



Iran War Update: August 18–19, 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 19 at 11:00 am ET.

Iranian missiles and drones launched since July 7: **At least 424** (6 between August 12–14)

Brent Crude Oil Price: [\\$91.19 a barrel](#) as of **9:00 am ET** ([day range](#): \$91.13–92.38)

1. Overview

- On August 18, President Trump [posted](#) on Truth Social that “There are no talks or conversations going on, or scheduled, with the Islamic Republic of Iran.”
 - He added, “The Naval Blockade remains in full force and effect. The Hormuz Strait is open and operating. All water mines have been removed or detonated.”
- In a Truth Social post earlier on August 18, President Trump [posted](#) a map marking the Strait of Hormuz, with the title “NEW U.S. Territory.”
- The Washington Post* [reported](#) on August 18 that the Pentagon is assessing whether to move U.S. troops out of the Persian Gulf as part of a re-evaluation of America’s regional military presence.
- CNN [reported](#) on August 18 that President Trump ordered administration officials not to pursue diplomatic talks with Iran for an indefinite period. President Trump is reportedly seeking an indication from Iranian leadership that they are willing to reach the deal he is looking for before resuming engagement.
- Israel’s Channel 12 [reported](#) on August 19, citing a senior Israeli security source, that the Iranian regime is rapidly rebuilding its missile production system and retains thousands of ballistic missiles.
 - Currently, Iran has more than 1,000 medium-range ballistic missiles that can reach Israel and over 1,000 short-range ballistic missiles left in its arsenal, according to the intelligence estimates cited by Channel 12.
- On August 18, Israel [struck](#) Syria’s Abu al-Duhur Military Airport, saying it acted to prevent a potential Turkish military deployment to the base.

- On August 18, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) [suspended](#) trade with Iran, following an Iranian missile attack targeting the country earlier in the day.
- On August 17, NBC News [reported](#) that Russia is sending Iran drone components, ammunition for small arms, and explosives for missiles and drones through the Caspian Sea to facilitate the reconstitution of Iranian stockpiles.

2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- According to regional officials cited by AP News on August 18, the White House has [told](#) Oman that it is opposed to elements of a to-be-announced Iranian-Omani agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, including joint management between Tehran and Muscat over the outbound route in the waterway.
- President Trump [told](#) reporters on August 17 that Tehran “wants to make a deal, but they’re not going to make the kind of deal that I feel is necessary.”
 - » He noted that Washington is not looking to extend the 60-day MOU with Iran that expired earlier this week.
- In an interview with Fox News on August 17, U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Jared Kushner [remarked](#) that discussions between the United States and Iran are “probably more robust” than ever.
 - » He stated that the Iranians are “engaging in a very strong way and that’s quite positive” and noted that “we are having very positive and active conversations”—contradicting President Trump’s Truth Social post one day later that there are no ongoing talks between the United States and Iran.
 - » However, Kushner also shared that the Iranians are currently “not showing any interest in doing something that makes sense for us.”
 - » Kushner highlighted that President Trump is focused on sustaining economic pressure on Tehran, including through the U.S. blockade.

Syria

- In an interview with Reuters on August 18, U.S. Special Envoy for Syria Tom Barrack [shared](#) that the United States is working to set up a deconfliction mechanism between Israel, Syria, and Turkey.

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

- Israel is [slated to receive](#) its second KC-46A “Gideon” aerial refueling tanker from the United States on August 20. According to Israeli outlet Channel 12, the refueling tanker is a “significant force multiplier for the [Israeli] Air Force ... and expands its range of action, freedom of action, and operational independence in long-range strikes, primarily against Iran.”

Iran

- CNN [reported](#) on August 18 that the White House’s approach towards Iran has shifted from “hammer Iran ASAP” to “strangle them” over time, quoting a source familiar with the matter.
- On August 18, the State Department [announced](#) that it is offering a reward up to \$10 million for information on five Iranian hackers linked to Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), stating that the individuals “have targeted numerous segments of U.S. critical infrastructure with malicious cyber activity.”
- On August 18, the Justice Department [announced](#) that 17 Iranian hackers belonging to the Iran-based Mabna Institute were charged for a campaign stealing academic data,

proprietary information, and intellectual property, with many of the attacks conducted on behalf of the IRGC.

Syria

- On August 18, unidentified aircraft—later confirmed to be Israeli fighter jets—[struck](#) the runway of Abu al-Duhur Military Airport in Syria's Idlib province. Initial reports from Al Jazeera [said](#) four to eight strikes hit the runway and suggested Israel was likely responsible.
 - » Shortly after the strike, Syria's Foreign Ministry [blamed](#) Israel and condemned the strike as an "unjustified act of aggression." Syria also called for international action over what it described as repeated Israeli violations of Syrian sovereignty.
 - » Later on August 18, Israel formally [confirmed](#) responsibility, with the Office of the Prime Minister posting on X that Syria was on the verge of violating a security "status quo" by "permitting Turkish troops to deploy" to the airbase, despite repeated Israeli warnings.
 - » On August 19, Syrian officials [confirmed](#) that a Turkish delegation had visited the military airport the day before the strike to inspect rehabilitation work at the base.

Yemen

- On August 17, Yemen's internationally recognized government [said](#) its forces carried out 133 military operations against the Iran-backed Houthis over the previous 24 hours, according to Al Hadath.

4. Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea Shipping

- On August 17, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [reported](#) that U.S. forces have redirected 64 commercial vessels attempting to bypass the Strait of Hormuz blockade, disabled three ships that failed to comply with orders, and boarded two others to enforce compliance.
- On August 17, six commodity vessels [transited](#) the Strait of Hormuz, up from three on August 15 and two on August 16 but below the 10-day average of 11 vessels, according to Reuters citing Kpler data.
 - » No very large crude carriers (VLCC) or liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers transited the Strait.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

- On August 19, the *Financial Times*, citing regime sources, [reported](#) that Iranian forces are weighing potential attacks on American military sites in European countries, such as Cyprus or Bulgaria, if the United States continues to strike Iran.
 - » One source reportedly [warned](#) that, "Should the U.S. go too far, Iran will defend itself at any price, go beyond the region and hit Europe too."
- Fouad Pashaei, the secretary-general of the Constitutionalist Party of Iran, an anti-regime monarchist political party in exile, was shot and [wounded](#) in Los Angeles on August 18. According to *Iran International*, the attack was an "assassination attempt."

Maritime

- On August 19, the IRGC-affiliated *Fars News* [reported](#) that Iranian forces seized an Emirati tanker in the northern corridor of the Strait of Hormuz and diverted it toward the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas.
 - » The Vessel had reportedly been bound for Jebel Ali in the U.A.E.
- On August 17, a cargo vessel was [struck](#) by multiple unidentified projectiles approximately 40 nautical miles southeast of Al Mukha, Yemen, resulting in the vessel's complete

constructive loss, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) center. The vessel was unmanned at the time of the attack.

Saudi Arabia

- On August 18, the Houthis [claimed](#) to have fired several drones at Saudi Arabia's Aramco refinery in the city of Jazan.

U.A.E.

- On August 18, Emirati officials [accused](#) Iran of firing two ballistic missiles at the U.A.E., with one projectile landing in the Gulf country's territorial waters and another falling outside Emirati territory.
 - » Later that day, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei [denied](#) the accusations.

Yemen

- On August 18, the Houthis reportedly [fired](#) two ballistic missiles and two drones at the city of Marib in central Yemen.

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

- On August 19, the Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Ali Abdollahi [threatened](#) Gulf countries hosting U.S. bases or storing American military assets, stating, "We wish to warn that any assistance or facilitation provided to the aggressor US military amounts to participation in the US military operation."
- On August 19, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali [described](#) last month's Ukrainian attack on an Iranian ship in the Caspian Sea as a "terrorist and criminal act," demanding that Ukraine pay for the damages it inflicted.
- On August 19, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei [condemned](#) a drone attack on the Iraqi Kurdistan prime minister's office overnight. Baghaei stated that the drone strike was a "highly suspicious development that requires vigilance and careful attention."
- On August 18, Iranian lead negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf [warned](#) that the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed until the United States satisfies the conditions outlined in the MOU, including lifting the blockade and ending military operations.
- On August 18, Secretary for Iran's Supreme National Security Council Mohsen Rezaei [re-sponded](#) to President Trump's post about the U.S. claiming the Strait of Hormuz, writing on X that "some dreams are too far from reality," and adding, "The gap between America's inability to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and its claim to own it is greater than the 7,000-mile distance between Washington and the Strait itself."

7. International Response

- On August 18, Qatari Foreign Ministry Spokesman Majed Al Ansari [informed](#) reporters that "We are also awaiting an agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and Iran regarding the Strait, which would enable us to return to the framework of negotiations," adding that "The agreement over the Strait of Hormuz would make it much easier for us to resume the talks between the United States and Iran."
- On August 18, Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Faleh al-Zaidi [condemned](#) drone attacks targeting the Kurdistan Regional Government's Prime Minister's Office in Erbil, announcing that Iraqi authorities will investigate the incidents.
- On August 18, a Turkish official [denied](#) that Ankara had a presence at the Syrian airbase near Idlib which Israeli forces struck overnight, saying, "There was no Turkish presence at

the airbase. Israel is inventing pretexts to bomb neighboring countries and destabilize the region.”

- On August 18, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot [announced](#) on X that Paris will soon expel two Iranian diplomats.
 - » The statement comes after the Iranian government claimed that two French diplomats would not be permitted back in Tehran after Iranian authorities detained and abused them last month.
- On August 17, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [spoke](#) with President Trump over the phone, urging him to pursue diplomacy with Iran and expressing his wishes for talks between the two countries to continue.
- On August 17, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) [condemned](#) the placement of Israeli flags along the coastal highway connecting Naqoura and Tyre in southern Lebanon, calling it a violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 that ended the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and requesting all sides in the conflict to refrain from taking “provocative actions.”

8. JINSA Resources

- Michael Makovsky, PhD, John Hannah, Blaise Misztal, and Jonathan Ruhe, [Shifting the Center of Gravity: Transforming the U.S.-Israel Security Partnership](#), August 18, 2026
- 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

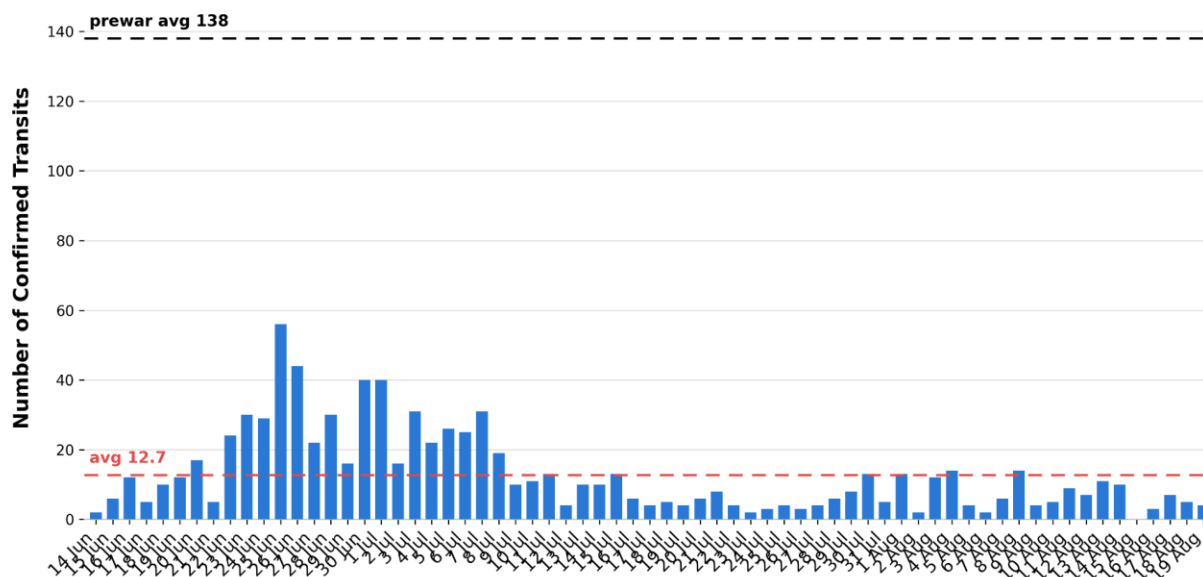
Estimated Casualties of Iran War Operations



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



Figures derived from Kpler shipping data reviewed by JINSA.