



Iran War Update: August 15–17, 2026

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President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed a now-expired 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 release regular updates about the conflict. The update below includes information since [JINSA's last update](#) as of August 17 at 11:30 am ET.

Iranian missiles and drones launched since July 7: **At least 424** (6 between August 12–14)
Brent Crude Oil Price: **[\\$89.20 a barrel](#)** as of **9:00 am ET** ([day range](#): \$88.01–89.68)

1. Overview

- The 60-day deadline established in the U.S.-Iran MOU for negotiations to reach a final deal expired on August 17. What comes next is unclear.
- In an interview with Fox News on August 17, President Donald Trump [declared](#) that Iran should “put up the white flag of surrender.” He added that he has “no time schedule” for the war with Iran, remarking, “I’m not in a hurry... the [U.S.] midterm [elections] have nothing to do with my thinking.”
 - » President Trump also [corroborated](#) earlier *Axios* [reporting](#) that indicated Washington formed a backchannel with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in recent months. The backchannel, *Axios* reported, dates back to May.
 - According to *Axios*, the President of Iraq’s Kurdistan Region Government (KRG), Nechirvan Barzani, facilitated a backchannel between Washington and IRGC leadership, which Barzani’s spokesman [confirmed](#). Barzani has “recently sent messages to the White House offering to help restart U.S.-Iran negotiations,” per *Axios*.
- A senior Iranian official [told](#) Reuters on August 17 that Tehran’s policy had changed from defensive to “fully offensive” as a result of the lack of diplomatic progress to reach a permanent end to the conflict with the United States.
 - » The official also noted that Iran is providing the United States with only a “few weeks” to implement the now-expired MOU for diplomatic engagement to continue.
- In a post on Truth Social on August 17, President Trump [stated](#), “The number one Goal is, and always will be, that Iran cannot have, in any way, shape, or form, a Nuclear Weapon.”
 - » The president’s statement contradicted Vice President J.D. Vance’s [remark](#) last week that the top U.S. priority in the Iran war is to reduce oil and gas prices for American consumers, and that preventing a nuclear Iran is a secondary priority.

- On August 17, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei [shared](#) with reporters that “an understanding has been reached [with Oman] regarding the map of the transit route” for ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, adding that details are being finalized.
- According to reporting from *The Wall Street Journal*, Iran had [used](#) the last two months to prepare for a widened conflict and increase the costs of the war, including through increasing missile and drone production and expanding the IRGC’s control over the Iranian army.
 - » The IRGC also coordinated with the Houthis in Yemen and Iran-aligned militias in Iraq to expand attacks.
- At a political rally on August 14, President Trump [remarked](#), “Pretty soon, I’ll be declaring the Hormuz Strait a territory of the United States.” That day, President Trump also [said](#) that the United States is planning to hit Iran’s economy hard without specifying further.

2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- In an interview with Fox News on August 17, on the subject of Iranian-Omani negotiations on managing the Strait of Hormuz, President Trump [threatened](#), “If Oman gets in the way, we’ll bomb the s— out of them.”
- On August 17, IRGC Spokesman Hossein Mohebi [denied](#) that backchannel talks took place with the United States, stating that “This lie by Trump is nothing more than fantasies brought on by the delusions and nightmares he is suffering from as a result of defeat and desperation in the war.”
- On August 15, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [told](#) the *Iranian Student News Agency* that Tehran has not yet decided to restart talks with Washington.

Lebanon

- On August 17, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun [welcomed](#) an initiative in the country’s parliament to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).
 - » In an official statement, he lauded UNIFIL’s role in improving stability in southern Lebanon, noting that “Our first option is to extend UNIFIL forces, and in the event of no extension for them, the second option is to adopt a formula that ensures the continuation of the presence of international forces in the south” that would work alongside the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).
- Following a Hezbollah drone attack on August 15 that prompted Israeli retaliatory strikes, Israeli Ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter [warned](#) on X, “If the Lebanese government uses this incident as a pretext to delay or discontinue peace talks, it would hand a tactical victory to the enemies of peace. Derailing the talks is precisely what Hezbollah is trying to achieve.”
 - » Spokesman for Israel’s Prime Minister Doron Spielman [stated](#) that Israel’s strikes against Hezbollah “should jumpstart the talks and make them [Lebanon] much more serious, not do the opposite,” adding that Israel continues to abide by the U.S.-Israel-Lebanon [Trilateral Framework](#) reached in June.
 - » Lebanese President Aoun [condemned](#) Israel’s strikes in southern Lebanon, stating that Israeli violations of the ceasefire agreement “constitute a clear message to the negotiation track.”

3. U.S., Israeli, and Arab Partner Operations

- On August 14, President Trump [urged](#) Americans to accept higher gasoline prices as a cost of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, saying paying “a tiny little bit more” for gasoline was worth it.
 - » Average U.S. gasoline prices had reached approximately \$4.08 per gallon, up 29 percent from a year earlier, while Brent crude was on track for a 6 percent weekly increase.

Lebanon

- On August 15, a Hezbollah explosive drone attack seriously [wounded](#) three Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers, prompting Israeli [strikes](#) in southern Lebanon that killed 11 people, according to Lebanese media.
 - » Seven people were [killed](#) in a strike on Ansar and four in a strike on Deir al-Zahrani.
 - » The IDF said the strikes killed two senior Hezbollah commanders: Ali Samir Al-Haj Hassan, a battalion commander in Hezbollah’s elite Radwan Force, and Ali Muhammad Fakhr al-Din (Abu Hassan Alaa), a senior commander in Hezbollah’s Badr regional division.

Yemen

- On August 16, *Al Arabiya* [reported](#) that over the past two days, Yemeni forces killed around 200 Houthi fighters in the country’s Taiz province, marking one of the largest losses for the group since fighting resumed in July.

4. Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea Shipping

- On August 17, Reuters [reported](#) that shipping through the Strait of Hormuz fell sharply following renewed Iranian attacks on commercial vessels, with reviewed Kpler data showing only five commodity vessels transited the Strait on August 15, and none were registered for August 16, compared with 31 the previous weekend.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

Iraq

- On August 17, two drones [launched](#) from Iranian territory struck the office of KRG Prime Minister Masrour Barzani in Iraq’s Kurdistan Region, according to the KRG’s security agency. No casualties were reported.

Lebanon

- In the early morning hours of August 15, Hezbollah [fired](#) an explosive drone at Israeli soldiers operating in the Ali Taher Ridge area of southern Lebanon, severely injuring three troops in the Yahalom combat engineering unit.

Maritime

- On August 17, the Houthis [claimed](#) to have fired a barrage of missiles at a Saudi military ship as well as four escort vessels in the Red Sea.
- On August 14, Iran [attacked](#) an Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) vessel transiting the Strait of Hormuz, marking the third attack on an ADNOC vessel in less than a week, according to the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). No injuries were reported.

Saudi Arabia

- On August 14, the Houthis [claimed](#) to have fired a drone at an Aramco facility in Najran in Saudi Arabia, but neither Saudi authorities nor Aramco officials have confirmed the attack.

Yemen

- On August 15, the director of Yemen's Mocha port [announced](#) that in recent days, the Houthis fired over 25 ballistic missiles at the port's facilities, resulting in the deaths of seven people and a loss of \$16 million. Due to the constant Houthi fire, the port is suspending maritime and commercial operations.
 - » The previous day, August 14, saw the Houthis [launch](#) six ballistic missiles at economic, maritime, and civilian sites on the Mocha port in Yemen along the Red Sea, killing four civilians, according to Reuters. According to a Yemeni military source, the attack also [killed](#) two security guards and set fire to two ships.

6. Internal Iranian Dynamics

- On August 16, the Iranian parliament [approved](#) a bill, which, if it becomes law, would ban Iranian citizens from communicating with foreign media outlets that the regime deems hostile to Iran.
 - » The bill particularly includes U.S. and Israeli media outlets, and notes that citizens must request permission from Iran's government before reaching out to foreign media, embassies, and organizations.

7. Threats, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian and Proxy Officials

- A senior Iranian official [told](#) Reuters on August 17 that Tehran's policy had changed from defensive to "fully offensive" as a result of the lack of diplomatic progress with the United States, threatening that "Iranian entities must be prepared to escalate tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and wider region, as Iran will be ready to make decisions and take action on difficult decisions."
 - » The official also warned that Iran would carry out a "timely and precise" operation on the U.S. naval blockade if the two countries failed to reach a diplomatic agreement.
- On August 17, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei [stated](#) that U.S. military presence in the Middle East has led to "environmental damage" for over five decades following an incident in which an Iranian attack on a tanker led to an oil spill in Omani waters.
- On August 16, Iranian Army Chief Amir Hatami [announced](#) that "Anyone who kills or captures and hands over an invading American military personnel will receive a reward equivalent to \$30,000 or 5 billion tomans from the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army," adding that a woman will receive double the compensation. August
- On August 16, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Baghaei [vowed](#) that two French diplomats who Iranian authorities had briefly detained in July would not be permitted to return to Tehran.
 - » During a press conference, Baghaei stated that "Insisting that these individuals were engaged in activities related to supporting civil society is itself an admission that the Vienna Convention was violated."
- On August 15, Hezbollah [warned](#) in a statement that Israel "must clearly understand that its attacks, violations and attempts to impose a fait accompli cannot continue, and will be met with an appropriate response."
 - » The statement also addressed Lebanese officials, saying that they "must not insist on continuing along the humiliating path of direct negotiations and providing the enemy with free concessions."
- On August 14, Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem directly [criticized](#) Lebanese officials negotiating with Israeli diplomats, asking, "How can you accept this ongoing humiliation

of the Lebanese army, exposing it to bombardment and Israeli pressures, instead of acting as its protectors?”

- » He also stated that “Israel is attempting to bind Lebanon to an inquiry committee that oversees the army’s deployment, operations, and internal details. Where is the patriotism? Where is the dignity of the army that ought to be preserved?”

8. International Response

- On August 17, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk [called](#) for an immediate de-escalation in Yemen amid rising civilian casualties, warning all parties to halt actions that risk returning the country to “full-scale conflict.”
- On August 15, Iran [claimed](#) that Qatar had captured three Iranian pilots after their Su-24 fighter jets crashed during a March 2 operation against Al Udeid Air Base and called for their release. Qatar “categorically” [denied](#) detaining the pilots.
 - » On August 17, Iran [said](#) it would continue to consider the three missing pilots prisoners in Qatar until their fate was clarified. Qatar said it had invited Iran to review details of its search-and-rescue operations in April but that Tehran had not responded.
- On August 15, Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the Emirati president, [said](#) the U.A.E. would “safeguard our rights to freedom of navigation” following repeated attacks on ADNOC vessels, while continuing to prioritize dialogue and diplomacy.
- On August 15, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [told](#) *Al Jazeera* that reopening the Strait of Hormuz was a priority, describing the waterway as “vital to international trade, particularly for oil and energy resources.”

9. JINSA Resources

- Gen Charles Wald, USAF (ret.), VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.), and VADM John W. Miller, USN (ret.), [“U.S. Must Reopen the Strait of Hormuz,”](#) *The Washington Times*, August 3, 2026
- Yoni Tobin, [Not Bottlenecks, But Strategic Opportunities: Making Room for More U.S. Refueling Tankers in Israel](#), August 3, 2026
- Giran Ozcan, [While Washington Pauses, Tehran Targets the Kurds](#), July 31, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, [“Taking Out Iran’s Pickaxe Nuclear Site is Key — Here’s How Trump Can Do It,”](#) *The New York Post*, Friday, July 24
- Giran Ozcan, [The Iran War Through the Kurdish Lens](#), July 24, 2026
- John Hannah, [“Trump’s Hands Are Tied in Hormuz. Here’s ‘Plan B,’”](#) *The Washington Examiner*, July 23, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel, [Arsenal of Procrastination: The United States Must Expand Munitions Production, Not Merely Replenish](#), July 21, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, [“The Long, Dark Shadow of the Iran Nuclear Deal,”](#) *The Dispatch*, July 17, 2026

Estimated Casualties of Iran War Operations



Country	Killed	Injured	Notes
United States	18	500+	1 missing; 10 seriously wounded; 100 wounded in July; 358+ returned to duty
Israel	67+	7,798+	Killed include 26 civilians and 41 troops killed fighting Hezbollah (40 soldiers, 1 contractor)
Iran	3,720+	26,580+	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	127	Several	Includes 28 in Iraqi Kurdistan
Jordan	—	31+	
Kuwait	8	161+	Injured includes 90 soldiers
Lebanon	4,346	12,301	Figures do not distinguish Hezbollah operatives from civilians
Oman	3+	17+	
Qatar	7	23	Killed occurred in March 22 helicopter crash
Saudi Arabia	3	34	Killed include 1 Saudi national and 2 foreign nationals
Syria	4+	Several	
United Arab Emirates	12	230	
International Waters	16	Several	

Data compiled by JINSA from various sources.

Commercial Ships Transiting Strait of Hormuz Since MOU

