# Iran War Update: November 17–18, 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 November 18 at 10:15 am ET.

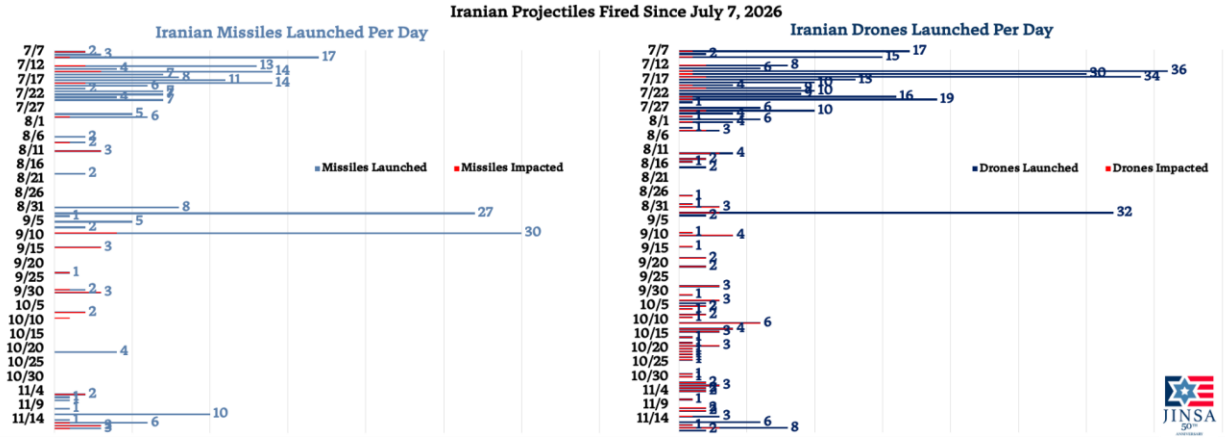
Iranian missiles and drones launched since July 7: **At least 668** (13 on November 17–18)

Brent Crude Oil Price: **$92.78 a barrel as of 9:00 am ET** (day range: $91.00–93.54)

## 1. Overview

- On November 18, Israeli media outlets reported that U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander ADM Brad Cooper is currently in Israel for a meeting with Israel Defense Force (IDF) Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir and additional senior Israeli military officials.
  - » The purpose of ADM Cooper's visit is to further cooperation and coordination between the U.S. and Israeli militaries and discuss future plans, in particular concerning the Iran conflict, according to sources familiar with the matter.
- On November 18, following reports that Iran developed plans to detonate a "dirty bomb" laced with chemical weapons, in Washington, D.C., Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters, "I don't think there is any imminent threat."
  - » On November 17, President Trump stated that, "If there is [such a threat], they [Iran] will pay a price the likes of which no other country has ever paid before."
    - – He added, "We take it [the threat of a dirty bomb] very seriously because they happen to be crazy."
  - » In a post on X on November 17, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei dismissed reporting that Iran has developed plans to detonate a dirty bomb in Washington as "baseless allegations."
  - » On November 16, CNN reported, citing U.S. intelligence, that Tehran has prepared plans to use a dirty bomb to target senior administration officials in Washington and could employ chemical weapons against U.S. troops in the Middle East.
- On November 17–18, Iran launched three attacks against Bahrain and one against Kuwait, claiming to target the Ali Al-Salem Air Base in Kuwait that is used by the U.S. military. The attack on November 18 marked the first time since early September that Iran targeted Kuwait or fired on more than one country on the same day.

- On November 17, an American military official shared that earlier that day, U.S. aircraft struck a missile launch site on Qeshm Island used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
  - » In a statement to reporters, the official stated that, "The strike was in response to IRGC aggression targeting U.S. personnel and assets."




## 2. Diplomatic Engagement

*Iran*

- *The New York Times* reported on November 17 that following the U.S. midterm elections, Iranian officials feel emboldened by significant Republican election losses that they view as criticism of President Trump's execution of the war in Iran, citing officials from the United States, Europe, and Iran.

*Lebanon*

- On November 17, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz called for changes to the United Nations' peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, declaring that its role "must change after 20 years" and reiterating Washington's support for a unified Lebanese military under the principle of "one state, one army."

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

- On November 18, Israel's *Walla News* reported, citing U.S. defense sources, that the American naval blockade of Iran's ports has cost the Iranian regime over $25 billion in lost oil export revenue.

*Iran*

- On November 17, the U.S. military carried out a strike on Iran's Qeshm Island, targeting a missile-launching site in the Strait of Hormuz after Iranian forces fired drones at an American radar system in Bahrain.

*Lebanon*

- On November 18, the IDF announced that it conducted an operation over the past day to dismantle a Hezbollah tunnel containing command quarters and living spaces in the Mount Dov area of southern Lebanon.

*Yemen*

- On November 18, Reuters reported, citing three sources familiar with Saudi planning, that Riyadh was preparing for its military campaign against the Houthis to continue well into 2027, seeking territorial gains by forces from the internationally recognized government before entering negotiations with the Houthis.

» Riyadh also believes U.S. offensive military support, which Washington has so far withheld, could accelerate those gains.

- On November 18, the Spokesperson for the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen Maj. Gen. Turki Al-Maliki shared that it had struck 60 Houthi military targets in Sanaa, Amran, Saada, and Hodeidah, including missile depots and drone production facilities.
- On November 18, Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council Chairman Rashad al-Alimi officially designated the Houthis and anyone working for them or supporting their cause as terrorists.

## 4. Iranian and Proxy Operations

*Bahrain*

- On November 18, missile alerts were triggered in Bahrain and air-defense batteries were activated to intercept inbound threats, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.
- On November 17, Bahrain intercepted an Iranian drone attack which the IRGC claimed targeted the American radar system at Sheikh Isa Air Base.
  - » That night, Bahrain's military announced that the country's air defenses shot down "a number of treacherous Iranian aerial attacks."
  - » The day prior, Secretary Rubio called Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani to condemn repeated Iranian attacks targeting Bahrain in recent days.

*Iraq*

- On November 17, Iranian forces fired a suicide drone at Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) positions in the city of Penjwen, near the Iranian border, though the group reported no casualties from the attack.
- On November 17, two explosive drones targeted Iranian Kurdish groups' bases in Sulaymaniyah.

*Kuwait*

- On November 17, Kuwaiti air defenses intercepted a drone attack targeting the Gulf nation.
  - » Later, the IRGC claimed that its forces fired at American missile and drone targets at Kuwait's Ali Al Salem base.

*Maritime*

- On November 18, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), the United Arab Emirates' state oil company, reported that one crew member was missing and 11 others injured after one of its vessels was struck overnight in the Strait of Hormuz.
  - » ADNOC said all other crew members had been safely evacuated and search-and-rescue operations were ongoing.
- On November 17, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Center reported that a tanker was struck by an unidentified projectile approximately 13 nautical miles north of Khasab, Oman, in the Strait of Hormuz, causing an onboard fire that was subsequently extinguished.
- On November 17, UKMTO reported of a November 16 incident in which a tanker seven nautical miles north of Khasab, Oman, sustained two strikes while transiting the Strait of Hormuz. The strikes caused a fire in the ship's engine room and another fire onboard.
- On November 17, UKMTO received word of a November 13 incident in which an unknown projectile struck a tanker in the Arabian Gulf.

*Outside the Middle East*

- On November 17, Pakistani national Asif Merchant was sentenced to 27 years in prison by a federal U.S. judge for attempting to assassinate President Trump on behalf of Iran.
  - » Merchant admitted to working for the IRGC, and directing plots to kill not only President Trump but also former President Joseph Biden and former senior U.S. official Nikki Haley.
  - » BBC News reported that Merchant travelled to Iran at least 15 times to receive training from Iranian intelligence operatives regarding the plot to assassinate President Trump, which was foiled by the FBI in late 2024.
- On November 17, Skopje's security agency announced that it arrested five North Macedonian nationals on suspicion of planning to assassinate an individual in Greece on behalf of Iran. One other suspect is still at large, according to a North Macedonian official.
  - » The Iranian man who allegedly maintained contact with the suspects is wanted by the FBI for reportedly targeting Iranian dissidents in the diaspora.

*Saudi Arabia*

- On November 18, the Saudi-led coalition claimed to shoot down a Houthi cruise missile targeting Riyadh.
  - » That same day, Saudi officials announced that a threat to the kingdom had passed after the country issued warnings to residents of Jazan, Najran and Khamis Mushait of an attack.
- On November 17, the Houthis claimed to have launched five drones targeting two pumping stations along Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline in the Riyadh area.
  - » Saudi authorities did not immediately confirm the attack or report any damage.
- On November 17, the Saudi-led coalition stated that its forces shot down a Houthi drone targeting Riyadh.

## 5. Internal Iranian Dynamics

- On November 18, Iranian demonstrators gathered in Abdanan to protest the deaths of 13 oil and gas workers who died in a bus crash.
  - » Protesters chanted "death to the dictator," "death to the incompetent official," "poverty, corruption, rising prices, we will fight until overthrow," and "long live the Shah."
  - » Iranian security forces fired shots and tear gas and arrested protesters.

## 6. International Response

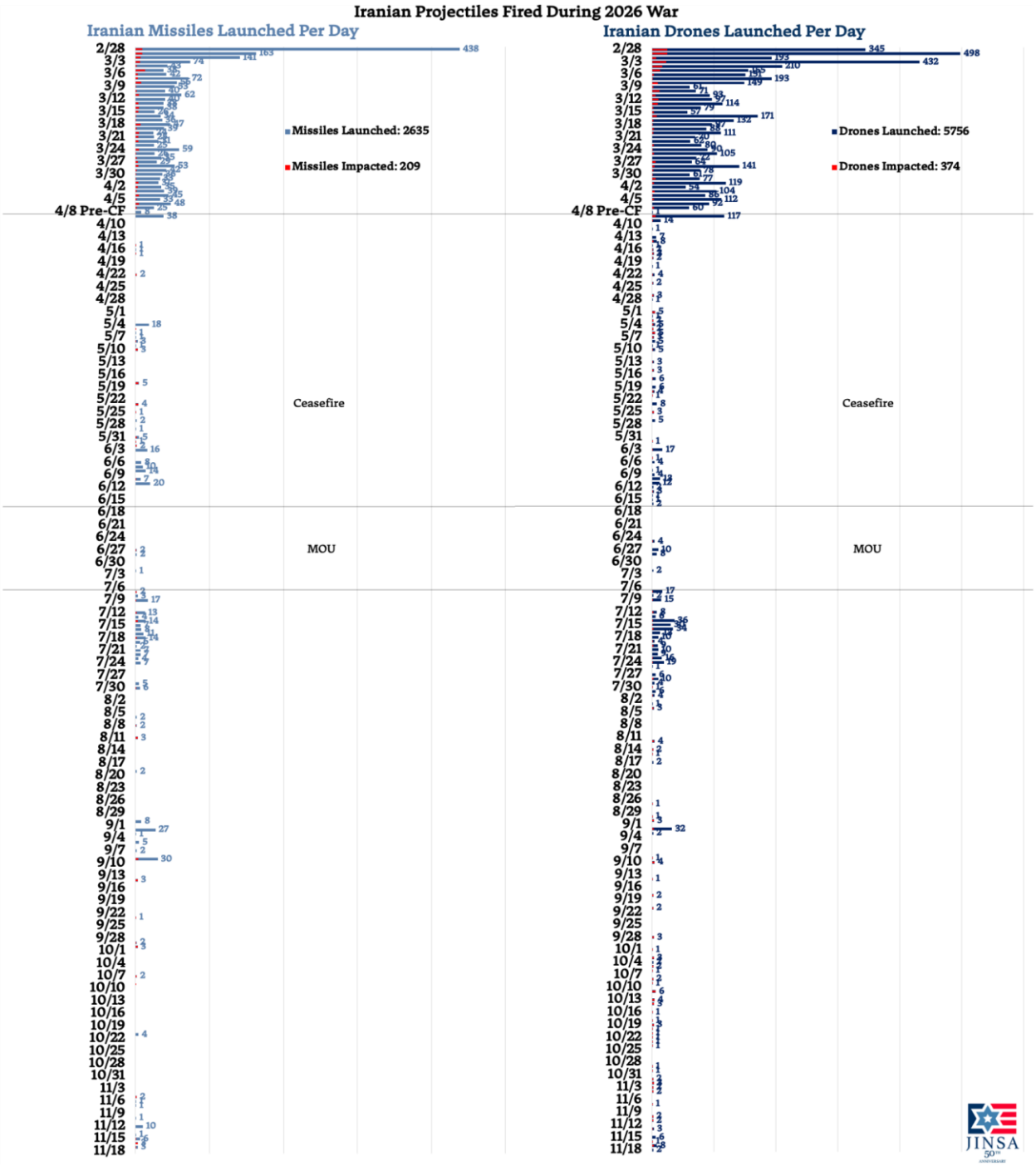
- On November 18, the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry released a statement condemning Iran's drone attack that day, stating that "the continuation of these attacks constitutes a dangerous escalation that threatens the region's security and stability and undermines diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalation."
- On November 18, Iraqi Oil Minister Bassem Mohammed Khudair al-Abadi announced that Iraq resumed pumping oil to Turkey through a pipeline with an initial capacity of 120,000 barrels a day as a means of avoiding the Strait of Hormuz.
- On November 17, following an Iranian attack on a U.S. base in Bahrain, the Qatari foreign ministry called on "all parties to exercise restraint during this period" and to "avoid any escalation that could undermine negotiation efforts."
- On November 17, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi in Muscat to discuss "diplomatic options" and "the importance of

safeguarding the security of maritime passages and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of international navigation and trade," according to an Omani readout.

- During a November 17 webinar with Israeli President Isaac Herzog, exiled Iranian crown prince Reza Pahlavi stated that the Iranian people "are fighting on the front lines against this regime. Forty thousand of them gave their lives to defeat this regime."
  - » He added that if the Iranian regime stays in power, "it will pursue nuclear weapons at any cost, and it will not hesitate to unleash a second, far greater Holocaust. The only way to deal with an existential threat is to eliminate it."

## 7. JINSA Resources

- LTG Karen Gibson, USA (ret.), LtGen Sam Mundy, USMC (ret.), and MajGen Robert Sofge, USMC (ret.), *Closing Iran's Second Front: A U.S. Strategy for the Houthi Threat*, November 17, 2026
- Jonah Brody, *To Stop Iran's Rearmament, Trump Must Confront Russia and China*, November 16, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, "How the Iran War Exposes Cracks in America's Foundation," *The Dispatch*, November 13, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, "President Trump: Forget the Midterms and Finish the Job in Iran," *The Hill*, November 7, 2026
- Hussein Aboubakr Mansour, *The Yemen–Horn of Africa Corridor: Houthi Expansion and the Gap in American Red Sea Strategy*, October 22, 2026
- Ari Cicurel, *Iran Escalates Before U.S. Midterm Elections*, October 19, 2026
- LtGen Michael Groen, USMC (ret.) and Sarah Havdala, "Iranian Cyber Operations," *RealClearDefense*, October 17, 2026
- John Hannah and Rena Gabber, "Iran 'Blew the Hell Out of Bahrain' — And Trump's Gulf Strategy With It," *The Washington Examiner*, October 12, 2026
- Lt Gen Thomas Bergeson, USAF (ret.), LTG Karen Gibson, USA (ret.), LtGen Sam Mundy, USMC (ret.), and MajGen Robert Sofge, USMC (ret.), "How to Keep the Houthis Out of the Red Sea," *The National Interest*, October 5, 2026


Iranian Projectiles Fired During 2026 War
Iranian Missiles Launched Per Day
Missiles Launched: 2635
Missiles Impacted: 209
Iranian Drones Launched Per Day
Drones Launched: 5756
Drones Impacted: 374
Ceasefire
MOU
Ceasefire
MOU
JINSA