



Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 5/6/26 Update

Ari Cicurel

Associate Director of Foreign Policy

Yoni Tobin

Senior Policy Analyst

Jonah Brody

Policy Analyst

Sarah Havdala

Policy Analyst

Rena Gabber

Research Associate

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 6 at 10:00 am ET.

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

Days left in Israel-Lebanon ceasefire: **8**, following April 23 three-week extension

Iranian missiles and drones launched since ceasefire: **245** (at least 5 on May 5–6)

Hezbollah attacks since ceasefire: **At least 71** (at least 5 on May 5–6)

Ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since ceasefire: **At least 315** (at least 4 on May 5–6)

- 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 51** (None between May 5–6)

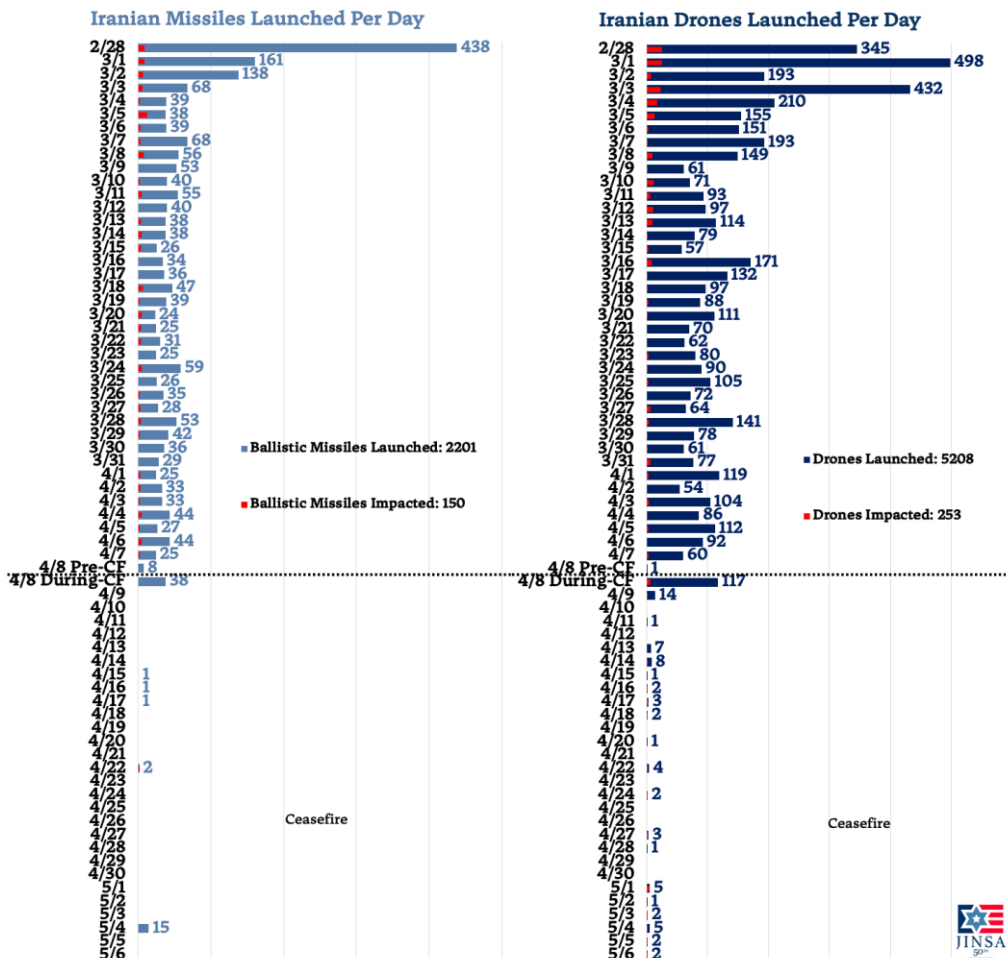
Total blockade-eligible ships that [evaded the blockade](#): **At least 20** (None between May 5–6)

- 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, and **no blockade-eligible oil or gas tankers** have breached the blockade so far.

1. Overview

- Reporting in *Axios* on May 6 indicated that the Trump administration believes that it has made [progress](#) on a one-page memorandum of understanding (MOU) to end the war, which would also set a framework for 30 days of more extensive nuclear negotiations.
 - » The White House expects a response from Iran in the next 48 hours, according to *Axios*.
- On May 6, President Donald Trump [posted](#) on Truth Social that “Assuming Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to, which is, perhaps, a big assumption, the already legendary Epic Fury will be at an end, and the highly effective Blockade will allow the Hormuz Strait to be OPEN TO ALL, including Iran. If they don’t agree, the bombing starts, and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before.”
- On May 6, President Trump [told](#) *The New York Post* that it is “too soon” for direct talks with Iranian officials, despite reports suggesting that the United States and Iran are nearing an agreement to end the war.

- On May 6, Lebanese television channel LBCI reported that the [third round](#) of negotiations between Israeli and Lebanese officials will take place over two days on either May 13–14 or 14–15.
- On May 5, Secretary of State Marco Rubio [stated](#) that “Operation Epic Fury has concluded” and that the United States “achieved the objectives of that operation.”
- On May 5 at 6:52 pm ET, President Trump [announced](#) on Truth Social “that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom (The Movement of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz) will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement [with Iran] can be finalized and signed.”
 - Earlier that day, Iran launched a cruise missile that [hit](#) a container ship in the Strait of Hormuz, injuring crew members.
 - Three commercial vessels with their Automatic Identification System (AIS) activated have transited the Strait of Hormuz so far on May 6.
 - However, pervasive electronic jamming and numerous ships in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf hiding or spoofing their location have introduced significant uncertainty regarding ships’ movements.
- According to an analysis of satellite imagery by *The Washington Post*, the Iranian military [struck](#) at least 228 U.S. military assets during the war. It damaged or destroyed 217 military structures and 11 pieces of equipment, including equipment for the Patriot missile defense system and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) radars, at 15 American military sites in the Middle East.
- Overnight on May 5–6, Iran [launched](#) four drones that hit targets in Iraqi Kurdistan.



2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- *Axios* [reported](#) on May 5 that the White House is negotiating a one-page MOU with 14 points to end the war, which includes both sides ending their blockades, an Iranian moratorium on nuclear enrichment, Washington's removal of sanctions on Iran, and the release of billions in frozen Iranian funds.
 - » The MOU would start a 30-day negotiation period that would include both sides gradually lifting their blockades, but if the talks end without a deal, the United States could resume the blockade or return to combat operations.
 - » The length of Iran's enrichment pause is still being negotiated, with U.S. officials pushing for 12 years and Iran offering five years. After this timeframe sunsets, Iran would be allowed to enrich uranium to 3.67 percent.
 - U.S. officials also reportedly want to add a clause where the timeframe for Iran's moratorium on enrichment would extend if it violates the agreement.
 - » U.S. officials also indicated that Iran would agree to enhanced nuclear inspections and the removal of its highly enriched uranium.
 - In response to the reported MOU, the Iranian Parliament's Foreign Policy and National Security Committee spokesperson Ebrahim Rezaei [wrote](#) on X on May 6 that "The *Axios* text is more of an American wish list than a reality; Americans will not gain anything in a war they are losing that they have not gained in face-to-face negotiations."
 - Iran's state-owned news agency also [accused](#) the *Axios* article of including "ambitious and unrealistic proposals."
- On May 5, Secretary Rubio [stated](#) in a press briefing that current negotiations with Iran are focused on "coming up with some level of understanding about the topics that they've [the Iranians] agreed to negotiate on."
 - » He noted, "We don't have to have the actual agreement written out in one day. ... We have to have a diplomatic solution that is very clear about the topics that they're [the Iranians] willing to negotiate on and the concessions they are willing to make at the front end in order to make those talks worthwhile."

Lebanon

- On May 5, Secretary Rubio [stated](#) he believes "a peace deal between Israel and Lebanon is imminently achievable," but that Hezbollah's presence remains a problem for both nations.
 - » He noted that the United States is "going to do everything we can to make sure that both sides continue to talk so the progress can be made on some sort of permanent ceasefire that isn't constantly spoiled by Hezbollah."
 - » He also claimed that the U.S. goal for a deal is to help the Lebanese government "begin to challenge Hezbollah in disarmament."

3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

Iran

- On May 5, Secretary Rubio [declared](#) that "Operation Epic Fury has concluded. We achieved the objectives of that operation."
 - » Regarding U.S. goals for the war in Iran and if the U.S. can actually claim victory if Iran still retains nuclear material and enrichment capabilities, Secretary Rubio noted that the

- U.S. military sought to destroy Iran's "conventional shield" of ballistic missiles that Iran uses to prevent external forces from interacting with its nuclear facilities.
- » On the topic of Project Freedom, Secretary Rubio insisted that "There has to be a pressure point on them that causes them to realize they cannot continue to close the straits or they'll face crushing economic consequences and global diplomatic isolation, which they have proven in the past to be susceptible to," adding, "They have a high pain threshold, but they don't have an unlimited pain threshold. Nobody does."
 - According to a May 5 report from Israel's Channel 12 news outlet, President Trump almost [chose](#) to resume strikes against Iran on May 1, but held off after Iran submitted its new ceasefire proposal.
 - » After rejecting Tehran's proposal, President Trump chose to launch Project Freedom while continuing diplomatic talks. However, he could still resume military operations to coerce Iran into serious negotiations, according to unnamed U.S. officials.
 - Regarding Israeli operations in Iran, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Lt Gen Eyal Zamir [claimed](#) on May 6 that the Israeli military has a "series of targets ready for attack. We are on high alert to return to an intense and broad campaign that will allow us to deepen our achievements and further weaken the Iranian regime."
 - » Lt Gen Zamir also assured that "Cooperation with the United States military and coordination continue at all times, and we are monitoring the situation."
 - In the early morning of May 6, Iranians [reported](#) hearing explosions in Bandar Abbas, Qeshm, and Sirik. According to *Iran International*, citing the Hormozgan province public relations office, "the sounds in Qeshm were the result of countermeasures against micro aerial vehicles and reconnaissance drones. It added that no impact, damage or explosion had occurred in Qeshm."

Lebanon

- On May 6, the IDF's Lt Gen Zamir [claimed](#) that the Israeli military has eliminated 2,000 Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon since fighting resumed in March 2026, noting, "We will seize every opportunity to deepen the blow to Hezbollah and its continued weakening."
- On May 6, the IDF [carried out](#) several airstrikes across southern Lebanon targeting Hezbollah sites after issuing evacuations for 12 villages.
- According to a May 6 report by Lebanese media, the IDF [bombed](#) the home of Ali Qassem, the mayor of Zellaya, in eastern Lebanon's Beqaa Valley.

4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping and Blockade Status

- Only three commercial vessels, all small cargo vessels, transited the Strait of Hormuz between May 5 and May 6 following the end of Project Freedom, JINSA-reviewed data from the Kpler analytics firm indicates.
 - » However, the analytics firm Windward Intelligence indicated on May 6 that thousands of vessels across the entire Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf are currently operating "dark," meaning without transmitting their accurate location.
- On May 5, Secretary Rubio [cited](#) the 23,000 civilians aboard ships that are stuck in the Persian Gulf because Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz as the reason for Project Freedom, noting that President Trump "directed the United States military to guide these stranded ships to safety, to provide a protective bubble under which they can operate."
 - » Secretary Rubio added that this operation is "the first step toward reopening the strait and bringing this regime's last-ditch act of economic arson to a close."
- On May 5, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Public Affairs Director Captain Tim Hawkins [spoke](#) of the two U.S. ships that transited the Strait of Hormuz on May 4, stating, "The U.S. forces provided a protective security bubble for the transiting commercial vessels that

included multiple defensive layers and coverage from warships, aircraft, and highly trained personnel,” on board while Iranian forces attempted to attack the vessels.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

- *The Washington Post* [reported](#) on May 6 that Iranian forces struck at least 228 American assets during the war, with over half of the damage occurring at the headquarters of the U.S. 5th fleet in Bahrain and three bases located in Kuwait.
 - » Damage or destruction to U.S. military targets also occurred at the Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan; two sites in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.); the al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar; Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia; and the Riffa and Isa air bases in Bahrain.

Maritime

- On May 5, a French-owned cargo ship, the *CGM San Antonio*, was [struck](#) by a possible land-attack cruise missile in the Gulf region during Project Freedom operations, injuring several crew members, according to U.S. officials cited by CBS News.
 - » The UK Maritime Trade Operations Centre separately [confirmed](#) receiving a report of a vessel struck by an unknown projectile within the Strait.
- According to Iranian state-run Press TV on May 5, Iran [introduced](#) a formal transit permit system for the Strait of Hormuz, requiring vessels to obtain authorization from the Persian Gulf Strait Authority and comply with its rules and regulations before crossing the waterway.

Lebanon

- On May 6, Hezbollah [launched](#) an explosive-laden drone toward northern Israel, which impacted inside Israeli territory. No casualties were reported following the impact.
- In two separate incidents on May 5, Hezbollah [fired](#) an unspecified number of rockets at IDF troops in southern Lebanon. The rockets impacted near the soldiers but did not result in any casualties.

Iraq

- On May 6, two drones [impacted](#) along the perimeter of a camp belonging to the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran outside Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan. No casualties were reported.
- On May 5, two drones [targeted](#) a Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan base in Surdash, Iraqi Kurdistan. No casualties were reported.

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. service-members 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.
- 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 2,702 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 8,311 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 227 have [been injured](#).

7. Threats, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian Officials

- On May 6, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [posted](#) on X a statement condemning the U.A.E. for its “collusion with hostile parties against the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the continued hosting of their military bases and equipment, and warns of the serious repercussions of this situation on peace and stability in the region.”
- According to Iran's statement on Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's meeting with his Chinese counterpart on May 6, Araghchi [remarked](#) that “Just as Iran appeared in the field of self-defense with strength and remains fully prepared to confront any kind of evil, it is also serious and constant in the field of diplomacy.”
- On May 5, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) [issued](#) a warning for all ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz to travel in the corridor announced by Tehran, stating that “Any diversion of ships to other routes is dangerous and will result in a firm response from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards navy.”

8. International Response

- On May 6, France's *Charles de Gaulle* aircraft carrier [sailed](#) through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea as part of French and British preparations for potential future operations to ensure freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [traveled](#) to Beijing on May 6 for a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.
 - » According to Beijing's readout of the meeting, Wang [stated](#) that "A resumption of hostilities is inadvisable, and persisting with negotiations is particularly important."
 - The Chinese Foreign Minister also noted that "China hopes that the parties concerned will respond to the strong appeal of the international community as soon as possible" to facilitate normal ship travel through the Strait of Hormuz.
 - » While still in Beijing, following his meeting with Wang, Araghchi called Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan.
 - According to Iran's Foreign Ministry, the Iranian and Saudi Foreign Ministers "emphasized the continuation of diplomacy and cooperation among regional countries to prevent the occurrence and escalation of tensions."
- On May 6, Saudi Aramco [reduced](#) the June price of Arab Light crude, its primary grade of crude for Asia, by \$4 per barrel, down to \$15.5 per barrel.
- On May 5, the United States and Gulf states [put forward](#) a United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution demanding Iran cease all attacks on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz; no longer charge tolls for ships passing through the strait; share the locations of all mines it deployed; and "immediately participate in and enable" a UN initiative to launch a humanitarian corridor in the strait.
 - » Should Iran fail to cooperate, the resolution threatened "effective measures that are commensurate with the gravity of the situation, including sanctions." The resolution, if passed, could be enforced with military means, as it was drafted under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter.
- In a rare move, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [called](#) U.A.E. President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on May 5 to condemn Iran's attack on the Emirates that harmed three civilians the day prior.

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
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [In Defense of the War, And How to Finish It](#), April 17, 2026