



Iran War Update: July 16, 2026

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President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 17, outlining terms to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz over a 60-day period of further negotiations. However, on July 8, President Trump [declared](#) the MOU to be “over,” and both sides have resumed exchanging fire. JINSA continues to re-release regular updates about the conflict. The update below includes information since [JINSA's last update](#) as of July 16 at 9:30 am ET.

Iranian missiles and drones launched since June 14 U.S.-Iran MOU announcement: **At least 218** (48 on July 15–16)

Ships that have seemingly breached the U.S. blockade: **0**

Ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since June 14 MOU announcement: **At least 645** (at least 13 between July 15–July 16)

Daily average of ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since June 14 MOU announcement: **19.5**

Daily average of ships transiting Strait of Hormuz prior to the Iran war: **138**

1. Overview

- Overnight on July 15, U.S. forces struck “Iranian command centers, air defense sites, missile and drone capabilities, and coastal surveillance facilities,” including multiple locations at Bandar Abbas, according to a [statement](#) from U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).
- On July 15–16, Iran continued to launch missile and drone attacks against Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, and Iraq.
- On the evening of July 15, President Trump [thanked](#) Iran for its “gesture of Goodwill” on Truth Social after the Iranian government released an American woman who was arbitrarily detained in December 2024.
- On July 15, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that President Trump is leaning toward expanding military operations against Iran, with options including increasing airstrikes, targeting the Pickaxe Mountain nuclear facility, and deploying ground troops to seize territory near the Strait of Hormuz.
- On July 15, CENTCOM [announced](#) that U.S. forces had redirected two vessels in the first twenty-four hours of the blockade and disabled the Curaçao-flagged tanker M/T *Belma* after it attempted to breach the renewed naval blockade while sailing toward Iran.
- On July 15, the House of Representatives [defeated](#) an amendment to end aid to Israel in a 313-104 vote. Nearly half of House Democrats voted in favor of the measure.

- In a July 15 interview with Joe Rogan, Vice President J.D. Vance [stated](#) that the United States is on the “right trajectory” with Iran, adding that “it’s just going to be really messy. There’s going to be a lot of starts and stops.”
 - » Vice President Vance remarked that “the military is one tool but diplomacy is another tool. I’m very frustrated by the Americans and frankly by people in other countries who [say] you cannot negotiate with the Iranians. Well then, what is your proposal to get people to stop shooting at ships in the Strait of Hormuz?”
 - » He also discussed a [Time](#) article alleging the existence of an Israeli influence campaign undermining efforts to end the war. He said, “there’s a literal foreign influence campaign being funded to tank the very deal I was pursuing ... my response to that is, well, go to hell.” He added that “there are some people within [the Israeli] system we know beyond a shadow of a doubt who are manipulating and trying to change American public opinion to keep the war going on indefinitely.”

2. Diplomatic Engagement

- On July 15, the United States announced planned military sales to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia worth over \$2.5 billion.
 - » Kuwait is slated to [receive](#) approximately \$484 million worth of equipment to enhance the readiness of its C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft.
 - » Saudi Arabia is set to receive around \$1.96 billion worth of guidance kits to turn unguided rockets into precision munitions.
 - According to the State Department, the U.S. [sale](#) will include “10,000 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System air-to-air guidance sections, and up to 10,000 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System air-to-ground guidance sections,” as well as related equipment.

Iran

- In an interview with Fox News on July 15, President Trump [shared](#), “We received a call just as I was coming here, and they [Iran] want to meet.”
 - » When President Trump was asked if he might eliminate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as he did ISIS, given that the former refuses to negotiate, Trump responded in the affirmative and noted that “We will see what’s happening.”
- In an interview with Joe Rogan on July 15, Vice President Vance [claimed](#) that Iran’s hardliners “freaked out” once the MOU was reached due to the amount of oil the United States was helping transit the Strait of Hormuz, and decided to target ships. He noted, “They’ve basically said, ‘We’re going to try to shut this thing down. We’re scared about losing our leverage.’ The pragmatists in their system are saying, ‘This was a mistake. Let’s keep on talking.’”
 - » He went on to state that he doesn’t know how diplomacy with Iran will end, noting that the United States is doing “a delicate diplomatic dance where we’re using economic leverage points, we’re using carrots and sticks, we’re trying to talk to the pragmatists, and then of course when they commit acts of violence, we’re responding to it.”
 - He added that “In the context of the broader negotiation... things are happening simultaneously to get us on a better trajectory.”
- Speaking at the Pennsylvania Defense and Innovation Summit on July 15, President Trump [claimed](#) that Tehran wants to “settle so badly.” He continued, “They don’t like what we’re doing, and they do want to settle. We’ll find out whether or not we settle with them, or we just finish it off.”

Lebanon

- On July 15, U.S.-brokered talks between Israel and Lebanon [concluded](#) in Rome, with a U.S. official stating that the parties agreed on the “structure and guidelines” for implementing the pilot zone process and would move into a technical phase in the coming days.
 - » Under the pilot zone framework, the Lebanese Armed Forces would deploy into designated areas after removing Hezbollah weapons and infrastructure, followed by phased Israeli military withdrawals if agreed benchmarks are met.

3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

Iran

- On the evening of July 15, CENTCOM [announced](#) on X that “U.S. forces struck Iranian command centers, air defense sites, missile and drone capabilities, and coastal surveillance facilities to further degrade Iran’s ability to threaten innocent mariners crewing commercial vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz,” adding that American troops also “used precision munitions to hit targets in multiple locations including Bandar Abbas.”
 - » Iranian state media [reported](#) that explosions occurred after numerous projectiles struck Semnan’s airport on the morning of July 16.
 - » An Iranian provincial official [claimed](#) that a location outside the city of Khondab was the target of two airstrikes, while another provincial official [announced](#) that various sites throughout the town of Kabudarahang came under fire on July 16.
- In the evening of July 15, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth [spoke](#) with Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz about U.S. military activity in Iran and Israel’s operations in Gaza, Syria, and Lebanon.
 - » According to Israel’s readout, Defense Minister Katz noted, “We have never asked the United States to act on our behalf along our borders. We are committed to defending the citizens of Israel against every threat, and that is what we intend to do.”
- On July 15, the Treasury Department [issued](#) sanctions on seven individuals and entities that are part of a global network helping the IRGC procure weapons.
- In a Fox News interview on July 15, President Trump was [asked](#) whether he believed regime change was possible in Iran when he called on the Iranian people to rise up against their government at the start of Operation Epic Fury. He responded in the affirmative, adding that “If they [the Iranian people] had guns, if they had weapons... I had no idea that they’d [the regime] be willing to kill 52,000 or even any people.”

Lebanon

- On the evening of July 15, the Israeli military [struck](#) a site in its southern Lebanese security zone near the town of Beit Yahoun, killing three armed Hezbollah fighters.

4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping

- Reuters, citing Kpler data, [reported](#) on July 16 that vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz fell after the United States reimposed its naval blockade, with nine ships transiting on July 15, down from 13 the previous day. Also, according to Reuters, no Very Large Crude Carriers or liquefied natural gas tankers transited the Strait.
- CENTCOM [announced](#) on July 15 that it has redirected two vessels and disabled one non-compliant vessel since the resumption of the U.S. naval blockade on July 14.
 - » U.S. forces disabled the Curaçao-flagged tanker M/T *Belma* after it ignored repeated warnings while sailing toward Iran’s Kharg Island. A U.S. aircraft fired Hellfire missiles into the vessel’s smokestack, preventing its continued voyage.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

- On July 15 and 16, Iranian forces carried out attacks on Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, and Kuwait.
 - » Bahrain
 - On the morning of July 16, Bahraini air defenses [intercepted](#) an unknown number of Iranian projectiles targeting the Gulf nation.
 - » Iraq
 - On July 15, International Coalition air defenses in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, [intercepted](#) and destroyed eight explosive-laden drones. No injuries or damage were reported.
 - The interceptions [occurred](#) near Erbil International Airport and the U.S. Consulate.
 - » Jordan
 - On the evening of July 15, the Jordanian military [announced](#) that its forces intercepted eight Iranian missiles.
 - » Kuwait
 - On the morning of July 16, Kuwaiti air defenses [intercepted](#) an unknown number of projectiles during an Iranian drone attack.
 - On the afternoon of July 15, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense [announced](#) that throughout the day, its forces intercepted 21 hostile drones and four cruise missiles.
 - According to the Defense Ministry's X account, Iran's attack resulted in damage to "several vital facilities" throughout Kuwait, but did not cause any casualties.
- On July 16, Damascus's state news agency [reported](#) that Syrian authorities discovered and thwarted a plot in which unnamed individuals attempted to transfer missiles and other weapons from Iraq to Lebanese Hezbollah through Syrian territory.
- On July 16, three sources [told](#) Reuters that Iranian authorities instructed the Houthi rebels in Yemen to be prepared to close the Bab el Mandeb Strait, a major shipping chokepoint by the Red Sea, if American forces strike Iran's power infrastructure.

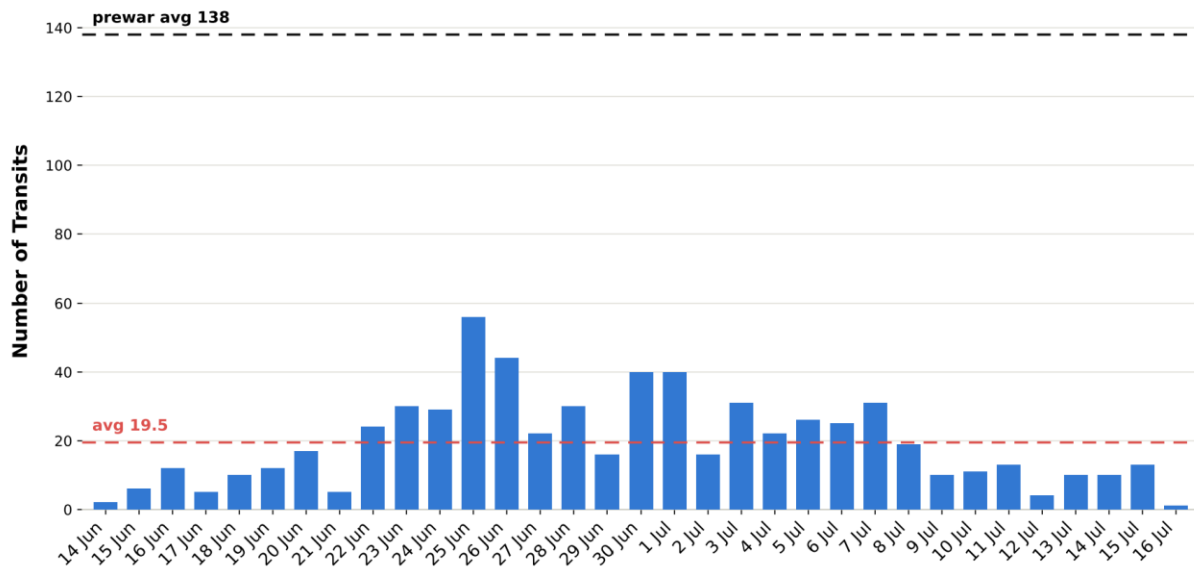
Estimated Casualties of Iranian Operations



Country	Killed	Injured	Notes
United States	13	400+	10 seriously wounded; 354+ returned to duty
Israel	65+	7,795+	Killed include 26 civilians and 39 killed fighting Hezbollah (38 soldiers, 1 contractor)
Iran	3,680+	26,500+	Includes 1,221+ military; Iran International reports 4,700+ security personnel killed
Azerbaijan	—	4	All civilians
Bahrain	3	46	Killed include a Moroccan contractor; injured include 5 Emirati soldiers
Iraq	119	Several	Includes 20 in Iraqi Kurdistan
Jordan	—	31+	
Kuwait	8	161+	Injured includes 90 soldiers
Lebanon	4,324	12,221	Figures do not distinguish Hezbollah operatives from civilians
Oman	3+	17+	
Qatar	7	20	Killed occurred in March 22 helicopter crash
Saudi Arabia	3	23	Killed include 1 Saudi national and 2 foreign nationals
Syria	4+	Several	
United Arab Emirates	12	230	
International Waters	10	Several	

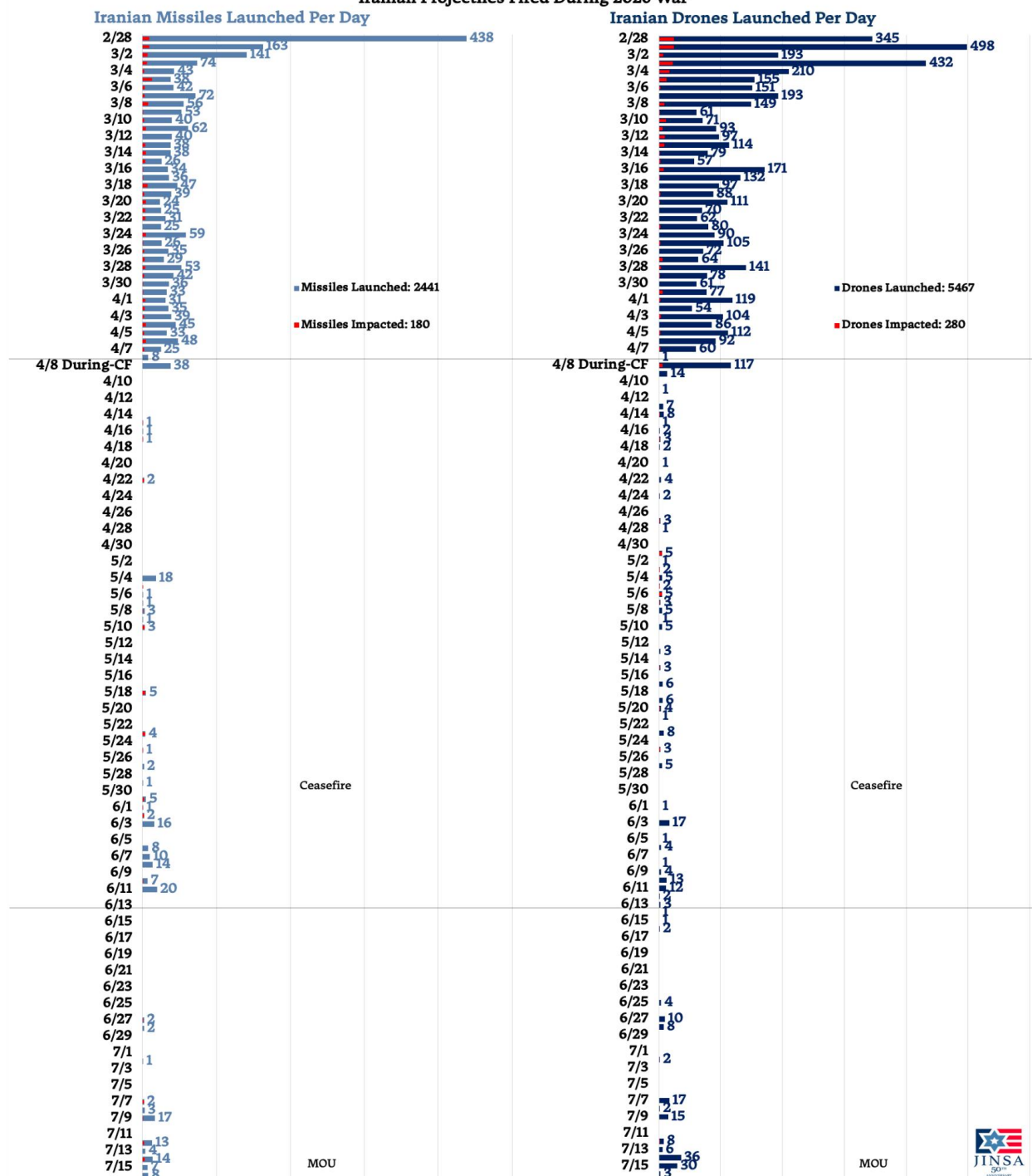
Data compiled by JINSA from various sources.

Commercial Ships Transiting Strait of Hormuz Since MOU



Figures derived from Kpler shipping data reviewed by JINSA.

Iranian Projectiles Fired During 2026 War



6. JINSA Resources

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- John Hannah, [How Trump Can Win Back Allies and Rejuvenate U.S. Diplomacy on Iran](#), *The Hill*, July 5, 2026

- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [Getting on Base: Israel is the Solution to Vulnerability of U.S. Bases in the Gulf](#), July 2, 2026
- Hussein Aboubakr Mansour, [The Unmaking of America's Persian Gulf Order](#), June 26, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, [How the MOU's "Nuclear Status Quo" Negates a Good Iran Deal](#), June 24, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, John Hannah, Blaise Misztal, and Jonathan Ruhe, [Reversal of Fortunes: The U.S.-Iran Memorandum of Understanding](#), June 23, 2026
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- [Infographic - The Iran MOU: Did the U.S. Understand the Assignment?](#), June 18, 2026
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- Blaise Misztal, [Uncertifiable and Illegal, but Probably Unstoppable: Congress Must Review the Iran MOU](#), June 17, 2026
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- Sarah Havdala, [While the War Raged On: Repression in Iran](#), June 16, 2026
- [Infographic: What's the Deal with the Deal?](#) June 12, 2026
- John Hannah, ["Trump Is Stuck and His Iran Leverage Is Spent,"](#) *The Washington Examiner*, June 12, 2026
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- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [Trump Is Lost on Iran](#), June 5, 2026