



Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 5/15/26 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 15 at 10:00 am ET.

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

Days left in Israel-Lebanon ceasefire: **0**, following April 23 three-week extension

Iranian missiles and drones launched since ceasefire: **At least 276** (at least 3 on May 15)

Hezbollah attacks since ceasefire: **At least 106** (at least 12 on May 14–15)

Ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since ceasefire: **At least 335** (at least 5 on May 14–15)

- 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 rerouted by U.S. forces: **At least 79** (2 on May 14–15)

Total blockade-eligible ships that [evaded the blockade](#): **At least 12** (0 between May 14–15)

- Note: JINSA is significantly revising down its estimates of total ships that evaded the blockade, based on the Pentagon's May 13 [statement](#) that it allowed 15 ships to cross the blockade line for humanitarian purposes.
- 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

- Following the summit in Beijing, President Donald Trump indicated on May 14 that Chinese President Xi Jinping had [pledged](#) that he is “not going to give military equipment” to Iran.
 - » However, it remained unclear from President Trump's statement whether Xi had promised not to give conventional weapons, like missiles, drones, and air defenses, or also to stop providing the dual-use chemicals that China had previously given to Iran to help it build ballistic missile fuel.
 - » When asked on the return flight whether Xi had committed to pressure Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, President Trump [stated](#), “I'm not asking for any favors because, when you ask for favors, you have to do favors in return.”

- Following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealing that he visited the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) during the war, *The Times of Israel* [reported](#) on May 15 that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir and other Israeli military officials also visited the country.
- With negotiations in Washington, D.C. between Israeli and Lebanese officials set to resume on May 15, Lebanese news outlet *Al-Akhbar*, a Hezbollah-affiliated outlet, [reported](#) that the United States is expected to announce an extension of the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon.
- On May 14, the House of Representatives narrowly [rejected](#) a Democratic-led War Powers resolution aimed at constraining the war against Iran due to a tie 212-212 vote.
 - » This marked the third attempt to pass a War Powers resolution in the House since the conflict began and the first since the war hit the 60-day deadline outlined in the War Powers Act.
- The U.A.E. attempted to convince Gulf nations to conduct coordinated strikes against Iran during the war, according to a *Bloomberg* [article](#) published on May 15, but the other regional nations chose not to join because they determined this was not their war.
 - » The report indicated that U.A.E. President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed spoke with several regional leaders, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and that Qatar considered joining a combined effort but, ultimately, decided against it.
 - » Bloomberg also reported that Emirati officials were upset that the U.A.E. was not included in the Pakistani-led mediation effort that Riyadh pushed.
- Saudi Arabia has discussed a [non-aggression pact](#) between Middle East nations, including Iran, in order to ease regional tensions, according to *The Financial Times*. The May 14 article indicates that Riyadh hopes to model the agreement on the 1970s Helsinki Process that decreased tensions in Europe amid the Cold War.

2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- On May 15, President Trump [explained](#) that he reviewed Iran's latest agreement offer but had rejected it because "if they have any nuclear of any form [in the proposed deal], I don't read the rest of it."
 - » He claimed that Iran suspending its nuclear enrichment for "20 years is enough but the level of guarantee from them is not enough ... In other words, it's got to be a real 20 years."

Lebanon

- The first day of talks between Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors to the United States [took place](#) yesterday, May 14. The State Department described the discussion as "productive." Talks will continue today, May 15.
 - » This is the third round of talks between the ambassadors.

3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

Iran

- In a [statement](#) following the summit in Beijing, President Trump claimed, "we've wiped out their [Iran's] armed forces, essentially. We may have to do a little cleanup work."
- In a Truth Social [post](#) on May 14 about Chinese President Xi Jinping and the summit in Beijing, President Trump noted the U.S. "military decimation of Iran (to be continued!)."

Lebanon

- On May 15, the IDF [conducted](#) airstrikes in the area of Tyre in southern Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah infrastructure.
- Overnight on May 15, Israeli forces [bombed](#) a rocket launcher in the Lebanese town of Zebdine that Hezbollah used to target Kiryat Shmona earlier, as well as several other Hezbollah-operated buildings in the area.
- On May 14, the IDF [carried out](#) several airstrikes targeting at least 65 Hezbollah facilities in southern Lebanon, including some of the group's command centers, weapon depots, and surveillance sites, and eliminated more than 20 Hezbollah fighters in the attacks.

4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping and Blockade Status

- On May 15, the U.A.E. [announced](#) plans to fast-track a new oil pipeline that would double its export capacity through Fujairah by 2027, bolstering its ability to route crude around the Strait of Hormuz.
 - » The U.A.E.'s existing Habshan-Fujairah pipeline currently handles up to 1.8 million barrels per day directly to the Gulf of Oman.
- On May 15, President Trump [indicated](#) that he spoke with President Xi about lifting sanctions on Chinese companies that purchase Iranian oil and that he is "going to make a decision over the next few days" about whether to lift them.
- U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [announced](#) on May 15 that 75 vessels in total—an increase of five vessels from JINSA's last update—have complied with U.S. orders to turn back toward Iranian ports since the U.S. naval blockade took effect, and that another four vessels have been disabled as part of CENTCOM blockade enforcement operations.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

Lebanon

- On May 15, Hezbollah launched a series of drone and rocket attacks targeting Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, as well as civilian communities in northern Israel.
 - » Late afternoon, Israeli defenses [intercepted](#) a Hezbollah rocket targeting Israeli troops operating in southern Lebanon.
 - » Mid-afternoon, Hezbollah [fired](#) a barrage of explosive drones that struck northern Israel and prompted sirens across the Western Galilee, but did not cause any injuries.
 - » In the morning, the Israeli military [shot down](#) a suspected Hezbollah drone operating near Israeli forces in southern Lebanon.
 - » Overnight, Israeli defenses [intercepted](#) another suspected Hezbollah drone flying near Israeli troops operating in southern Lebanon.
- Due to a May 14 Hezbollah attack on Rosh Hanikra in northern Israel that injured four civilians, Israel's Northern Command Chief Maj. Gen. Rafi Milo [signed](#) an order on May 15 declaring the coastline between Rosh Hanikra and the area of Achziv a zone closed for military activity.
- On the evening of May 14, Hezbollah [launched](#) numerous rockets at the northern Israeli community of Kiryat Shmona, with Israeli defenses intercepting some of the projectiles and the others crashing into open areas.
- In two separate instances on May 14, Hezbollah [fired](#) surface-to-air missiles at Israeli drones operating in southern Lebanon, but failed to shoot them down.

- Due to the severe threat posed by Hezbollah's first-person view drones, the Israeli military has [received](#) approximately 158,000 square meters of mesh netting and seeks to acquire an additional 188,000 square meters to place around IDF positions in Lebanon.

Iraq

- On May 15, multiple drones were [identified](#) in the skies above Erbil Governorate in Iraqi Kurdistan, with at least one drone reported to be intercepted.
 - » On May 15, a Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) civilian camp was [targeted](#) by at least three drones outside Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan without any reported casualties. It is unclear if these drones were part of the cluster of drones previously spotted in Erbil Governorate.

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 49 people have been killed in Israel](#), while over 7,795 have been [injured](#). At least 19 of these [casualties](#) include Israeli soldiers who have been killed while fighting Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.
 - » On the evening of May 14, 20-year-old Staff Sgt. Negev Dagan was [killed](#) after coming under Hezbollah fire 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, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and police forces.
 - » Azerbaijan: Four civilians have been [injured](#).
 - » Bahrain: Three people have [been killed](#), including a [Moroccan contractor](#), and at least 46 people [have been injured](#), including five [Emirati soldiers](#).
 - » Iraq: At least 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 2,896 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 8,824 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, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian Officials

- Speaking at a press conference in New Delhi on May 15, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [remarked](#) that Iran has “no trust” in the United States, noting that “contradictory messages” from Washington led Tehran to be skeptical about its true intentions.
 - » He added that the U.S.-Iran negotiations mediated by Pakistan were not dead but “in difficulty.” Araghchi stated that Tehran is aiming to maintain the ceasefire to allow for diplomacy, but it is also ready for a resumption of hostilities.
 - » When asked about a possible mediating role for China, Foreign Minister Araghchi noted, “We have very good relations with China. We are strategic partners, and we know that the Chinese have good intentions. So, anything they can do to help diplomacy would be welcomed.”
 - » He claimed that all ships can transit the Strait of Hormuz, except those “at war” with Iran, though they must coordinate movement with the Iranian Navy.
- On May 15, Araghchi [indicated](#) that “the final statement by the BRICS ministerial meeting was blocked—or some parts of that were blocked—by a member state that has its own special relations with Israel,” a reference to the U.A.E.
 - » Despite Iran hitting Emirati cities and energy infrastructure, Araghchi claimed, “we have no difficulty with that certain country. They have not been our target in the current war. We only hit American military bases and American military installations, which are unfortunately on their soil.”
- On May 14, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf [mocked](#) U.S. defense spending to fund the war in Iran, posting on X: “You know what’s crazier than \$39 trillion in debt? Paying a pre-GFC [global financial crisis] premium to fund a LARP [Live Action Role-Play] and all you’ll get is a brand new GFC.”
- On May 14, the Iranian parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee head, Ebrahim Azizi, [stated](#) that the parliament is reviewing a bill that would offer a reward to anyone who kills President Trump, CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper, or Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu.
 - » Speaking with Iran’s state TV, Azizi said, “We believe the vile president of the United States, the ominous and disgraceful Zionist prime minister, and the CENTCOM commander must be targeted and subjected to reciprocal action,” adding that “if any natural or legal person carries out this religious and ideological mission, the government is obliged to pay €50 million as a reward.”

8. International Response

- Following the summit in Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a [statement](#) noting that “This conflict, which should never have happened, has no reason to continue.”
- After a two-day meeting in New Delhi, the BRICS nations [failed](#) to issue a joint statement about the war in the Middle East due to “differing views among some members,” according to a statement from India. The statement indicated that “a member had reservations” about sections on Gaza, the Red Sea, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.
- During Indian President Narendra Modi’s visit to the U.A.E., the two countries [signed](#) agreements on strategic defense cooperation, petroleum reserves, and liquified petroleum gas, according to an Indian government release on May 15.
- On May 15, Honduras [designated](#) the IRGC and Hamas as terrorist organizations.

9. JINSA Resources

- 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
- Yoni Tobin, [Blockade Evasion Update - 5/8](#), 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
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [In Defense of the War, And How to Finish It](#), April 17, 2026