israel’s *Maariv* outlet.

Iran

- On May 25, the United States [struck](#) two Iranian boats that were attempting to lay mines in the Strait of Hormuz and a surface-to-air missile launch site in Bandar Abbas that [targeted](#) U.S. aircraft.
 - » The U.S. strikes on the missile site in Bandar Abbas reportedly [killed](#) four Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members.

Lebanon

- On the afternoon of May 26, the IDF [carried out](#) several airstrikes in southern Lebanon after urging residents of the city of Nabatieh to evacuate.
 - » The IDF also [issued](#) evacuation warnings for Mashghara and Sohmor in southern Lebanon, urging residents to head to the Beqaa Valley region before planned strikes.
- Overnight between May 25–26, the IDF [stated](#) that it conducted overnight strikes against more than 100 Hezbollah targets across the Beqaa Valley and southern Lebanon, targeting weapons depots, command centers, observation posts, and other infrastructure used to plan attacks against Israeli troops and civilians.

- On May 25, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [released](#) a video statement in which he claimed that “We are at war with Hezbollah. Just in recent weeks, our brave fighters have eliminated more than 600 terrorists.”
 - » However, he noted, “But we are not taking our foot off the gas. On the contrary, I have instructed them to press the pedal even harder.”
 - » Prime Minister Netanyahu also added, “We will strike them. Yes, they are attacking us with drones, cyber-enabled drones, and we have a special team working on this—and we will solve that too ... But what this requires from us now is to intensify the blows, increase the force. We will strike them decisively.”
- On May 25, the IDF [announced](#) that its troops dropped around 85 munitions targeting over 70 Hezbollah positions throughout Lebanon over the past day, including Hezbollah fighters traveling on motorcycles near Israeli troops and 10 weapons depots and command centers in the city of Tyre in southern Lebanon, as well as sites in the Beqaa Valley in eastern Lebanon.
- On May 24, Israel’s Channel 12 [reported](#) that Israel plans to remain in control of Lebanese territory up to 10 kilometers north of the Lebanon-Israel border, stretching over 600 square kilometers. As part of this buffer zone, Israel will reportedly be establishing an additional 20 permanent outposts, in addition to the five already in place.
- On the morning of May 24, the IDF [destroyed](#) a 100-meter-long Hezbollah tunnel in the area of Mount Dov in Lebanon.

4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping and Blockade Status

- On May 26, the United States [resumed](#) Project Freedom to help ships travel safely through the Strait of Hormuz, with the U.S. Navy helping a Greek-flagged tanker carrying two million barrels of crude oil cross the waterway.
- On May 25, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei [stated](#) that Tehran is collecting fees for navigational services and environmental protection measures tied to transit through the Strait of Hormuz, emphasizing that Iran is “not seeking to collect tolls.”

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

- On May 26, the IRGC [claimed](#) that it shot down an MQ-9 Reaper drone after it entered Iranian airspace and that its forces also fired at an RQ-4 intelligence drone and an F-35 fighter jet.
- According to a senior IDF official cited by Israel’s Channel 12, elements of Iran’s defense industry were [less damaged](#) than estimated or remain undamaged.
 - » Channel 12 also noted that the rate of reconstituting Iran’s missile and drone production systems has been faster than initial Israeli estimates.

Maritime

- On May 26, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) [reported](#) an incident 60 nautical miles east of Muscat, Oman, in which the master of a tanker reported an external explosion near the vessel’s port side aft close to the waterline. The crew and vessel are reported safe, though some bunker fuel was discharged into the sea.

Lebanon

- Since the Lebanon-Israel temporary ceasefire began on April 17, Hezbollah has [launched](#) over 1,000 drones and over 700 rockets targeting Israel, according to security officials who spoke with Israel’s *Walla News* on May 26. It is unclear whether or not these figures include attacks on Israeli troops inside Lebanon.

- On May 25, an unnamed senior Israeli official [conveyed](#) to Israel's Channel 12 that "At the moment, we are defenseless in the face of this deadly reality," referring to non-stop Hezbollah drone attacks targeting Israel's northern civilian communities.
 - » The unnamed official claimed that pressure from the United States to reach a deal with Iran has left Israel "without solutions on the diplomatic stage," to adequately address the Hezbollah threat in Lebanon with effective military action, and that "The truth is our hands are tied and that needs to change soon."
 - » Israel's *Maariv* outlet [reported](#) on May 25 that Hezbollah released videos that day showing footage from its drones as they flew above the Israeli towns of Shetula and Zerait. The video reportedly marked certain sites as targets for future strikes.
 - » The following day, *The Jerusalem Post* [reported](#) that Hezbollah has equipped its first-person view (FPV) drones with night-vision cameras to target Israeli soldiers at nighttime. Hezbollah may also be using this technology to stage drone attacks on Israel's northern towns.
- Between May 24–26, Hezbollah fired a series of drones and a rocket targeting Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, as well as civilian communities in northern Israel.
 - » On the evening of May 26, a suspected drone infiltration [triggered](#) sirens in the northern Israeli town of Malkia, with the IDF later declaring the incident's conclusion.
 - » No injuries were [reported](#) after Hezbollah launched several explosive drones on the afternoon of May 26, many of which were intercepted or impacted along the Israeli border with Lebanon.
 - » Earlier in the day on May 26, an explosive Hezbollah drone [detonated](#) inside a military zone in northern Israel, triggering infiltration sirens in the towns of Elkosh and Netua.
 - In a separate incident on the morning of May 26, another Hezbollah drone [detonated](#) inside an Israeli military zone without triggering infiltration sirens.
 - » Late in the evening on May 25, an explosive Hezbollah drone [crashed](#) on the Israeli border with Lebanon, triggering infiltration sirens in the towns of Shlomi and Rosh Hanikra.
 - » In the late afternoon of May 25, Hezbollah [launched](#) several explosive drones, with one striking the town of Shomera in northern Israel and others crashing in an Israeli military zone along the border with Lebanon.
 - Two other explosive drones [crashed](#) in Israeli territory along the Lebanese border, with the Israeli Air Force also intercepting a Hezbollah rocket in separate afternoon incidents.
 - » In the early afternoon of May 25, a Hezbollah drone [crashed](#) near Israeli soldiers deployed in southern Lebanon, without causing injuries, but prompting sirens in northern Israel.
 - » In the early afternoon of May 25, Hezbollah [fired](#) an explosive drone, striking a home in the northern Israeli town of Metula without causing injuries.
 - » Drone infiltration sirens [sounded](#) in the northern Israeli town of Arab al-Aramshe on May 25 due to a "suspicious aerial target," before the IDF lost contact with the projectile, suggesting the drone crashed or exited the military's area of surveillance without causing injuries.
 - Another suspected drone infiltration also [triggered](#) sirens in the northern towns of Shlomi and Rosh Hanikra.
 - » On May 24, an IDF soldier was [killed](#), and another was seriously wounded after an explosive Hezbollah drone impacted an armored personnel carrier near the southern Lebanese town of Debel.

- » On May 24, the IDF [fired](#) an interceptor missile at a “suspicious aerial target” that triggered sirens in Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel before losing contact with the projectile.

Iraq

- On May 25, an unspecified number of Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK) bases were [targeted](#) by at least four ballistic and drones, resulting in at least nine casualties.

Outside the Middle East

- Israeli cybersecurity researchers [attributed](#) a March cyberattack against the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to Iranian hackers, as reported by Reuters on May 26.
 - » The breach caused parts of the transit system to go offline and resulted in the theft of at least 700 gigabytes of emails, backups, and other files.

Internal Dynamics and Repression

- On May 25, Iran executed two individuals on charges tied to espionage and national security offenses.
 - » Iranian authorities [executed](#) Gholamrez Khani Shekarab on charges of espionage and intelligence cooperation with Israel, according to the Iranian judiciary’s Mizan Online outlet.
 - » Iran also [executed](#) Abbas Akbari Feyzabadi on charges of disrupting public order and collusion against national security during the January protests in Isfahan province.

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 Khorak, 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 53 people have been killed in Israel](#), while over 7,795 have been [injured](#). At least 23 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: 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 3,151 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 9,571 have been wounded—figures that do not distinguish between Hezbollah operatives and civilians.
- » Oman: At least [three people](#) have been killed, and at least 17 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 230 have been injured.

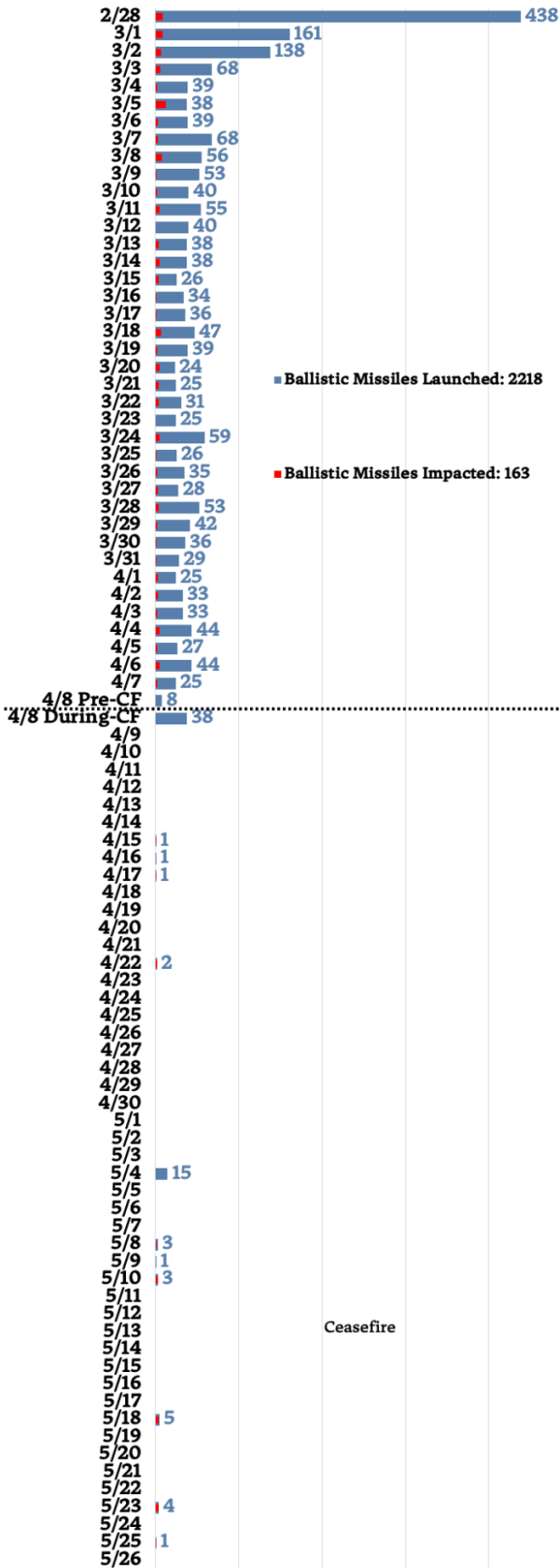
7. Threats and Condemnation from Iranian Officials

- On May 26, Iran’s foreign ministry [accused](#) the United States of committing a “gross violation of the ceasefire” with its May 25 strikes on Iran while warning that Tehran holds Washington responsible for the consequences of what it described as “aggressive and unjustified actions.”

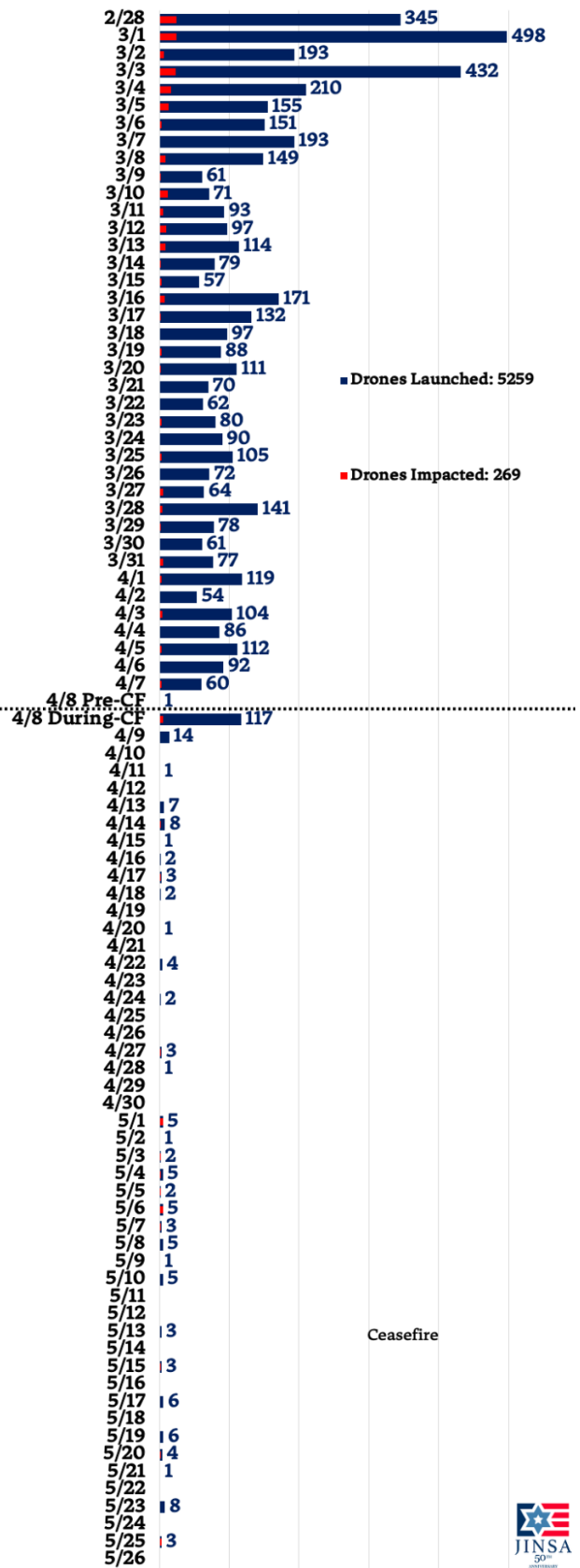
8. International Response

- On May 25, Pope Leo XIV [stated](#) that the “just war” theory, a doctrine the Catholic Church has used since the fifth century to argue that wars should be waged only to defend against aggression, “is now outdated.” The Trump administration has cited the doctrine to justify the war with Iran.
 - » Pope Leo added, “We cannot rule out the possibility that some leaders may consider armed conflict as an effective way of diverting attention from domestic problems and a cynical tool for managing difficulties.”

Iranian Missiles Launched Per Day



Iranian Drones Launched Per Day



9. JINSA Resources

- LTG Charles Hooper, USA (ret.) and Yoni Tobin, [Abraham's Fortress: Strengthening Middle East Defenses Against Iran](#), May 19, 2026
- Yoni Tobin, [Blockade Evasion Update – 5/19/26](#), May 19, 2026
- Rena Gabber and Jonah Brody, [Holding China Accountable for Iran](#), May 13, 2026
- Gen Charles Wald, USAF (ret.), VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.), VADM Robert Harward, USN (ret.), LTG Karen Gibson, USA (ret.), VADM John Miller, USN (ret.), VADM John Bird, USN (ret.), Blaise Misztal, Jonathan Ruhe, and Ari Cicurel, [Epic Fury II: Securing U.S. Objectives in Iran](#), May 8, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, "[The U.S. Blockade of Iran Is a Means, Not an End](#)," *The National Interest*, May 8, 2026
- Giran Ozcan, [Iranian Attacks on Iraqi Kurdistan Threaten a Vital U.S. Partnership](#), May 7, 2026
- 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