



Iran War Update: September 19–22, 2026

Ari Cicurel
Associate Director of Foreign Policy

Jonah Brody
Policy Analyst

Sarah Havdala
Policy Analyst

Rena Gabber
Research Associate

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 September 22 at 10:00 am ET.

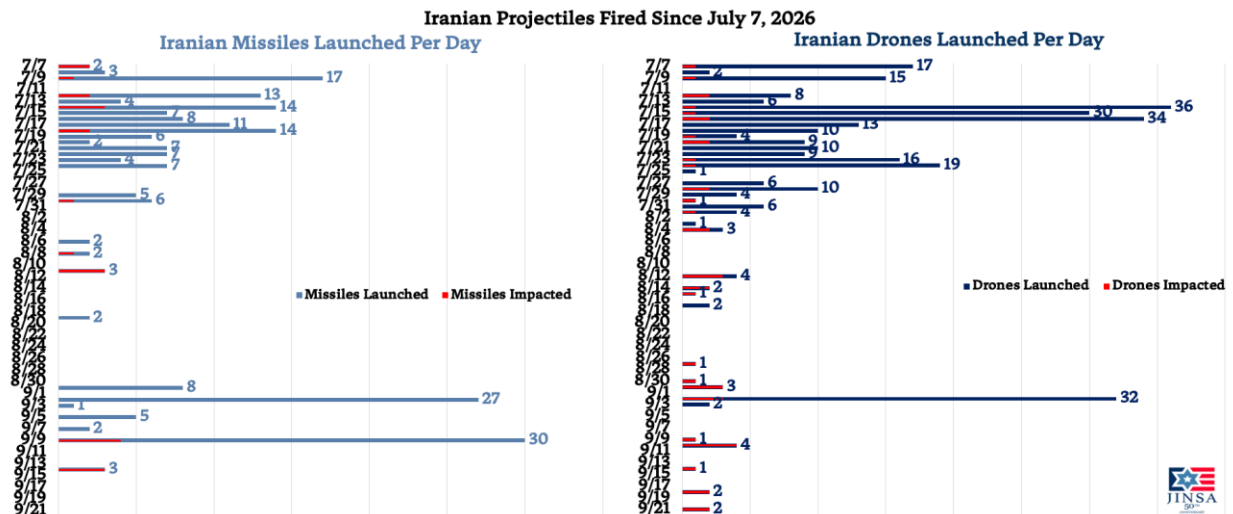
Iranian missiles and drones launched since July 7: **At least 554** (2 on September 19–22)

Brent Crude Oil Price: **[\\$98.57 a barrel](#)** as of **9:00 am ET** ([day range](#): \$97.43–102.30)

1. Overview

- On September 22, Saudi Arabia [restarted](#) its East-West Pipeline at a reduced rate, nine days after Iranian-backed drone attacks forced its closure and halted crude exports from the Red Sea port of Yanbu.
- The United Kingdom [announced](#) on September 21 that the Royal Air Force would provide defensive support to Saudi Arabia to assist it with countering Houthi attacks and promote regional stability.
- According to reporting from [The New York Times](#) and [NBC News](#), on September 20, President Donald Trump decided to halt planned U.S. strikes on the Houthis hours before they were set to begin.
 - » President Trump had ordered the Pentagon to prepare for strikes against the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen following a call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s on September 17—reversing earlier decisions to hold off on U.S. military intervention in the conflict.
 - » *NBC News* reported that some U.S. military officials raised concerns about opening a new front in the Iran war given diminishing levels of long-range and defensive weapons.
- On September 19, the Houthis announced that they had [launched](#) a missile and drone attack on Riyadh—their first attack on Saudi Arabia’s capital in months—with attacks targeting civilians and infrastructure also reported in several other Saudi cities, including Yanbu.
- On September 18, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth [disputed](#) *The Washington Post*’s reporting that more American troops had died in the Iran war than publicly disclosed, stating “This is DISGUSTING and FAKE. A complete LIE.”

- » Earlier that day, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that at least four additional U.S. service members had died during the war in Iran than publicly reported by the Pentagon, which would bring the total count of military fatalities to at least 22, citing six U.S. officials familiar with the matter.
- On September 18, CNN [reported](#) that U.S. forces were close to intercepting a Chinese vessel believed to be carrying components for a nuclear weapon, before realizing just before that an intelligence report produced with artificial intelligence had misidentified the ship's cargo.



2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- On September 22, a senior Iranian official told Reuters that Iran had [offered](#) to open the Strait of Hormuz if the United States ends its blockade and decreases its military pressure.
- On September 22, Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that the Trump administration was [open to meeting](#) with Iranian officials on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) but that no meeting was scheduled.
 - » President Trump [told](#) *Fox News* one day earlier that he would probably be willing to meet with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.
- According to reporting from *The Wall Street Journal* on September 21, the Trump administration has proposed [providing](#) a \$5 billion investment in a new fund called the Partnership for Allied Trust and Construction, or Pact, to assist Middle Eastern states with rebuilding energy infrastructure damaged by the war and reduce their dependence on the Strait of Hormuz.
 - » Washington would seek contributions from eight regional states to match its investment, to create a fund worth \$10 billion.
- On September 21, Iranian state media reported that the United States had [refused](#) to issue visas for several members of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's delegation to the UNGA.
- On September 19, Iran's Supreme National Security Secretary Mohsen Rezaei [said](#) Tehran had conveyed its conditions to mediators for resuming negotiations with the United States, which include an end to the war on all fronts, the unfreezing of Iranian funds, and an end to the U.S. naval blockade.

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

Iran

- On September 21, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent [announced](#) that foreign companies providing services to Iranian airlines would face U.S. secondary sanctions beginning September 23 as part of Operation Economic Outcast.
 - » “If they land, you cannot provide them with fuel. You cannot provide them with landing services, you cannot sell them tickets, or you will be knocked out of the dollar system,” Bessent told CNBC.
- On September 21, U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham [announced](#) that the United Kingdom would provide air-to-air refueling for Saudi aircraft conducting defensive operations to intercept Houthi attacks.

Lebanon

- On September 19, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) [carried out](#) strikes on Hezbollah infrastructure, including surveillance sites, in southern Lebanon in response to a Hezbollah bombing attack inside the Israeli buffer zone that left two soldiers injured.

Strait of Hormuz

- On September 21, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Adm. Brad Cooper [said](#) the U.S. naval blockade had turned back 110 Iran-linked merchant vessels attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz and described the blockade as “100 percent effective.”
 - » Cooper said U.S. forces had provided “coordinated protection” for more than 2,000 commercial vessel transits and the movement of one billion barrels of oil through the strait over the previous several months.
 - » Cooper also said the Strait’s primary transit routes had been cleared of mines and that CENTCOM was working with all six Gulf Cooperation Council countries, other U.S. government agencies, and shipping and insurance companies to facilitate commercial traffic.

Yemen

- On September 22, fighting between Iran-backed Houthis and Saudi-backed, internationally recognized government forces reportedly [killed](#) at least 154 people over two days.
 - » Houthi military sources said 118 people were killed by Saudi airstrikes, artillery fire, and clashes in Taiz, Al-Jawf, Marib, and Saada, while government sources reported 36 deaths among their forces.
- On September 18, the Houthis [announced](#) that Saudi forces carried out 26 strikes throughout Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen, bringing the total to more than 300 strikes over the past week.

4. Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea Shipping

- On September 22, Reuters [reported](#) that Saudi Arabia restarted operations on its East-West Pipeline at a reduced rate and could resume crude exports from the Red Sea port of Yanbu later that day.
 - » Drone attacks had forced Saudi Arabia to shut the pipeline on September 13, halting crude loadings at Yanbu.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

Lebanon

- On September 19, Hezbollah operatives [planted](#) a roadside bomb in the Israeli buffer zone in southern Lebanon, wounding two IDF soldiers operating an engineering vehicle.

Maritime

- The United Kingdom Trade Operations (UKMTO) [reported](#) on September 21 that a tanker transiting inbound through the Strait of Hormuz was struck by an unidentified projectile. Two crew members sustained minor injuries, but the vessel remained in operation and continued to its next power under its own power.
- In a separate incident on September 21, a liquefied petroleum gas tanker transiting out-bound through the Strait of Hormuz was [hit](#) by debris from unidentified projectiles, according to UKMTO. The crew was reported safe, and the tanker continued its voyage.

Saudi Arabia

- On September 19, the Houthis [claimed](#) they fired several ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as drones, at “sensitive sites” in Riyadh and Aramco facilities in the city of Yanbu.
 - » Earlier in the day, firefighters [responded](#) to a burning Aramco fuel tank near King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh.
- On September 19, Saudi-backed forces in Yemen [announced](#) that they intercepted a ballistic missile the Houthis had fired towards Riyadh, while Saudi air defenses also disrupted Houthi attempts to fire at civilian sites in the cities of Bisha, Taif, Farasan and Yanbu.

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

- On September 22, Iranian parliament speaker Mohammed Bagher Ghalibaf, who led previous negotiations with the United States, [insisted](#) that Iran would not surrender American forces and that “Trump must understand that he cannot impose his power on the Iranian people and its armed forces.”
- On September 22, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) spokesman Hossein Mohebbi [declared](#) that “the war is not over,” threatening, “We will certainly change the geography of the war.”
 - » He continued, warning that “We will certainly bring new weapons with new capabilities into the battle,” and “Our targets will no longer necessarily be the same as before.”
- On September 20, Iran’s Khatam al-Anbiya command [warned](#) that if the United States resumed its strikes on Iran, “Every US base and interest in the region, without restriction or consideration, will be targeted by sustained, effective and painful attacks.”
- On September 20, Houthi Supreme Political Council head Mahdi al-Mashat [declared](#) that the Houthis’ approach with Saudi Arabia now follows the pattern of “blockade for blockade, escalation for escalation,” and warned that “Our options will escalate, God willing, and take more painful forms, and we will not retreat from our rights even if we pay with our lives.”

7. International Response

- On September 22, the foreign ministers from G7 countries (United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan) [released](#) a statement condemning Houthi attacks targeting Saudi Arabia and urged Iran to suspend its support for the rebel group.
- On September 22, Russian President Vladimir Putin held a [phone call](#) with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, during which they discussed the need for safe passage

through the Straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb, according to a statement from the Kremlin.

8. JINSA Resources

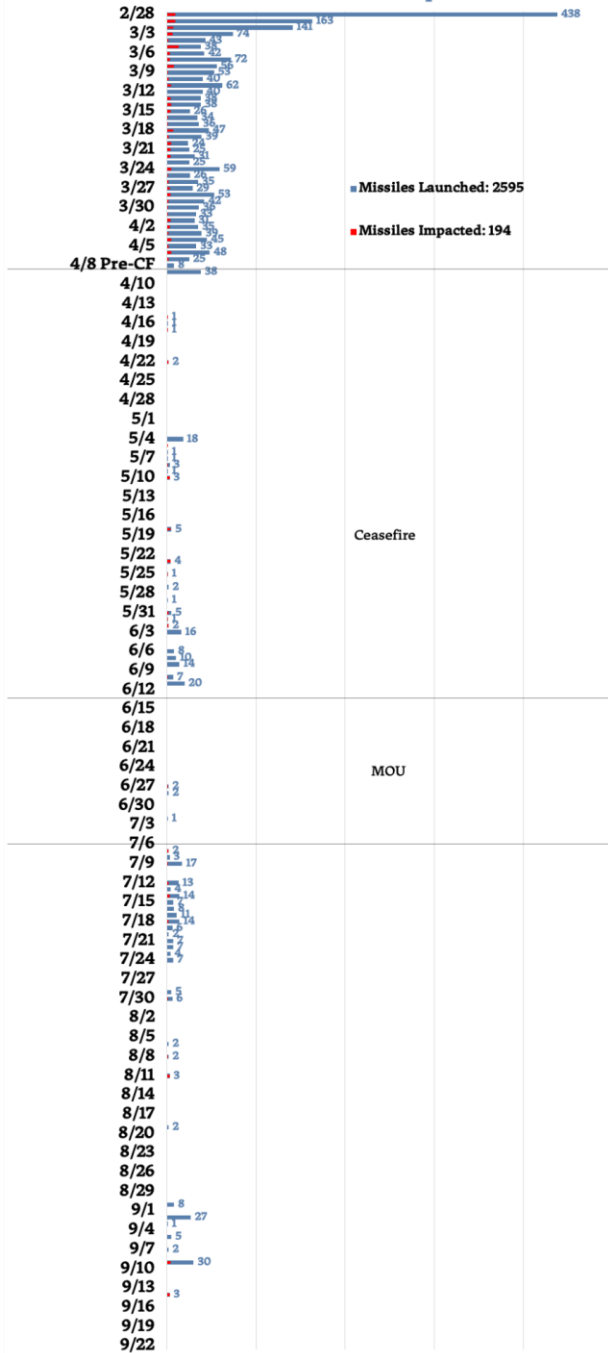
- Jonah Brody, [The Houthis Close in on the Gulf's Oil Export Lifeline](#), September 17, 2026
- Sarah Havdala, [Iran in the Wake of Women, Life, Freedom](#), September 16, 2026
- Giran Ozcan, [The United States Cannot Afford to Abandon the Kurdistan Region](#), September 14, 2026
- Ari Cicurel and Jonah Brody, [All Is Not Quiet on the Houthi Front](#), September 11, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, [Why Iran Fears Israel, But Not America](#), September 9, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [How to Win the Iran War](#), September 3, 2026
- 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

Estimated Casualties of Iran War Operations			JINSA
Country	Killed	Injured	Notes
United States	18	500+	10 seriously wounded; 100 wounded in July; 358+ returned to duty
Israel	67+	7,800+	Killed include 26 civilians and 41 troops killed fighting Hezbollah (40 soldiers, 1 contractor)
Iran	3,724+	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	9	161+	Injured includes 90 soldiers
Lebanon	4,386	12,407	Figures do not distinguish Hezbollah operatives from civilians
Oman	3+	17+	
Qatar	7	23	Killed occurred in March 22 helicopter crash
Saudi Arabia	3	47	Killed include 1 Saudi national and 2 foreign nationals
Syria	4+	Several	
United Arab Emirates	12	230	
International Waters	22	Several	

Data compiled by JINSA from various sources.

Iranian Projectiles Fired During 2026 War

Iranian Missiles Launched Per Day



Iranian Drones Launched Per Day

