

Iran Update Special Report, April 12, 2026



Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, Nidal Morrison, William Doran, Kelly Campa, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

NOTE: ISW-CTP will no longer publish morning updates covering the war with Iran. ISW-CTP will instead publish threads on its social media channels in the morning that cover the latest developments in the war and include relevant maps.

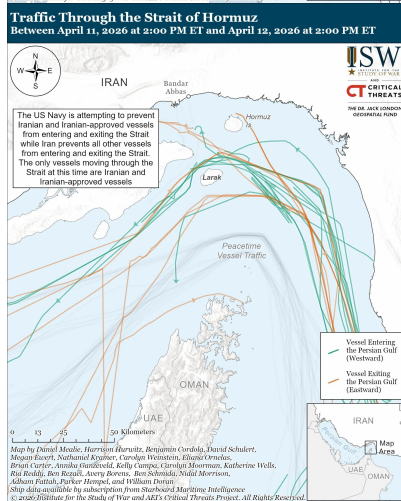
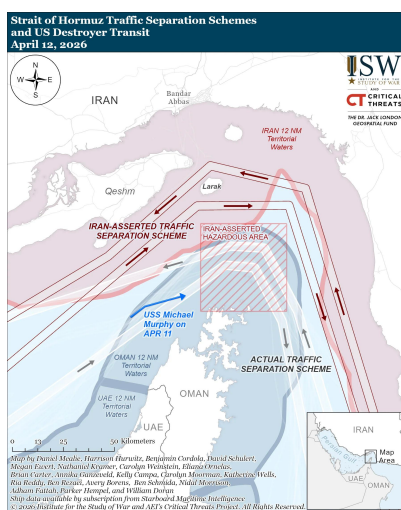
Key Takeaways

1. The US Navy is attempting to prevent Iranian and Iranian-approved vessels from entering and exiting the Strait, while Iran prevents all other vessels from entering and exiting the Strait. The only vessels moving through the Strait at this time are Iranian and Iranian-approved vessels. Very few ships are transiting the Strait other than the ships moving through Iran's territorial waters.
2. The United States and Iran did not reach an agreement during talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 11 and 12. US President Donald Trump emphasized on April 12 that Iran's delegation did not make compromises on its nuclear program, but that he believed Iran would return to negotiations.
3. Iran sought an all-encompassing agreement that would have transformed US-Iran relations in fundamental ways, while the United States appeared focused on specific issues related to freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear program. The multiple competing Iranian factions with divergent priorities and objectives in negotiations that were part of the Iranian delegation also likely made reaching an agreement exceptionally difficult.
4. Iran has not fired any munitions targeting the Gulf states since ISW-CTP's last data cut off on April 11. Iranian fired a declining rate of missiles and drones targeting Gulf states since the ceasefire went into effect on April 8.

Toplines

The US Navy is attempting to prevent Iranian and Iranian-approved vessels from entering and exiting the Strait, while Iran prevents all other vessels from entering and exiting the Strait.[1] The only vessels moving through the Strait at this time are Iranian and Iranian-

approved vessels. These Iranian-approved vessels are acceding to Iran’s protection racket and using Iran’s unilaterally imposed traffic separation scheme that forces vessels into Iranian territorial waters. Very few ships are transiting the Strait other than the ships moving through Iran’s territorial waters. Only one ship transited the Strait on April 12 and did not use the Iranian-approved shipping lanes by skirting the southern edge of the Iran-declared hazardous area. US President Donald Trump said on April 12 that the US Navy will “interdict every vessel” that has paid Iran for passage and indicated that enforcement of the blockade will begin soon.[2] Iran has used threats of attacks and a limited number of mines to declare a “hazardous area” across the entire Strait of Hormuz except for Iranian territorial waters, where Iran then imposes fees.[3] The US Navy has deployed ships to clear the remaining naval mines and restore freedom of navigation.[4] Some Gulf countries are also supporting mine-clearing efforts, according to Trump.[5] Two US Navy destroyers transited the Strait on April 11 to set conditions for clearing mines in the Strait of Hormuz. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy threatened the destroyers but did not attack them.[6] The IRGC Navy has threatened that any military vessels in the Strait will be subject to a “decisive response.”[7]



The United States and Iran did not reach an agreement during talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 11 and 12.[8] Two Iranian officials speaking to the New York Times on April 12 stated that US-Iran talks failed to reach an agreement over Iran’s stockpile of highly enriched uranium (HEU), Iran’s “control” over the Strait of Hormuz, and Iran’s demand that \$27 billion in frozen revenues held abroad be released.[9] The two officials stated that the United States demanded that Iran immediately open the Strait of Hormuz to maritime traffic, but Iran countered that it would only allow unfettered traffic in the Strait after a final peace deal.[10] The lack of a public, mutually agreed-upon document establishing the ceasefire requirements makes adherence to the ceasefire difficult to establish, but US officials said after

the two-week ceasefire agreement that the ceasefire required Iran to reopen the Strait. The officials added that the US delegation demanded that Iran “hand over or sell” its entire HEU stockpile, to which Iran made an unspecified counterproposal that the United States did not accept.[11] The officials stated that the US side refused Iran’s requests for war reparations from frozen oil revenue in various countries.[12] US President Donald Trump emphasized on April 12 that Iran’s delegation did not make compromises on its nuclear program, but that he believed Iran would return to negotiations.[13] Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who was the head of the Iranian delegation and has accumulated substantial power within the Iranian system in the last year, blamed the US side for the failure of the negotiations and stated that the United States must “earn” Iran’s trust, however.[14]

There were two principal issues that made reaching an agreement exceptionally difficult. First, as ISW-CTP noted on April 11, Iran sought an all-encompassing agreement that would have transformed US-Iran relations in fundamental ways, while the United States appeared focused on specific issues related to freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and Iran’s nuclear program.[15] This is best reflected by Iran’s focus on the release of sanctioned funds, its hope that the United States would recognize Iran’s “sovereignty” over the Strait of Hormuz, and a region-wide ceasefire.[16] Iran also remains unwilling to entertain limitations to its enrichment of nuclear material, which would presumably be needed to release sanctioned funds.[17] Any release of sanctioned funds without serious limitations to Iranian enrichment capabilities would be a massive change in stated Trump Administration policy.

Second, the multiple competing Iranian factions with divergent priorities and objectives in negotiations were part of the Iranian delegation, as ISW-CTP also noted on April 10 and April 11.[18] One faction, consisting of top IRGC officials and led by IRGC Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi, was reportedly fighting with a second faction led by Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi—both far more pragmatic than their IRGC counterparts—about the aims of negotiations before the trip to Islamabad.[19]

Iran has not fired any munitions targeting the Gulf states since ISW-CTP’s last data cut off on April 11. Iran has fired a decreasing number of missiles and drones targeting Gulf states since the ceasefire went into effect on April 8.[20] Iran fired a single drone targeting Bahrain on April 11.[21] The Gulf states did not detect or intercept any Iranian missiles or drones on April 12.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

New satellite imagery shows damage to several Iranian internal security sites in Kurdistan Province and one IRGC Ground Forces base in Alborz Province. These strikes occurred prior to the ceasefire.

- Satellite imagery from April 11 confirms that the combined force struck a Basij base in Qorveh, Kurdistan Province, between March 7 and April 9.[22]
- An OSINT account posted satellite imagery on April 11 that indicates the combined force struck a “police outpost” in Adinan, Kurdistan Province, between March 6 and 18.[23]
- Satellite imagery posted on April 11 confirms that the combined force struck a police station in Sonateh, Kurdistan Province, between March 6 and April 12.[24]
- An OSINT account posted satellite imagery on April 12 that shows that combined force strikes destroyed several buildings at the IRGC Ground Forces 10th Sayyed al Shuhada Division training base in Karaj, Alborz Province, between March 7 and 17.[25]

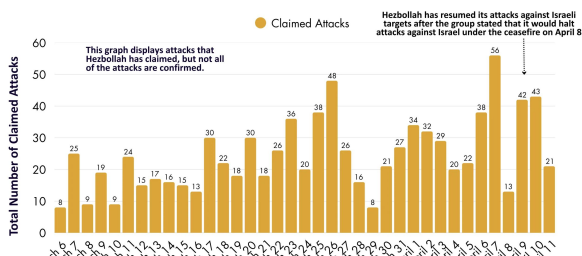
Iranian Response

See the topline section.

Israeli Campaign Against Hezbollah and Hezbollah Response

Hezbollah claimed that it conducted 17 rocket and drone attacks targeting IDF infrastructure and civilian communities in northern Israel between 2:00 PM on April 11 and 2:00 PM on April 12.[26] Hezbollah's volume of attacks on northern Israel on April 11 decreased significantly compared to its rate of fire over the past two days (see graphic below). An Israeli military correspondent reported that Hezbollah launched about 20 total rockets targeting northern Israel on April 12.[27] The correspondent reported that there were no casualties from Hezbollah's attacks and that no rockets struck any civilian or military targets.[28] Hezbollah claimed that it conducted two rocket attacks and two drone attacks targeting Kiryat Shmona, which has been one of Hezbollah's most frequent targets during the war due to its position on the Israel-Lebanon border.[29]

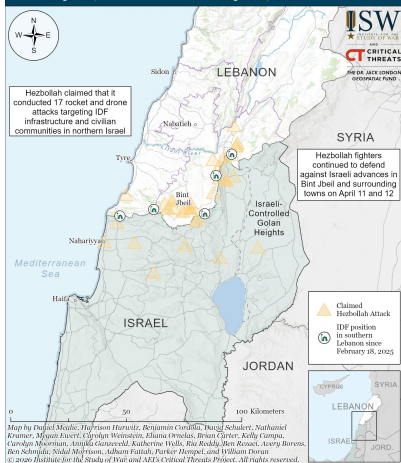
Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Targeting Israeli Forces and Positions in Israel Between March 6, 2026 and April 11, 2026



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Hezbollah Attacks in Northern Israel and Southern Lebanon Between April 11, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET and April 12, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET



Hezbollah fighters continued to defend against Israeli advances in Bint Jbeil and surrounding towns on April 11 and 12. Hezbollah claimed to conduct several rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces and vehicles in Bint Jbeil and surrounding villages, including Ainata and Ain Ebel, on April 11 and 12.[30] The IDF had isolated Bint Jbeil as of April 9 and appears to be attempting to secure the town's

neighborhoods.[31] The 84th (Givati) Infantry Brigade (91st Territorial Division) raided a hospital in Ainata, seized a weapons depot stored there, and killed about 20 fighters operating in the area.[32]

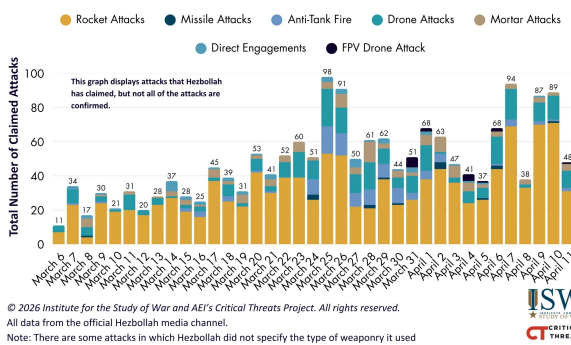
Securing Bint Jbeil is operationally significant for the IDF because it is located at the nexus of multiple main roads in southeastern Lebanon, including the Tebnine-Bint Jbeil Road, that the IDF could use to advance north and link with Israeli forces advancing from other axes. Israeli political officials have expressed Israel’s intent to create a “security zone” that extends between eight and ten kilometers north of the Israeli border.[33] A security zone of this size would encompass second- and third-line villages near the Lebanon-Israel border, including Bint Jbeil. The IDF aims to push Hezbollah forces back to limit their ability to fire anti-tank fire targeting northern Israeli towns and remove the threat of a coordinated Hezbollah cross-border infiltration into northern Israel.[34]

Bint Jbeil is also symbolically significant to Hezbollah. Former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah proclaimed victory in Bint Jbeil after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000.[35] Hezbollah has also previously fought the IDF at Bint Jbeil in previous conflicts, including in 2006 and in the October 7 War.[36]

The IDF continued to operate in southwestern Lebanon on April 12. Hezbollah claimed to target Israeli forces with rockets in al Bayyada, southwestern Lebanon.[37] Lebanese media also reported IDF artillery fire in the vicinity of Mansouri on April 12.[38] The IDF advanced into Mansouri, which is north of al Bayyada and located about 11 kilometers north of the Israel-Lebanon border, on or before April 7.[39]

The IDF continued to operate near Khiam and Taybeh, southeastern Lebanon, on April 12.[40] Hezbollah claimed to launch a first-person view (FPV) drone targeting an IDF tank in Odaisseh.[41] The IDF 1st (Golani) Infantry Brigade (36th Armored Division) killed a Hezbollah fighter in an engagement on April 13.[42] The Golani Brigade has been operating in Taybeh, southeastern Lebanon, since March 24.[43]

Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Between March 6, 2026 and April 11, 2026 By Type



The IDF has continued to conduct air operations targeting Hezbollah infrastructure and fighters across southern Lebanon. Independent Lebanese media reported that the IDF conducted at least 35 airstrikes in southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP’s last data cutoff on April 11.[44] The IDF announced that it destroyed a Hezbollah rocket launcher preparing to fire on northern Israel in Jouaiyya, Tyre District, on April 11.[45]

Other Axis of Resistance Response

The Saudi Foreign Ministry summoned the Iraqi ambassador to Saudi Arabia on April 12 in response to Iranian-backed Iraqi militia drone attacks targeting Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.[46] Iranian-backed Iraqi militia front groups have claimed multiple drone attacks targeting US bases in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait since the start of the war.[47]

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Endnotes

[1] <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/116392448970133700>

[2] <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/116392448970133700>

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[4] <https://youtu.be/wmwVQMWTqD0?t=360>

[5] ; <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/4457220/us-forces-start-mine-clearance-mission-in-strait-of-hormuz/> <https://youtu.be/wmwVQMWTqD0?t=360>

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[9] <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/11/world/middleeast/iran-strait-of-hormuz-uranium-stockpile-sticking-points.html?smid=url-share>

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[26] <https://t.me/mmirleb/14944> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/14960> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/14967> ;
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- [30] <https://t.me/mmirleb/14999>; <https://t.me/mmirleb/14950>
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Benjamin Schmida, Nidal Morrison, Adham Fattah, Avery Borens, Kelly Campa, William Doran, Annika Ganzeveld

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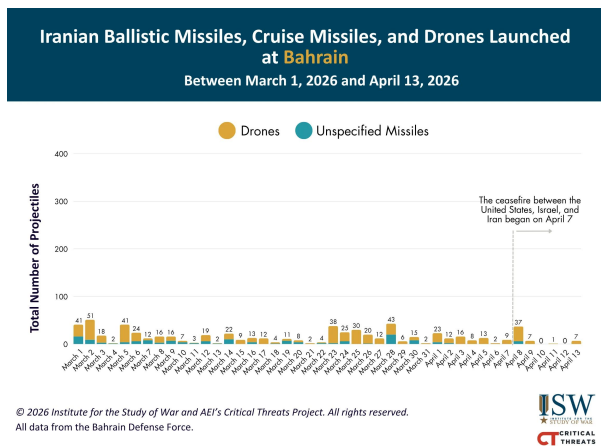
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Key Takeaways

1. Iranian-backed Iraqi militias are likely responsible for at least some of the recent drone attacks against Gulf states. It is very unlikely that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias would conduct drone attacks against regional states if the Iranian regime opposed such attacks, which suggests that Iran has not ordered its militia partners to cease attacking regional states.
2. The US negotiating delegation demanded a 20-year moratorium on uranium enrichment, the removal of Iran's highly enriched uranium (HEU) stockpile from Iran, and unfettered freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz during the negotiations in Pakistan. Iran countered the 20-year moratorium on uranium enrichment with a "single-digit" number of years and offered to downblend its HEU instead of handing over its HEU stockpile. It is unclear whether the three US demands and the Iranian counterproposal represent the full scope of each side's demands.
3. US Central Command (CENTCOM) is simultaneously imposing a blockade on Iranian ports and vessels while taking steps to open the official transit route through the Strait of Hormuz for vessels transiting to or from non-Iranian ports. CENTCOM implemented its blockade on Iranian ports and vessels at 10:00 AM ET on April 13.
4. Iranian and Iranian-approved vessels continued to use the Iranian-approved transit route to cross the Strait of Hormuz before the blockade went into effect on April 13, but more vessels transited outside this route near the Omani coast than on April 12. At least two oil tankers destined for China via the Iranian-approved shipping transit route turned around after CENTCOM began blockading Iranian and Iranian-approved shipping.

Toplines

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias are likely responsible for at least some of the recent drone attacks against Gulf states. The Bahrain Defense Force reported that it intercepted seven “Iranian” drones on April 13.[1] Bahrain did not specify from where the drones were launched.[2] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias use some of the same types of drones as Iranian forces do because the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) supplies drones to its Iraqi militia partners.[3] It is therefore possible that the Bahrain Defense Force’s use of the term “Iranian” drones refers to Iranian drones used by Iraqi militias. Bahrain’s Foreign Ministry also summoned the Iraqi charge d’affaires on April 13 in response to “continued” Iraqi militia drone attacks targeting Bahrain and other Gulf Cooperation Council states.[4] Saudi Arabia similarly summoned the Iraqi ambassador to Saudi Arabia on April 12 for the same reason.[5] Iranian-backed Iraqi militia front groups have claimed multiple drone attacks targeting US bases in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait since the start of the war.[6]



It is very unlikely that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias would conduct drone attacks against regional states if the Iranian regime opposed such attacks, which suggests that Iran has not ordered its militia partners to cease attacking regional states. Many Iranian-backed Iraqi militias answer to the IRGC, which provides guidance and support for their attacks.[7] The IRGC has previously demonstrated its ability to force Iraqi militias to halt their attacks, such as when IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani directed Iranian-backed Iraqi militias to halt their attacks against US forces in January 2024.[8] The fact that Iraqi militias continue to attack the Gulf states, therefore, suggests that Iran has not directed the militias to halt these attacks.

Some Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have continued to attack regional states despite the Shia Coordination Framework’s efforts to push the militias to agree to a “truce.”[9] An informed source told Iraqi media on April 5 that the framework authorized Iranian-backed Badr Organization head Hadi al Ameri to negotiate a “temporary truce” with the militias.[10] The source stated that Ameri’s negotiations focused on Iranian-backed Iraqi militias Kataib Hezbollah and Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, both of which are more loyal to Iran and are less responsive to domestic pressure than other Iraqi militias.[11] Framework member Amer al Fayez told Iraqi media on April 12 that Ameri’s committee successfully negotiated a “conditional truce” with the militias.[12] Fayez stated that the truce stipulated that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias would halt attacks on US interests and diplomatic facilities in exchange for a commitment from the United States and Israel to stop striking Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) and militia bases in Iraq.[13] It is unclear whether the truce required the militias to halt attacks against US interests across the region, or only in Iraq. Iranian-backed Iraqi militias control multiple brigades within the PMF.[14] It is unclear which militias agreed to this truce.

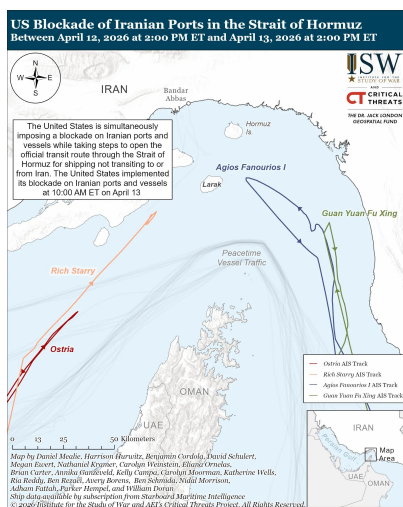
Iran rejected a US proposal to pause uranium enrichment for 20 years in exchange for the unfreezing of some Iranian assets and ending the current war during talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 11 and 12. A US official and a source with knowledge told Axios on April 13 that the United States demanded a 20-year moratorium on uranium enrichment, the removal of Iran's highly enriched uranium (HEU) stockpile from Iran, and unfettered freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz during the negotiations in Pakistan.[15] The US delegation offered to release a "certain portion" of frozen Iranian assets and end the current conflict in exchange for Iran meeting these demands.[16] Iran countered the 20-year moratorium on uranium enrichment with a "single-digit" number of years and offered to downblend its HEU instead of handing over its HEU stockpile.[17] Iran's reported counterproposal to dilute its HEU is consistent with the position of some regime officials before the current conflict began, when Iran was in a relatively stronger position than it is now.[18] Iran presumably seeks to dilute rather than hand over its HEU stockpile so that it could re-enrich this stockpile at some point in the future.

An Israeli journalist reported on April 13 that the Iranian delegation in Islamabad, led by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi, discussed Iran's nuclear program "contrary to instructions from Tehran." [19] The only Iranian officials who could presumably give such instructions are IRGC Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi or Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei. This report is consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that there appear to be internal divisions among regime power centers and that the regime appears to lack a unified negotiating strategy.[20]

It is unclear whether the above three US demands and Iranian counterproposal represent the full scope of each side's demands. Regime-affiliated media reported on April 11 that Iranian demands included sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, compensation for war damages, and a region-wide ceasefire across the "Axis of Resistance." [21] It is unclear whether the Iranian delegation raised these demands during the April 11-12 negotiations, however. It is also unclear whether recent reports capture the entirety of US demands during the talks in Islamabad. US demands have previously included limits to Iran's ballistic missile program and funding for its regional proxies and partners.[22] It is possible that the negotiations in Islamabad concluded before these issues were raised because it was clear that the gap between the delegations' positions on core demands was too wide to resolve. US President Donald Trump stated on April 13 that Iran contacted US officials about conducting a second round of negotiations.[23] A US official and a regional source told Axios on April 13 that regional mediators, including Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt, will speak to US and Iranian officials in the coming days to "bridge the remaining gaps" between the two sides and seek to facilitate a second round of discussions before the two-week ceasefire ends on April 21.[24]

US Central Command (CENTCOM) is simultaneously imposing a blockade on Iranian ports and vessels while taking steps to open the official transit route through the Strait of Hormuz for vessels transiting to or from non-Iranian ports. CENTCOM implemented its blockade on Iranian ports and vessels at 10:00 AM ET on April 13.[25] CENTCOM announced on April 13 that it will enforce a blockade on vessels from all nations that enter or depart Iranian ports and coastal areas, including ports in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.[26] CENTCOM noted that it will not impede freedom of navigation for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz to or from non-Iranian ports.[27] United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported on March 13 that US forces are enforcing "maritime access restrictions" on Iranian ports and coastal areas in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and parts of the Arabian Sea.[28] UKMTO reported that CENTCOM granted "neutral vessels" currently docked at Iranian ports a limited grace period to depart.[29] UKMTO did not specify the length of the "limited grace period," however. UKMTO added that CENTCOM's blockade will not impede traffic to or from non-Iranian ports, but that vessels may encounter US "military presence, directed communications, or right-of-visit procedures"

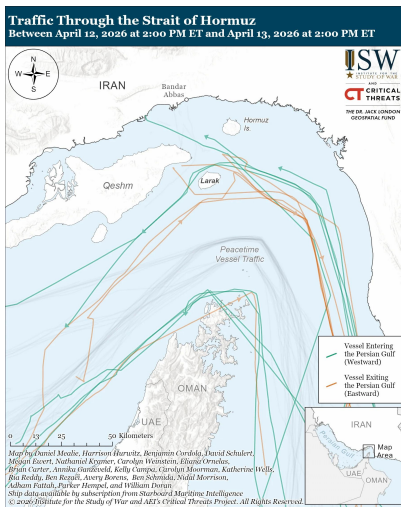
while transiting the strait.[30] A senior US official told the *Wall Street Journal* on April 13 that over 15 US naval vessels are supporting the blockade.[31] The official did not specify which vessels are implementing the blockade, but CENTCOM currently has an aircraft carrier, multiple guided-missile destroyers, an amphibious assault ship, and several other warships deployed near the strait.[32] Two US missile destroyers also deployed to the Persian Gulf via the Strait of Hormuz on April 11.[33] CENTCOM did not specify what procedures it intends to use to enforce the blockade, but US forces have previously interdicted Venezuelan and Russian oil tankers using small boarding teams transported by helicopters deployed from naval vessels.[34] US President Donald Trump said on April 13 that he expects unspecified countries to assist CENTCOM with the blockade of Iranian ports and vessels.[35] Trump previously said on April 12 that some Gulf countries are supporting US naval mine-clearing efforts, but it is unclear whether they would help enforce the blockade.[36] The United Kingdom and France said that they will not take part in the blockade.[37]



Iranian and Iranian-approved vessels continued to use the Iranian-approved transit route to cross the Strait of Hormuz before the blockade went into effect on April 13, but more vessels transited outside this route near the Omani coast than on April 12. Several Western media outlets reported that at least two Iranian-linked tankers, the *Aurora* and the *New Future*, departed the Strait of Hormuz on April 13 before CENTCOM implemented its blockade on Iranian ports and vessels.[38] Kpler and London Stock Exchange Group data indicate that the *Aurora* is transporting Iranian oil products, while the *New Future* is transporting diesel loaded from the Hamriyah Port in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Oman.[39] The *New Future's* previous three "trades" were with Iran, according to the *New York Times*.^[40] Commercially available shipping data also shows that at least six vessels entered the Strait of Hormuz via the Iranian-approved transit route, while at least four other vessels entered the strait outside the Iranian-approved route near the Omani coast on April 13. The shipping data further shows that at least five vessels departed the Strait of Hormuz via the Iranian-approved transit route, while one vessel departed outside the Iranian-approved route near the Omani coast on April 13. It is unclear whether the five vessels that departed the strait on April 13 are included in CENTCOM's "limited grace period."^[41]

At least two oil tankers destined for China via the Iranian-approved transit route turned around after CENTCOM began blockading Iranian and Iranian-approved shipping.^[42] CBS reported that two falsely flagged oil tankers, the *Rich Starry* and the *Ostria*, changed course less than an hour before CENTCOM began enforcing the blockade.^[43] A successful US blockade of Iranian and Iranian-approved shipping would cut off Iran's main source of revenue by disrupting its nearly 2 million barrel-per-day oil export trade.^[44] A sanctions-focused US analyst estimated on April 13 that a successful blockade on Iranian ports and shipping would cost the regime around \$435 million USD per day, leaving Iran with few alternatives to export and import goods.^[45] The analyst added that Iran's

onshore oil storage capacity is 13 days, after which Iran would have to shut down its oil fields, potentially causing long-term damage to the oil fields.[46]



US and Israeli Air Campaign

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Response

Nothing significant to report.

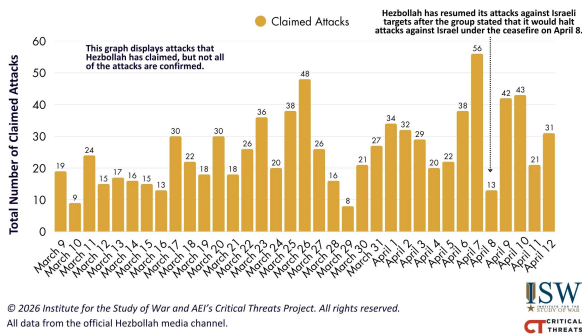
Israeli Campaign Against Hezbollah and Hezbollah Response

Israeli and Lebanese officials appear to disagree over the scope of the upcoming Lebanese-Israeli preparatory talks. Lebanese Ambassador to the United States Nada Hamadeh, Israeli Ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter, and US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa are scheduled to meet in Washington, DC, on April 14.[47] Lebanese President Joseph Aoun’s office announced on April 10 that Hamadeh, Leiter, and Issa agreed to hold a preparatory meeting to discuss the declaration of a ceasefire and a date to begin direct Israeli-Lebanese negotiations under US auspices.[48] Leiter stated that Israel agreed to begin formal negotiations on April 14 but noted that Israel refuses to discuss a ceasefire with Hezbollah, however.[49] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu similarly reiterated on April 12 that the preparatory talks will focus on disarming Hezbollah and efforts to reach “a lasting peace” between Israel and Lebanon.[50]

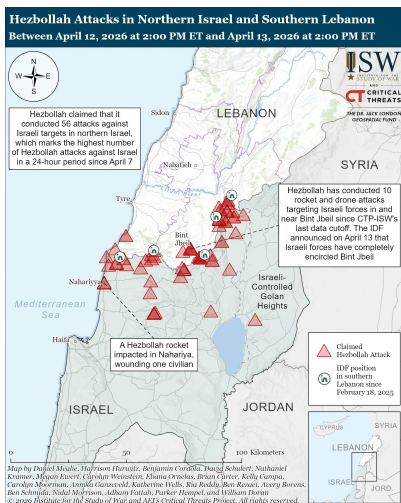
Hezbollah claimed that it has conducted 56 attacks targeting IDF infrastructure and Israeli communities in northern Israel since CTP-ISW’s last data cutoff on April 12.[51] Hezbollah has claimed 42 attacks against Israeli targets in northern Israel as of 2:00 PM ET on April 13, which is a relative increase from its claimed rate of fire targeting northern Israel on April 12 (see April 12 data in graphic below).[52] An Israeli military correspondent reported that Hezbollah launched a barrage of less than 10 rockets targeting Nahariya on April 13.[53] The correspondent reported that at least one rocket impacted in Nahariya, which wounded one civilian and caused material damage.[54] An Israeli military correspondent also reported that Hezbollah fired five rockets targeting Karmiel on April 13.[55] The correspondent reported that the IDF intercepted four of the rockets and allowed one to fall in an open area.[56] Hezbollah also claimed that it conducted seven drone and rocket attacks targeting Kiryat

Shmona, which has been one of Hezbollah's most frequent targets in northern Israel because of its proximity to the Israel-Lebanon border.[57]

Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Targeting Israeli Forces and Positions in Israel Between March 9, 2026 and April 12, 2026

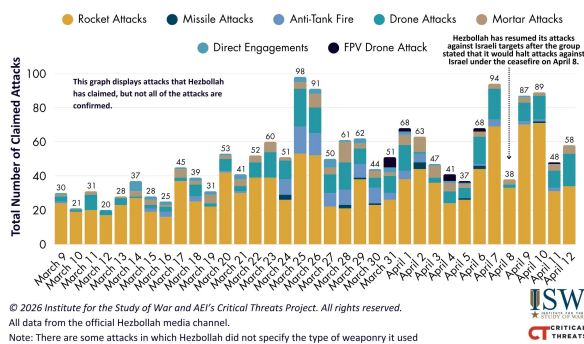


Hezbollah claimed that it has conducted 19 attacks targeting Israeli forces in southern Lebanon since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on April 12.[58] Hezbollah claimed 10 rocket and drone attacks targeting IDF forces in Bint Jbeil and surrounding villages amid the IDF's isolation of and advance into Bint Jbeil on April 13.[59] An Israeli military correspondent reported that a Hezbollah drone attack wounded eight IDF personnel in southern Lebanon on April 13.[60]



Hezbollah has sustained a high rate of drone attacks against Israeli targets since it resumed its attacks against Israeli targets on April 8 (see below). Hezbollah has claimed 22 drone attacks as of 2:00 PM ET on April 13.[61] Hezbollah previously claimed 19 drone attacks on April 12.[62] An Israeli think tank previously noted on March 23 that drones are increasingly becoming “a significant component of [Hezbollah's] campaign.”[63] Hezbollah prioritized domestic drone production and shifted its munition rehabilitation budget to focus on drones after the Fall 2024 conflict.[64] Hezbollah has long assembled low-cost Ayoub and Mersad drones in Lebanon using civilian parts ordered online.[65]

Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Between March 9, 2026 and April 12, 2026 By Type



The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah infrastructure and fighters across Lebanon. The IDF struck approximately 150 Hezbollah targets across Lebanon in the past 24 hours.[66] The IDF stated that it struck rocket and drone launchers, anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) launch sites, Hezbollah command centers, unspecified military buildings, and Hezbollah fighters.[67] The IDF confirmed that it killed over 250 Hezbollah fighters and commanders in its April 8 strikes on Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and southern Lebanon.[68] The Lebanese Health Ministry reported that the IDF's April 8 strikes killed 357 individuals.[69] The IDF confirmed that it killed the following Hezbollah commanders:

- **Hassan Mustafa Nasser.[70]** Nasser was Hezbollah's Logistics Support Staff Commander. The IDF stated that Nasser was a veteran commander responsible for acquiring and storing Hezbollah's military equipment. The IDF added that Nasser was a central figure in Hezbollah's reconstitution efforts.
- **Ali Qassem ("Abu Ali Abbas").[71]** Qassem was a senior commander in Hezbollah's Intelligence Unit. The IDF stated that Qassem was one of the commanders responsible for collecting intelligence on Israel and identifying Israeli targets.
- **Ali Hijazi.[72]** Hijazi was a senior commander in Hezbollah's Intelligence Unit. The IDF stated that Hijazi was also responsible for collecting intelligence on Israel and identifying Israeli targets.
- **"Abu Muhammad Habib."[73]** Habib was the deputy commander of Hezbollah's Missile Unit. This unit launched missiles targeting Israel during the Fall 2024 Israel-Hezbollah conflict and in the current war. The IDF added that Habib recently led operations to bolster the unit's capabilities.

Israeli forces have continued to conduct ground operations in southern Lebanon since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff at 2:00 PM ET on April 12. The IDF reported that the 7th Armored Brigade (36th Armored Division) and the "Yahalom" Special Operations Force Unit (IDF Combat Engineering Corps) destroyed an underground Hezbollah tunnel in Taybeh, southeastern Lebanon, on April 13.[74] Israeli forces located a Hezbollah cell planning to launch drone attacks targeting Israeli forces and directed an Israeli strike targeting one of the fighters on April 13.[75] Israeli soldiers also directed an airstrike on a loaded Hezbollah launcher on April 13.[76]

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz stated on April 12 that Israel's "Operation Silver Plow" is focused on "leveling" Hezbollah infrastructure and houses that the group uses to launch projectiles at Israel.[77] Katz added that the goal of this operation is to disarm Hezbollah and evacuate all Lebanese residents south of the Litani River.[78] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated on April 12 that Israeli forces are working to "push back" the threat of Hezbollah ATGMs and rocket attacks, but noted that the IDF will need to conduct further operations.[79] Katz's announcement comes as the Israeli government tightened restrictions on public gatherings and reversed a decision to reopen schools in northern Israel on April 12.[80]

The IDF has nearly taken control of the town of Bint Jbeil in southeastern Lebanon.[81] The IDF had isolated Hezbollah fighters in Bint Jbeil as of April 9 and has conducted raids and engaged Hezbollah fighters in neighborhoods throughout the town since then.[82] The IDF has killed over 100 Hezbollah fighters in the area.[83] Three brigades—the 35th Paratrooper Brigade, 89th Commando Brigade, and 84th (Givati) Infantry Brigade—are currently operating to clear the town of remaining fighters.[84] An Israeli military correspondent said that there are a “few dozen” Hezbollah fighters left in the city.[85] The IDF estimated that at least 150 Hezbollah fighters were in Bint Jbeil before the IDF operation.[86] Hezbollah fighters fired rockets and drones targeting Israeli forces operating in and around Bint Jbeil on April 12 and 13.[87] Hezbollah can fire rockets and drones from a considerable distance and likely did not fire these munitions at Israeli forces from within the city.

An unspecified Israeli military official told Reuters on April 13 that the IDF will achieve full operational control of Bint Jbeil within days.[88] Securing Bint Jbeil is operationally significant for the IDF because it is located at the nexus of multiple main roads in southeastern Lebanon, including the Tebnine-Bint Jbeil road, that the IDF could use to advance north and link with Israeli forces advancing from other axes. Israeli political officials have expressed Israel’s intent to create a “security zone” that extends between eight and ten kilometers north of the Israeli border.[89] The IDF seized Bint Jbeil Stadium in the town center on April 13.[90] Former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah delivered a victory speech in this stadium in 2000 following the IDF’s withdrawal from southern Lebanon.[91]

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[90] <https://t.me/BenTzionM/7413> ;

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Iran Update Special Report, April 14, 2026



Benjamin Schmida, Katherine Wells, Ben Rezaei, Avery Borens, Parker Hempel, William Doran, Adham Fattah, Carolyn Moorman, Nidal Morrison, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

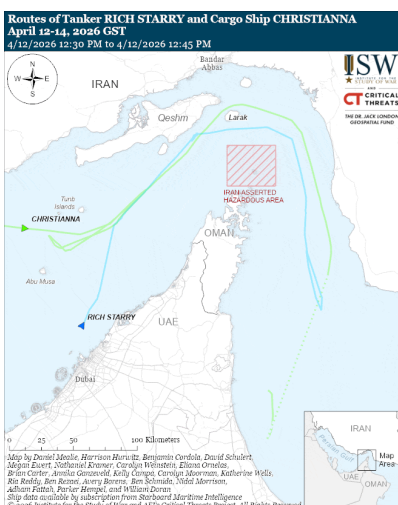
1. US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that no vessels have breached the US blockade on Iranian ports since CENTCOM implemented its blockade on April 13. The US blockade on Iranian ports does not have a defined geographic boundary, and the United States can interdict vessels almost anywhere in international waters until they arrive at their final port. It is unclear whether any of the vessels that left Iranian ports on April 14 were authorized to do so under CENTCOM's "limited grade period."
2. The United States' decision not to renew a 30-day sanctions waiver for Iranian oil exports, which is set to expire on April 19, will further constrain Iran's ability to export oil in addition to the US blockade on Iranian ports. Two US officials told Reuters on April 14 that the US Treasury Department will enforce sanctions on Iranian oil after April 19.
3. Iran is reportedly considering temporarily pausing shipments to avoid testing the US blockade on Iranian ports and raising tensions ahead of possible talks, according to a person familiar with Iranian decision-making on the Strait of Hormuz speaking to Bloomberg on April 14. Iran would only be able to pause shipments for a limited period of time before it would start to run out of room to store oil. Iran could also pursue several other courses of action in response to the US blockade, including agreeing to a deal acceptable to the United States, attempting to run the blockade, or resuming the war.
4. Iranian Supreme Leader Adviser Mohammad Mokhber warned that Iran will "open new fronts" and "increase economic pressures" on US allies and regional countries in response to the US blockade on Iranian ports, likely to try to coerce the United States to end its blockade. Mokhber may have been referring to the Houthis, which has not conducted attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea during the war thus far. Arab officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on April 14 that Iran is pressuring the Houthis to "close" the Bab al Mandeb Strait.
5. US President Donald Trump stated on April 14 that the United States and Iran may hold another round of talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, "over [the] next two days." A senior Iranian source told

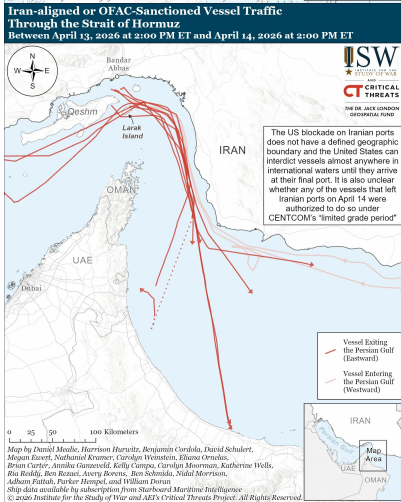
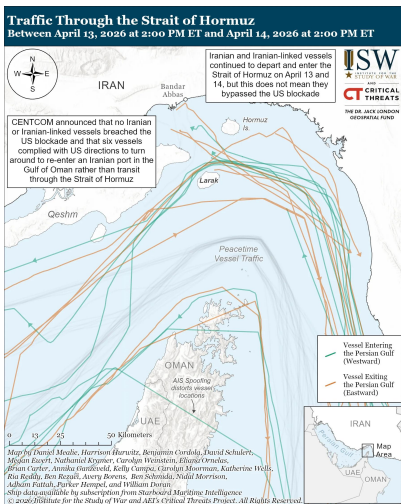
Western media on April 14 that the United States and Iran are keeping April 17 through 19 open for possible talks, but that no date has been confirmed.

Toplines

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that no vessels have breached the US blockade on Iranian ports since CENTCOM implemented the blockade on April 13.[1] CENTCOM implemented a blockade on April 13 against all vessels transiting to or from Iranian ports. The US blockade on Iranian ports does not have a defined geographic boundary, and the United States can interdict vessels almost anywhere in international waters until they arrive at their final port. US forces have previously demonstrated their ability to interdict vessels in international waters.[2]US officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on April 14 that US forces will likely attempt to intercept or “quarantine” any vessels that violate the blockade in the Arabian Sea to limit the threat of attacks from the Iranian coast.[3] Vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz are therefore not automatically breaching the US blockade. Commercially available maritime data indicates that at least eight vessels departed the Strait of Hormuz, including six Iranian or Iranian-linked vessels, on April 14. One of the vessels, the US-sanctioned *Rich Starry* oil tanker, departed from Amjan Port in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on April 13.[4] Other Iranian or Iranian-linked vessels, including the *Elpis* and *Christianna*, also left the strait after departing Iranian ports.[5] Commercially available maritime data also indicates that at least nine vessels entered the Strait of Hormuz, including three Iranian or Iranian-linked ships. One of the entering vessels was the *Ocean Energy* cargo ship, which docked at Iran’s Bandar Abbas Port on April 13.[6] It is unclear whether this vessel was exempted from the blockade. Reuters reported that a US military notice sent to mariners exempts humanitarian shipments to Iran from the US blockade.[7] CENTCOM also announced that six merchant vessels complied with the US direction to return to an Iranian port in the Gulf of Oman.[8]CENTCOM has not interdicted any vessels at the time of this writing.

It is also unclear whether any of the vessels that left Iranian ports on April 14 were authorized to do so under CENTCOM’s “limited grace period.” United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations reported on April 13 that CENTCOM granted “neutral vessels” currently docked at Iranian ports an unspecified grace period to depart. The complexity and variety of factors involved in the blockade, including determining vessels’ origin and destination and whether vessels are considered “neutral”, make it premature to try to assess whether some vessels have gotten through the US blockade.

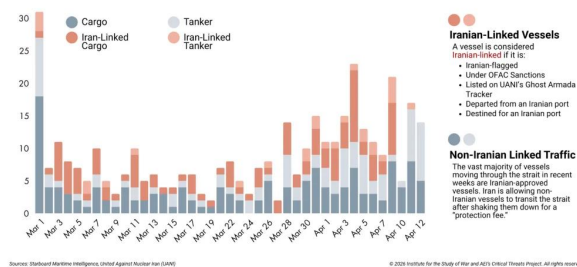




The United States' decision not to renew a 30-day sanctions waiver for Iranian oil exports, which is set to expire on April 19, will further constrain Iran's ability to export oil in addition to the US blockade on Iranian ports.[9] Two US officials told Reuters on April 14 that the US Treasury Department will enforce sanctions on Iranian oil after April 19.[10] US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent also told reporters on April 14 that the US blockade on Iranian ports will ensure that no vessels from the People's Republic of China (PRC) are "able to get their [Iranian] oil." [11] The PRC purchases more than 90 percent of Iran's oil exports.[12] A sanctions-focused US analyst estimated on April 13 that a successful blockade on Iranian ports would cost the regime around \$435 million USD per day, leaving Iran with few alternatives to export and import goods.[13]

Iranian-Linked Vessels Transiting the Strait of Hormuz

Iran has imposed its own traffic separation scheme that forces vessels into Iranian territorial waters and enables Iran to selectively allow Iranian or Iranian-approved vessels to transit the strait. This graphic depicts total traffic entering or exiting the Strait of Hormuz since March 1, including to or from Bandar Abbas.



Iran is reportedly considering temporarily pausing shipments to avoid testing the US blockade on Iranian ports and raising tensions ahead of possible talks, according to a person familiar with Iranian decision-making on the Strait of Hormuz speaking to Bloomberg on April 14.[14] Iran would only be able to pause shipments for a limited period of time before it would start to

run out of room to store oil. A sanctions-focused analyst reported on April 13 that Iran's onshore oil storage capacity is 13 days, after which Iran would have to shut down its oil fields, potentially causing long-term damage to the oil fields.[15] Iran's limited storage capacity highlights the difficult position the US blockade has put Iran in. Iran appears to have three other courses of action that it could take to respond to the US blockade on Iranian ports. It is unclear which course of action Iran will pursue at this time. The courses of action include:

1. Iran could agree to a deal acceptable to the United States, which would likely require Iran to make concessions on its nuclear program and other issues.
2. Iran could attempt to run the blockade, a move that would almost certainly result in a US response and possibly the seizure of Iranian vessels central to Iran's oil trade.
3. Iran could restart or widen the conflict, although it is unclear whether a resumption of the conflict would necessarily end the US blockade on Iranian ports.

Iranian Supreme Leader Adviser Mohammad Mokhber warned that Iran will “open new fronts” and “increase economic pressures” on US allies and regional countries in response to the US blockade on Iranian ports, likely to try to coerce the United States to end its blockade.

Mokhber may have been referring to the Houthis, which have not conducted attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea during the war thus far. Arab officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on April 14 that Iran is pressuring the Houthis to “close” the Bab al Mandeb Strait.[16] Saudi Arabia has urged the United States to end its blockade on Iranian ports and return to negotiations due to concerns that the blockade could cause the Houthis to resume attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Bab el Mandeb Strait, according to the Arab officials.[17] Saudi energy officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that the Houthis have sent guarantees that their fighters will not attack Saudi Arabia or its ships passing through the Bab el Mandeb, however.[18] Previous Houthi attacks on shipping between 2023 and 2025 sharply increased shipping costs and contributed to global inflation.[19]

US President Donald Trump stated on April 14 that the United States and Iran may hold another round of talks in Islamabad, Pakistan, “over [the] next two days.”[20] A senior Iranian source told Western media on April 14 that the United States and Iran are keeping April 17 through 19 open for possible talks, but that no date has been confirmed.[21] Trump did not specify who would lead the US delegation in a potential second round of negotiations. US Vice President JD Vance, who led the US delegation in the first round of negotiations on April 11 and 12, told Fox News on April 14 that Iran moved closer to the US position but “didn’t move far enough.”[22] Two senior Iranian officials and one US official told the *New York Times* that Iran responded to the US demand for a 20-year moratorium on uranium enrichment with a pause “for up to five years.”[23] Iran's willingness to pause enrichment for five years would represent an Iranian concession and notable inflection in Iran's position. Vance also said that the Iranian delegation was “unable to cut a deal” and instead had to return to Tehran to get approval from “the Supreme Leader or someone else.”[24] Vance's statement is consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that the United States is negotiating with a de facto committee composed of competing political, military, and security factions, rather than a unified delegation with a clear mandate and unified positions.[25]

US and Israeli Air Campaign

New satellite imagery shows damage to several Iranian internal security and military sites in Tehran, Kermanshah, and Ilam provinces. These strikes occurred prior to the ceasefire.

- Satellite imagery from March 17 confirms that the combined force struck the IRGC Ground Forces 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit in eastern Tehran City.[26] The 27th Mohammad

Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit is the IRGC Ground Forces' provincial unit for Tehran City and the IRGC's main unit in the city.[27] The 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit oversees 23 Basij regional bases throughout Tehran City.[28] The 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit deployed to Syria during the Syrian civil war and incurred casualties while fighting for the Bashar al Assad regime.[29]

- Satellite imagery from March 17 confirms that the combined force struck the IRGC Navy Headquarters in Tehran Province.[30]
- An OSINT account posted satellite imagery on April 14 that shows that combined force strikes destroyed several buildings in Mehran, Ilam Province, including the Mehran Border Regiment and Mehran Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Headquarters.[31]
- Satellite imagery shows that the combined force struck a headquarters belonging to the IRGC and Basij in Eslamabad-e Gharb, Kermanshah Province.[32]
- Satellite imagery posted on April 14 shows that the combined force struck the Artesh Air Force 11th Tactical Airbase, which is home to the Artesh Air Force Headquarters in eastern Tehran.[33]

Iranian Response

Iran may have struck a bulk carrier off the coast of Oman on April 7 before the ceasefire went into effect.[34] United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported on April 14 that two unidentified projectiles struck a vessel 112 nautical miles southeast of Ras al Hadd, Oman, on April 7, causing a fire on the vessel.[35] UKMTO reported that a Pakistani Naval vessel assisted the struck bulk carrier and resolved the incident.[36] This attack marks the 29th attack or incident affecting civilian vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz that UKMTO has recorded since the war began.[37]

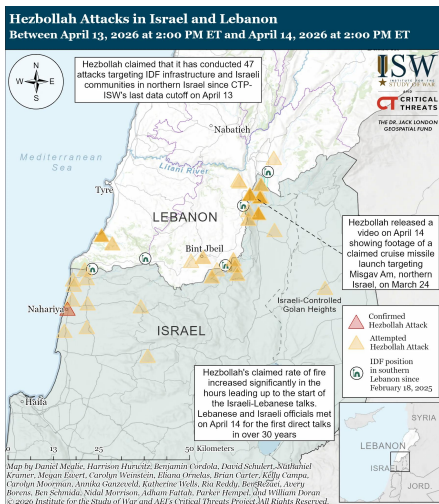
Israeli Campaign Against Hezbollah and Hezbollah Response

Lebanese and Israeli officials met in Washington, DC, on April 14, which marks the first direct talks between the two countries in over 30 years.[38] Lebanese Ambassador to the United States Nada Hamadeh Moawad, Israeli Ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz, and US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa attended the talks.[39] An unidentified US State Department official told Axios on April 13 that the officials would discuss measures to ensure security in northern Israel and Lebanese sovereignty.[40] Lebanese officials stated that Lebanon would demand an immediate ceasefire during the meeting and that Lebanon would not agree to future negotiations unless a ceasefire is implemented.[41] No official details about the meeting have been released at the time of this writing. Leiter stated that the talks were "excellent" and noted that the officials are all on the "same side of the equation" and are "united in liberating Lebanon" from Iranian influence and Hezbollah.[42] No Lebanese officials have commented on the talks at the time of this writing.

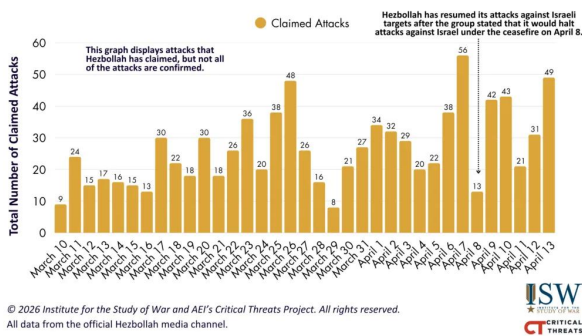
Hezbollah officials and supporters categorically rejected the Lebanese government's direct talks with Israel. Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem stated on April 13 that the Lebanese government's decision to engage in direct talks was "stabbing the resistance in the back" and called on the government to cancel the talks.[43] Qassem stated that Hezbollah will not surrender and reiterated that Hezbollah's objectives are to completely stop Israel's operations and secure an Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanese territory.[44] Hezbollah Political Council member Wafiq Safa similarly rejected the negotiations and told the Associated Press on April 14 that Hezbollah will not abide by any agreement made during the talks.[45] Hezbollah supporters have also held protests in Beirut in recent days to protest the direct talks.[46] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) warned on April 14, about an hour before the

talks began, that it expected Hezbollah to increase its rate of rocket attacks targeting northern Israel.[47]

Hezbollah claimed that it has conducted 47 attacks targeting IDF infrastructure and Israeli communities in northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on April 13.[48] Hezbollah has claimed 44 attacks against Israeli targets in northern Israel as of 2:00 PM ET on April 14, which is similar to its claimed rate of fire targeting Israel on April 13 (see April 13 data in graph below). Hezbollah's claimed rate of fire increased significantly in the hours leading up to the start of Israeli-Lebanese talks in Washington, DC, on April 14.[49] Hezbollah claimed that it launched three waves of rocket barrages between 11:00 and 11:30 AM ET, targeting between 5 and 13 civilian areas in northern Israel per barrage.[50] Hezbollah likely conducted these large-scale attacks to signal opposition to the Lebanese government's direct talks with Israel.[51] The IDF warned that Hezbollah would likely increase its rate of fire targeting northern Israel on April 14.[52] An Israeli military correspondent did not report any casualties from Hezbollah's rocket barrages targeting civilian areas on April 14.[53] An Israeli military correspondent reported that at least one Hezbollah drone impacted in Nahariya but did not cause any casualties.[54]



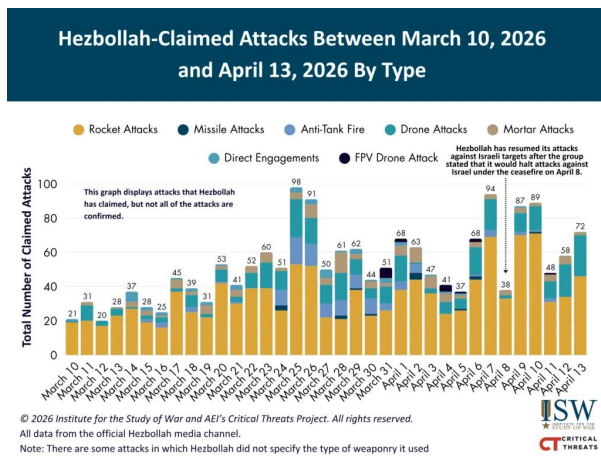
Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Targeting Israeli Forces and Positions in Israel Between March 10, 2026 and April 13, 2026



Hezbollah claimed that it has conducted 24 attacks targeting Israeli forces in southern Lebanon since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on April 13.[55] Hezbollah claimed that it fired four surface-to-air missiles (SAM) targeting IDF drones and fighter aircraft over southern Lebanon on April 14.[56] The IDF did not report any casualties from Hezbollah rocket, drone, or SAM attacks in southern Lebanon on April 14.

Hezbollah released a video on April 14 showing footage of a claimed cruise missile launch targeting northern Israel on March 24. The video shows Hezbollah fighters preparing and launching an Iranian-made Paveh long-range cruise missile toward an IDF outpost near the town of Misgav Am.[57]

The Paveh has a range of around 1,650 kilometers and is part of the Soumar family of IRGC cruise missiles.[58] Israeli researchers first reported on March 19 that Hezbollah had received Paveh missiles from Iran.[59] Hezbollah has employed a variety of weapons in its attacks against Israeli targets (see graph below).

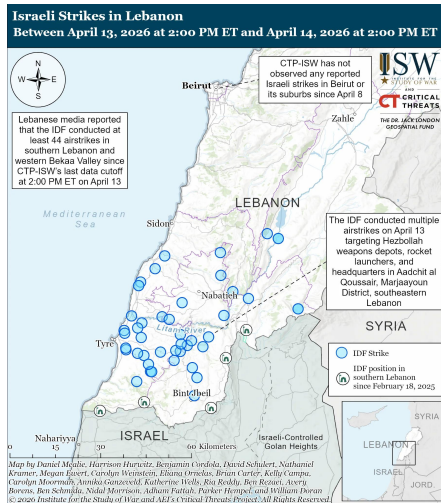


The IDF has continued to advance into the operationally and symbolically significant town of Bint Jbeil in southeastern Lebanon. IDF Northern Command Commander Major General Rafi Milo said on April 14 that the IDF completed its encirclement of Bint Jbeil and launched an attack on the town in “the last few days.”[60] The 35th Paratrooper Brigade (98th Paratrooper Division (Res.)), 89th Commando Brigade (98th Paratrooper Division (Res.)), and 84th (Givati) Infantry Brigade (91st Territorial Division) are currently operating in Bint Jbeil.[61] An Israeli journalist published footage on April 14 of an 84th Infantry Brigade commander standing in front of a Hezbollah memorial in Bint Jbeil.[62] The memorial is located around 300 meters from Bint Jbeil’s city center, according to an Israeli geospatial analyst.[63] The IDF published footage on April 14 of three Hezbollah fighters, including a Radwan Force member, surrendering to the 84th Infantry Brigade after engaging Israeli soldiers in Bint Jbeil on April 13.[64] The IDF also announced on April 14 that Hezbollah fighters engaged and wounded ten 101st Battalion (35th Paratrooper Brigade) soldiers, causing three serious injuries, in Bint Jbeil on April 13.[65] Bint Jbeil is operationally significant for the IDF because it is located at the nexus of multiple main roads in southeastern Lebanon, including the Tebnine-Bint Jbeil road, that the IDF could use to advance north and link with Israeli forces advancing from other axes. Bint Jbeil is also symbolically significant to Hezbollah. Former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah proclaimed “victory” from a stadium in Bint Jbeil after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000.[66] The IDF captured the Bint Jbeil Stadium on April 13, according to an Israeli journalist.[67] Hezbollah has also fought the IDF at Bint Jbeil in previous conflicts, including in 2006 and in the October 7 War.[68] An unspecified Israeli military official told Reuters on April 13 that the IDF will achieve full operational control of Bint Jbeil within days.[69]

Israeli forces have also continued to conduct ground operations in other areas of southern Lebanon. The IDF 933rd (Nahal) Infantry Brigade (162nd Armored Division) located and directed airstrikes targeting Hezbollah anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) crews, observation posts, and weapons depots in southern Lebanon.[70] 933rd Brigade forces also seized small arms, ammunition, and military vests from a Hezbollah cache in a civilian home.[71] An open-source intelligence (OSINT) account geolocated footage of the 933rd Brigade operating in Beit Lif, Bint Jbeil District, southeastern Lebanon.[72]

The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah infrastructure and fighters across Lebanon. The IDF conducted multiple airstrikes on April 13 targeting Hezbollah weapons depots, rocket launchers, and headquarters located in Aadchit al Qoussair, Marjaayoun District, southeastern

Lebanon.[73][74] The IDF reported that Hezbollah has launched around 130 rockets from Aadchit al Qoussair targeting northern Israel, particularly Kiryat Shmona, since March 2.[75][76] Aadchit al Qoussair is located around 10 kilometers from Kiryat Shmona. Lebanese media reported that the IDF conducted at least 44 airstrikes in southern Lebanon and western Bekaa Valley since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff at 2:00 PM ET on April 13.[77] CTP-ISW has not observed any reported Israeli strikes in Beirut or its suburbs since April 8, despite the IDF issuing an evacuation order for Beirut's southern suburbs on April 9.[78]



Iranian Internal Security

Iran's mounting economic strain could hurt its ability to finance post-war reconstruction.

Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani acknowledged on April 14 that the government lacks sufficient financial resources to fully cover the cost of rebuilding homes that were destroyed during the war.[79] Iranian media separately reported on April 14 that damage to major industries, such as Iran's steel and petrochemical industries, has deprived Iran of part of the foreign currency resources that these industries previously generated through exports, which has further tightened Iran's foreign currency constraints.[80] The combined force struck major industrial and energy facilities, including the Mobarakeh Steel Complex in Esfahan Province and Khuzestan Steel Company in Khuzestan Province, damaging major production hubs that support the broader Iranian economy.[81] Iranian media reported on April 1 that the damage to the Khuzestan Steel Company will require at least six months and up to one year to repair.[82] The Mobarakeh Steel Company separately announced on April 2 that strikes on the company have forced it to shut down its production lines.[83]

These wartime losses coincide with the regime's internet shutdown, which has further exacerbated Iran's economic strain by imposing substantial daily losses on commercial activity. An Iranian Chamber of Commerce official stated on April 14 that the internet shutdown is causing \$30 to \$40 million USD in "direct" daily losses and up to \$80 million USD when including "indirect" losses, which he argued is equivalent to the destruction of multiple major infrastructure assets each day.[84] NetBlocks reported on April 14 that Iran's nationwide internet blackout, now exceeding 46 days, severely disrupts financial transactions, commercial activity, and business operations.[85] NetBlocks estimates that the countrywide internet shutdown costs the Iranian economy over \$37 million USD per day.[86]

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Iran Update Special Report, April 15, 2026



Ria Reddy, Ben Rezaei, Benjamin Schmida, Parker Hempel, Nidal Morrison, Adham Fattah, Carolyn Moorman, Katherine Wells, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

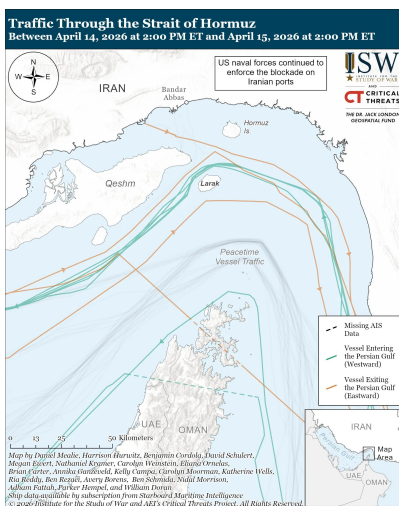
Key Takeaways

1. US naval forces continued to enforce the blockade on Iranian ports. US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported on April 15 that no vessels had breached the blockade on Iranian ports during the first 48 hours of enforcement.
2. The United States has reportedly set two preconditions for another round of negotiations: first, Iran must fully “reopen” the Strait of Hormuz, and second, the Iranian negotiating delegation must have “full authority” to finalize a deal. The second precondition comes amid reports of intra-regime conflict and corroborates ISW-CTP’s assessment that the United States is negotiating with a divided council of hardliners and pragmatists rather than a singular, unified authority.
3. Some Iranian officials have signaled different levels of willingness to compromise on Iran’s nuclear program in negotiations with the United States. These statements, at least to some extent, reflect internal disagreement over Iran’s negotiating position.
4. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz stated on April 14 that the United States and Israel have decided that removing the enriched uranium from Iran is a “threshold condition” for ending the US-Israeli campaign.
5. The US Treasury sanctioned 29 targets, including three individuals, 17 companies, and nine vessels on April 15, which are tied to Iranian oil smuggling and associated financing networks as part of the United States’ broader economic pressure campaign on Iran.
6. Pakistan is reportedly pushing the United States and Iran to extend the ceasefire by 45 days. US President Donald Trump told ABC News on April 14 that he is not considering extending the ceasefire that ends on April 22.
7. Iran is exploiting the current ceasefire to reorganize and regenerate its ballistic missile forces program on the tactical level by attempting to reopen tunnel entrances at missile bases.
8. Iran reportedly utilized an advanced reconnaissance satellite purchased from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 2024 to target US military assets and bases across the Middle East during the war.

9. The Israeli Security Cabinet reportedly held a meeting on April 15 to discuss a possible ceasefire in Lebanon, amid recent direct talks between Israel and Lebanon under US auspices. Israeli officials have not announced the outcome of the security cabinet meeting at the time of this writing, however.

Toplines

US naval forces continued to enforce the blockade on Iranian ports. US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported on April 15 that no vessels had breached the blockade on Iranian ports during the first 48 hours of enforcement.[1] CENTCOM stated that nine vessels complied with the US direction to turn around and return to Iranian ports or coastal areas.[2] CENTCOM added that US forces have halted economic maritime trade to and from Iran and are prepared to act against any vessels attempting to violate the blockade.[3] Additional CENTCOM reporting indicates that the US forces redirected at least one Iranian-flagged cargo vessel after it departed Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province.[4]



The United States has reportedly set two preconditions for another round of negotiations: first, Iran must fully “reopen” the Strait of Hormuz, and second, the Iranian negotiating delegation must have “full authority” to finalize a deal.[5] Iran has not conducted any kinetic activity targeting international shipping since April 7.[6] Iran does not need to conduct attacks against vessels to maintain the threat to international shipping, however. The decision for vessels to transit the strait is for the shipping companies, which will likely be hesitant to move vessels through the Strait until Iran provides reassurance that it does not pose a threat to their vessels and cargo.

The second precondition, which demands that Iran’s delegation have “full authority” from Iran’s senior leadership (including the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)) to finalize a deal, corroborates ISW-CTP’s assessment that the United States is negotiating with a divided council of hardliners and pragmatists rather than a singular, unified authority.[7] US Vice President JD Vance stated on April 14 that he believed that the Iranian negotiators in Islamabad wanted to make a deal, which implies that he assesses that the hardliners in Tehran were responsible for Iran’s reticence to make a deal.[8] Anti-regime media separately reported on April 14 that Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary General Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr was furious when Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi allegedly appeared open to compromising on halting Iranian funding for the Axis of Resistance at the US-Iran negotiations in Islamabad on April 11.[9] Zolghadr then reportedly briefed Araghchi’s “deviation” to senior leadership, including by sending messages to IRGC officials and Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei’s close affiliate Hossein Taeb, which

resulted in the leadership ordering the delegation to leave after 21 hours of negotiations.[10] Zolghadr was one of the founding members of the IRGC Quds Force and helped establish some of the groups that now comprise the Axis of Resistance.[11] Unspecified mediators speaking to the *Wall Street Journal* on April 15 confirmed that Zolghadr has been “highly influential” in Iranian decision-making in US-Iran negotiations.[12] These reports follow previous anti-regime media reports on April 10 that IRGC Commander and key decisionmaker Major General Ahmad Vahidi pushed to get Zolghadr on the Iranian delegation to Islamabad, but the delegation leaders Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf pushed back due to Zolghadr’s lack of diplomatic experience.[13] The senior leadership’s response to withdraw the delegation after Araghchi’s reported openness to discussing Iran’s support for the Axis of Resistance shows how unwilling the hardliners are to compromise on Iranian positions and how much sway they have over Iranian decision-making.

Some Iranian officials have signaled different levels of willingness to compromise on Iran’s nuclear program in negotiations with the United States. These statements, at least to some extent, reflect internal disagreement over Iran’s negotiating position. Iranian Deputy Parliament Speaker Ali Nikzad stated on April 15 that Iran will not negotiate its right to enrich uranium.[14] Former hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad appointed Nikzad to several ministerial posts while he was president, and Nikzad later served as campaign chairman for former hardline President Ebrahim Raisi in the 2017 election.[15] His relationship with hardline figures suggests that Nikzad may similarly hold hardline, anti-Western views. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei adopted a slightly more flexible tone and stated on April 15 that Iran is willing to discuss “the level and type of enrichment.”[16] Baghaei emphasized that Iran must retain the ability to enrich uranium based on its “needs,” however.[17] Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi leads the foreign ministry and is more pragmatic than some Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) officials involved in negotiations, which may make him more open to supporting limited concessions (see above). Two senior Iranian officials separately told the *New York Times* on April 13 that Iran told the United States that it is willing to pause enrichment for up to five years.[18] These differences likely reflect the presence of competing factions in Iran with divergent objectives in negotiations, which ISW-CTP previously assessed will likely complicate efforts to reach a negotiated agreement.[19]

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz stated on April 14 that the United States and Israel have decided that removing the enriched uranium from Iran is a “threshold condition” for ending the US-Israeli campaign.[20] Iran offered to downblend its highly enriched uranium instead of handing over its highly enriched uranium (HEU) stockpile during US-Iran talks on April 11 and 12.[21] ISW-CTP previously assessed that Iran presumably seeks to dilute rather than hand over its HEU stockpile so that it could re-enrich this stockpile at some point in the future.[22]

The US Treasury continues to sanction the Iranian oil trade as part of the broader US economic pressure campaign against Iran.[23] The US Treasury sanctioned 29 targets, including three individuals, 17 companies, and nine vessels on April 15, which are tied to Iranian oil smuggling and associated financing networks.[24] The US Treasury Department designated individuals and companies involved in shipping, logistics, and financial facilitation activities that support Iranian oil exports and sanctions evasion.[25] The Treasury stated that these networks operate within the broader shipping empire of Hossein Shamkhani and generate revenue for the Iranian regime and its regional proxies, including Hezbollah.[26] Hossein is the son of former Iranian Defense Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani.[27] The United States sanctioned Hossein and his multinational shipping network in July 2025 for generating tens of billions of dollars in revenue for the Shamkhani family and the Iranian regime.[28] The Treasury separately reported on April 14 that it is maintaining “maximum pressure” on Iran and is prepared to impose secondary sanctions on foreign financial institutions that continue to support Iranian activities.[29] The Treasury added that a short-term authorization permitting the sale of

Iranian oil currently stranded at sea will expire in the coming days and “will not be renewed.”[30] The Trump administration has also sent warning letters to banks in Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, and the PRC, stating that financial institutions facilitating Iranian funds could face secondary sanctions and potential exclusion from the US financial system.[31]

Pakistan is reportedly pushing the United States and Iran to extend the ceasefire by 45 days.[32] US President Donald Trump told ABC News on April 14 that he is not considering extending the ceasefire.[33] The ceasefire is set to expire on April 22.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

Iran is exploiting the current ceasefire to reorganize and regenerate its ballistic missile forces on the tactical level. Satellite imagery observed by CNN on April 14 showed that Iran attempted to remove debris in front of the entrances to the Southwest Tabriz Missile Base in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province, and the Khomein Missile Base in Khomein, Markazi Province.[34] An Israeli geospatial analyst assessed that the internal structures of the Khomein and Tabriz missile bases “appear to still be intact” and that missile stockpiles are likely still there.[35] The combined force struck the Khomein Missile Base on February 28 and the Tabriz missile base on March 3.[36] The combined force struck the entrances of multiple Iranian missile bases over the course of the conflict, likely to degrade Iran’s ability to access missiles and missile launchers.[37] Iran is exploiting the lack of combined force strikes to move and use the construction equipment (such as bulldozers) necessary to access the missile launchers at Khomein and Tabriz. Unspecified sources told CNN on April 14 that US intelligence officials assessed that roughly half of Iran’s missile launchers are still operational.[38]

The combined force struck an Iranian defense industrial site and likely a makeshift internal security headquarters before the ceasefire. Satellite imagery from March 27 shows that the combined force struck the Ritaj Entertainment Complex in Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province.[39] An Iranian researcher stated on March 22 that IRGC Ground Forces commanders used the complex as a headquarters following the destruction of the IRGC Ground Forces Karbala Operational Division base.[40] Satellite imagery from April 15 shows that the combined force struck two facilities with the Ya Mahdi Industrial Research Complex between March 7 and 17.[41] Ya Mahdi Industrial Research Complex is a US-sanctioned company that is involved in the purchase of missile-related technology for the Iranian Aerospace Industries Organization and production of navigational equipment, radar systems, and high-pressure test instruments.[42]

Iranian Response

Iran reportedly utilized an advanced reconnaissance satellite purchased from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 2024 to target US military assets and bases across the Middle East during the war.[43] Leaked Iranian military documents obtained by the *Financial Times* indicate that the IRGC Aerospace Force covertly purchased the Chinese Earth Eye TEE-01B reconnaissance satellite in 2024 for \$36.6 million after its launch and transferred the satellite to the IRGC while in orbit.[44] The TEE-01B’s reported half-meter-per-pixel imagery resolution is comparable to Western models and enables the IRGC to identify aircraft, vehicles, and infrastructure changes, which likely supports Iranian battle damage assessments and targeting refinement.[45] The *Financial Times* reported that it obtained time-stamped coordinate lists, satellite imagery, and orbital analysis, which indicated that Iranian commanders tasked the satellite with monitoring key US military sites and captured images in March before and after drone and missile attacks on said locations.[46] China also granted the IRGC Aerospace

Force access to Emposat's commercial ground stations, a Beijing-based satellite control and data provider with a global network.[47] Empostat is reportedly closely linked to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Aerospace Force, including PLA personnel associated with key Empostat satellite launch command centers.[48] The combined force has repeatedly struck Iranian satellite ground stations during the 12-Day War and the current war in Iran, but by utilizing commercial ground stations outside of Iran, the IRGC prevented Israeli strikes.[49] The leaked data showed that the satellite captured imagery of Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia from March 13 to 15.[50] This corresponded with Iranian ballistic missile attacks on Prince Sultan Air Base, which damaged five US KC-135 refueling tankers.[51] Other data showed that the satellite also conducted surveillance of the Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan and locations close to the US Fifth Fleet naval base in Manama, Bahrain, and Erbil airport, Iraq, contemporaneous with IRGC-claimed attacks on facilities in those areas.[52] The satellite also captured imagery of critical infrastructure that Iran struck in Gulf states, such as the Alba Aluminum facility in Bahrain, which Iran struck on March 29.[53] The *Financial Times* report on the IRGC's utilization of Chinese intelligence assets for offensive capabilities follows a similar *Washington Post* report that Russia reportedly shared intelligence with Iran to support Iranian attacks against US forces in the Middle East in March.[54]

Israeli Campaign Against Hezbollah and Hezbollah Response

The Israeli Security Cabinet reportedly held a meeting on April 15 to discuss a possible ceasefire in Lebanon, amid recent direct talks between Israel and Lebanon under US auspices.[55] Israeli officials have not announced the outcome of the security cabinet meeting at the time of this writing. Israeli officials told Israeli and Western media on April 15 that the Israeli Security Cabinet met to discuss a possible ceasefire in Lebanon.[56] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a statement after the meeting, did not specify whether the Israeli officials had made a decision about a ceasefire in Lebanon, according to an Israeli Army Radio correspondent.[57] A senior Israeli political source told Israeli media on April 15 that Israel's assessment is that Israel will need to agree to a ceasefire in Lebanon in the next few days.[58] Israeli media reported that the US has put "heavy pressure" on Israel to accept "a temporary, symbolic ceasefire" in Lebanon.[59] The Israeli discussion of a possible ceasefire in Lebanon follows the first direct talks between Israeli and Lebanese officials in over 30 years in Washington, DC, on April 14.[60] The United States, Israel, and Lebanon issued a joint statement following their trilateral meeting on April 14 and stated that Lebanon, Israel, and the United States agreed to hold "direct negotiations" at an unspecified future date and location.[61]

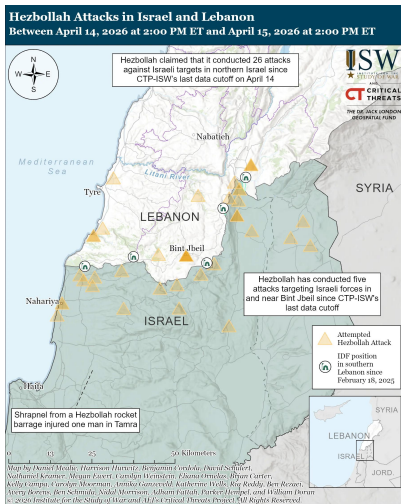
Israeli media reported that senior Israel Defense Forces (IDF) officials are calling for the IDF to expand its "security zone" in southern Lebanon.[62] An Israeli Army Radio correspondent reported on April 15 that unspecified senior IDF officials are pushing for the IDF to expand the Israeli "security zone" in Lebanon beyond "second and third village lines" where the IDF units are currently operating.[63] The officials have also called for IDF units to conduct raids on Lebanese villages deeper within southern Lebanon.[64] IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said on April 15 that he has ordered IDF units operating in southern Lebanon to make southern Lebanon up to the Litani River a "killing zone" for Hezbollah operatives.[65] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on April 11 that the IDF had created a "security zone" in southern Lebanon.[66] Netanyahu stated that the IDF security zone extends between eight and ten kilometers north of the Israel-Lebanon border.[67] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz previously called for the "security zone" to extend up to the Litani River.[68]

Hezbollah claimed that it conducted 26 attacks targeting IDF infrastructure and Israeli communities in northern Israel since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff on April 14.[69] An Israeli Army Radio correspondent reported on April 15 that Hezbollah launched 70 to 80 percent of its rockets

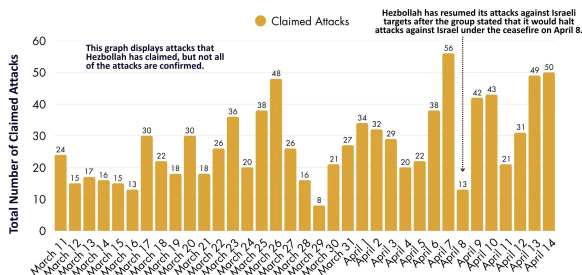
targeting northern Israel from positions north of the Litani River.[70] An Israeli military correspondent also reported on April 15 that Hezbollah fired about 40 rockets at northern Israel.[71] Shrapnel from Hezbollah rocket fire lightly wounded one man in Tamra, northern Israel.[72]

Hezbollah claimed that it conducted 20 attacks targeting Israeli forces in southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff on April 14.[73] Hezbollah claimed that it conducted four rocket attacks targeting IDF personnel in Beit Jbeil, southeastern Lebanon.[74] Hezbollah also claimed that it conducted a complex attack targeting an element of the IDF 101st Battalion, 35th Paratroopers Brigade (98th Division) in Bint Jbeil.[75] Hezbollah said that it used an improvised explosive device (IED) before engaging the patrol with small arms fire.[76]

Hezbollah fired a Paveh long-range cruise missile on April 14, targeting northern Israel.[77] The missile likely fell short and struck a civilian home in Ablah, Zahle District, Lebanon.[78] An unknown projectile — which a missile expert later identified as a Paveh based on the debris — struck a house in Ablah, according to a post from a Lebanese open-source intelligence (OSINT) account on April 15.[79] The Paveh has a range of around 1,650 kilometers and is part of the Soumar family of IRGC cruise missiles.[80]



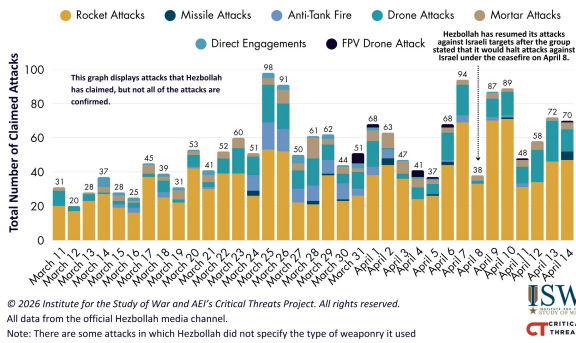
Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Targeting Israeli Forces and Positions in Israel Between March 11, 2026 and April 14, 2026



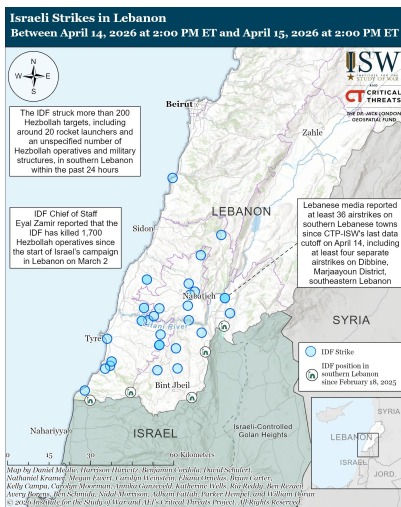
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Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Between March 11, 2026 and April 14, 2026 By Type



The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah infrastructure and fighters across Lebanon. The IDF said it has struck more than 200 Hezbollah targets, including around 20 rocket launchers and an unspecified number of Hezbollah operatives and military structures, in southern Lebanon within the past 24 hours.[81] IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir reported that the IDF has killed 1,700 Hezbollah operatives since the start of Israel’s campaign in Lebanon on March 2.[82] Lebanese media reported at least 36 airstrikes on southern Lebanese towns since ISW-CTP’s last data cutoff on April 14, including at least four separate airstrikes on Dibbine, Marjaayoun District, southeastern Lebanon.[83] The IDF also reiterated evacuation orders on April 15, calling for southern Lebanese residents to move north of the Zahrani River.[84] The IDF previously called for southern Lebanese residents to move north of the Zahrani River on March 12 and 17.[85] The Zahrani River is further north than the Litani River and is located approximately 56 kilometers north of the Israel-Lebanon border.[86]



The IDF completed its “siege” of Bint Jbeil, southeastern Lebanon, on April 15.[87] Hezbollah wounded a 401st Armored Brigade (162nd Armored Division) battalion commander in Bint Jbeil, southeastern Lebanon, on April 14.[88] The IDF “completed” the “siege” of Bint Jbeil on April 15 after fighting in the town over the last few days.[89] Bint Jbeil is operationally significant for the IDF because it is located at the nexus of multiple main roads in southeastern Lebanon, including the Tebnine-Bint Jbeil road, that the IDF could use to advance north and link with Israeli forces advancing from other axes. Bint Jbeil is also symbolically significant to Hezbollah. Former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah proclaimed “victory” from a stadium in Bint Jbeil after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000.[90]

Iranian Internal Security

Iranian media reported on April 15 that two improvised explosive device (IED) attacks targeted a Basij checkpoint on Imam Khamenei Street in Tehran City, injuring three people and causing material damage to nearby homes and vehicles.[91] An informed security source told a hardliner outlet that the incident caused “superficial” damage due to the incomplete explosion of both IEDs, but the attack did injure one Basij member and two other Iranians.[92] The security source noted that the Mojahedin-e Khalq has conducted similar attacks.[93] A reformist outlet separately quoted an IRGC statement that said that the attack originally included three IEDs, two of which exploded and one that Iranian authorities dismantled.[94] The IRGC statement also reportedly said that there are possibly two more IEDs remaining in the area.[95]

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Iran Update Special Report, April 16, 2026



Katherine Wells, Parker Hempel, Carolyn Moorman, Ben Rezaei, Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, Nidal Morrison, Kelly Campa, Ria Reddy, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. The main sticking point in current US-Iran negotiations is reportedly Iran's enrichment of uranium and its highly enriched uranium stockpile. The IRGC appears to be playing an outsized role in Iranian decision-making in these negotiations, traditionally meant for civilian leadership.
2. Iran appears to have not compromised on its stance over the Strait of Hormuz and its nuclear program, despite Iranian sources attempting to illustrate that Iran has compromised and the two sides have made progress in negotiations, however. Iran is leveraging its position over the Strait of Hormuz to extract concessions while maintaining its claim to control access to the waterway.
3. US President Donald Trump stated on April 16 that the United States is "very close" to reaching a deal with Iran. Trump stated that Iran "has agreed to almost everything" and added that Iran has agreed to hand over its enriched uranium stockpile. Iran has not publicly confirmed Trump's remarks at the time of this writing.
4. The United States is targeting materiel support to Iran's armed forces and military capabilities through the blockade. The blockade also continues to impose economic costs on Iran.
5. The Iranian missile force is exploiting the current ceasefire to reconstitute its tactical and operational-level units, but rebuilding the industrial facilities and other components that sustain the missile force at the strategic level will be extremely challenging.
6. US President Donald Trump announced that Lebanon and Israel have agreed to a 10-day ceasefire beginning at 5:00 PM ET on April 16. Netanyahu stated that Lebanon must disarm Hezbollah and establish a "lasting peace agreement" with Israel.

Toplines

Iran is leveraging its position over the Strait of Hormuz to extract concessions while maintaining its claim to control access to the waterway. Reuters reported on April 15 that Iran has

proposed allowing ships to transit through the Omani side of the Strait of Hormuz without interference if the United States agrees to conditions that prevent renewed conflict and meet Iranian demands.[1] Iran has linked increased maritime access to broader negotiations, including demands to unfreeze Iranian funds, and a permanent end to US and Israeli strikes both in this war and for posterity. The implication of Iran's "concession" is that it could threaten ships to discourage them from transiting the Omani side of the Strait unless the United States grants Iran significant concessions. Agreeing to Iranian demands along these lines would show Iran that it can coerce the United States using the Strait of Hormuz both now and in the future.

The main sticking point in current US-Iran negotiations is reportedly Iran's enrichment of uranium and its highly enriched uranium stockpile. The United States has proposed a 20-year pause to enrichment, while the Iranians offered a 3- to 5-year pause, according to Iranian sources speaking to Reuters.[2] The United States wants Iran to remove all of the highly enriched uranium from Iran, whereas Iran has proposed down-blending it or only moving part of its highly enriched uranium to another country, but not all of it, according to Iranian sources speaking to Western media in recent days.[3] Iran could still enrich the remaining stockpile relatively quickly if it retained some highly enriched uranium, and it could use a 5-year pause to improve centrifuges and build or repair them. A Western diplomat told Reuters on April 16 that the nuclear issue "remains a core obstacle." [4] An unspecified source also told Reuters that a Pakistani mediator had made a breakthrough on "sticky issues," but the negotiating parties have not resolved issues over Iran's nuclear program.[5] An Iranian source told Reuters on April 16 that Iran is not ready to send all of its highly enriched uranium stockpile abroad, but it could send "part of it" to a third-party country.[6] The source claimed that Iran needed to retain some of the stockpile because Iran needs the remaining stockpile for medical purposes at a research reactor in Tehran.[7] This research reactor runs on only a few tens of kilograms (kg) of 20 percent enriched uranium instead of 10,000kg of Iran's total enriched uranium stockpile, according to nuclear expert David Albright.[8] Only a small portion—roughly 400kg—of the 10,000kg Albright references is highly enriched uranium (60%). US objectives appear to remain at zero enrichment on Iranian soil, however. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated on April 15 that Israeli and US objectives in Iran are identical and include the removal of Iranian highly enriched uranium, the "dismantling" of Iran's nuclear enrichment capabilities, and "reinstating" a nuclear deal.[9]

Iran appears not to have compromised on its stance over the Strait of Hormuz and its nuclear program, despite Iranian sources attempting to illustrate that Iran has compromised and the two sides have made progress in negotiations, however. Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) affiliated media on April 16 denied all recent Reuters reporting citing Iranian sources.[10] The same IRGC-affiliated outlet had cast doubt on progress in future US-Iran talks, due to Iran's distrust of the United States and US "excessive demands" earlier on April 16.[11] These conflicting reports on Iranian stances in these negotiations corroborate CTP-ISW's continued observation that the Iranian negotiating council is not unified. This disunity will make it harder for Iran to make decisions and implement decisions throughout this negotiating process.[12]

The IRGC appears to be playing an outsized role in Iranian decision-making in these negotiations, traditionally meant for civilian leadership. Pakistani Army Chief Field Marshall Asim Munir met with Iran's negotiating delegation lead Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and Iran's Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters Commander Major General Ali Abdollahi Aliabadi on April 16 as part of his mediation mission in Tehran as part of the US-Iran negotiation process.[13] Munir might travel to Washington next.[14] Abdollahi Aliabadi is notably not on the Iranian negotiating team. The Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters is responsible for joint and wartime operations and not typically diplomatic missions.[15] Munir's meeting with Aliabadi follows recent anti-regime media reports that Abdollahi Aliabadi and IRGC Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi organizing Iran's wartime military

efforts.[16] Iranian and international media did not report whether Munir met with Vahidi at the time of this writing. Vahidi is part of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's inner circle, which pushed for the Assembly of Experts' election of Mojtaba as supreme leader in March.[17] Vahidi and his affiliates, including Supreme National Security Council Secretary Brigadier General Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, have also reportedly been in conflict with pragmatists in the regime, like Ghalibaf, over Iran's national security and foreign policy decisions.[18]

US President Donald Trump stated on April 16 that the United States is “very close” to reaching a deal with Iran.[19] Trump stated that Iran “has agreed to almost everything” and added that Iran has agreed to hand over its enriched uranium stockpile.[20] Trump added that he may travel to Pakistan to sign an agreement if negotiations conclude in Islamabad.[21] Iran has not publicly confirmed Trump's remarks at the time of this writing.

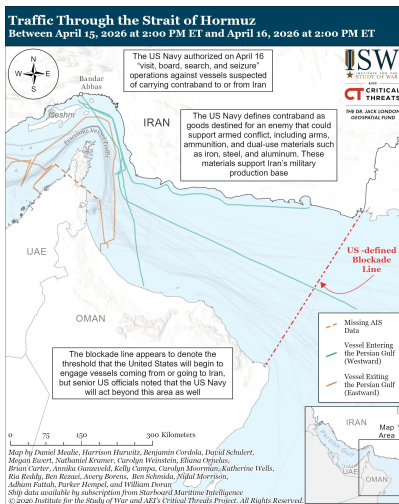
The United States Navy continues to enforce a blockade on Iranian ports. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dan Caine and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth defined a blockade line that runs diagonally across the Gulf of Oman from Ras al Hadd, Oman, to the Iran-Pakistan border.[22] The blockade line appears to denote the threshold that the United States will begin to engage vessels coming from or going to Iran, but Caine and Hegseth noted that the US Navy will act beyond this area as well.[23] The US Navy will interdict Iranian-linked ships in the Pacific Ocean that crossed the line before the blockade began, for example. US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that 14 vessels have complied with US directives to turn around.[24]

The United States is targeting materiel support to Iran's armed forces and military capabilities through the blockade. Caine stated on April 16 that the United States will pursue any vessel in Iranian territorial waters and international waters that attempts to provide materiel support to Iran.[25] The US Navy authorized, on April 16, “visit, board, search, and seizure” operations against vessels suspected of carrying contraband to or from Iran.[26] It defines contraband as goods destined for an enemy that could support armed conflict, including arms, ammunition, and dual-use materials such as iron, steel, and aluminum.[27] These materials support Iran's military production base. Recent US-Israeli strikes have severely degraded Iran's steel and petrochemical production capacity, which likely increases Iran's reliance on imports now targeted by the blockade.[28]

The blockade also continues to impose economic costs on Iran. CENTCOM announced on April 15 that the blockade has effectively halted maritime trade to and from Iran.[29] Iran halted petrochemical exports on April 13, at least in part due to the blockade that began the same day.[30] Steel—explicitly defined as contraband—and petrochemicals are among Iran's most important exports and support both economic and military activity.[31] Iran's severely limited ability to export such goods reduces Iran's access to foreign currency. The blockade, combined with growing US sanctions on Iran's illicit oil networks and the recent US decision not to renew a 30-day sanctions waiver for Iranian oil exports, will also constrain Iran's oil export capabilities.[32] A sanctions-focused US analyst estimated on April 13 that a successful blockade on Iranian ports and shipping would cost the regime around \$435 million USD per day.[33]

Commercially available maritime data provides only limited information on vessel compliance with the US blockade. At least four vessels entered the Strait of Hormuz, and two vessels exited the strait since CTP-ISW's data cutoff on April 15, according to Starboard Maritime Intelligence.[34] This data does not confirm whether any of these vessels violated the blockade or received US authorization to transit. One of the entering vessels, cargo ship ZAYNAR2, departed Mumbai, India, on April 11 and entered the strait on April 15.[35] Commercially available maritime data does not indicate what the vessel was carrying. Reuters previously reported that US military guidance to mariners exempts humanitarian shipments to Iran. Open-source information also does not reveal whether the vessel

communicated with US Navy forces.



The Iranian missile force is exploiting the current ceasefire to reconstitute its tactical and operational-level units, but rebuilding the industrial facilities and other components that sustain the missile force at the strategic level will be extremely challenging. US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth acknowledged in a press briefing on April 16 that Iran has begun to dig up its missile launchers but noted that Iran has not determined how to “replenish” its missile stockpile.[36] Satellite imagery observed by CNN on April 14 showed that Iran attempted to remove debris in front of the entrances to the Southwest Tabriz Missile Base in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province, and the Khomein Missile Base in Khomein, Markazi Province.[37] The combined force struck the entrances of multiple Iranian missile bases over the course of the conflict to disrupt Iran’s ability to fire missiles.[38] Removing debris from these missile sites and restoring coordination between missile units and command and control within the force, for example, will enable the missile force to conduct more coordinated missile attacks, if it chooses to do so. These activities do not, however, alter the serious strategic damage the air campaign wrought to Iran’s ballistic missile program. The campaign struck defense industry facilities related to the program, ranging from final missile component assembly to aluminum and steel mills required for the raw materials of the missiles.[39] Reconstituting these assets will take much longer, in relative terms, than it did after the June 2025 strikes because Israel struck far fewer industrial targets across far fewer segments of the ballistic missile production chain in June.

US President Donald Trump announced that Lebanon and Israel have agreed to a 10-day ceasefire beginning at 5:00 PM ET on April 16.[40] Trump said in a social media post that he spoke to Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who both agreed to the ceasefire.[41] The US State Department published the following six provisions for the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement later on April 16:[42]

1. Israel and Lebanon have agreed to a ceasefire starting at 5:00 PM ET on April 16 for an initial 10-day period. The ceasefire is a “gesture of goodwill” by Israel to allow time for negotiations toward a peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon.
2. The initial 10-day ceasefire period may be extended by mutual agreement from Israel and Lebanon, provided that the Lebanese government “effectively demonstrates” its ability to assert its sovereignty over Lebanon.
3. Israel agreed to halt all offensive military operations in Lebanon. Israel reserves the right to act in self-defense against any “planned, imminent, or ongoing” Hezbollah threats against Israel, however. These Israeli attacks would not constitute a violation of the ceasefire agreement.
4. The Lebanese government agrees to take “meaningful steps” to prevent Hezbollah or other non-

state actors from conducting attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory. The United States said that Lebanon would receive unspecified international support with this task.

5. The United States, Lebanon, and Israel recognize that the Lebanese security forces alone have the responsibility to defend Lebanese sovereignty and national defense.
6. Israel and Lebanon request US support for further negotiations between Israel and Lebanon to resolve remaining issues, including the demarcation of the Israel-Lebanon border and establishing a peace agreement between the two countries.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that Israel accepted the 10-day temporary ceasefire to pursue “a historic” peace agreement with Lebanon under US auspices.[43] Netanyahu stated that Lebanon must disarm Hezbollah and establish a “lasting peace agreement” with Israel.[44] Netanyahu stated that Israel will maintain its “security zone” in southern Lebanon.[45] Netanyahu said that the “security zone” will reportedly allow Israel to prevent Hezbollah from conducting infiltration operations into northern Israel and prevent the group from launching anti-tank guided missiles at northern Israeli communities.[46] Netanyahu said that Hezbollah requested that Israel fully withdraw from Lebanese territory and agree to a “quiet for quiet” ceasefire as a part of the ceasefire agreement.[47] Netanyahu said that he did not agree to either of the Hezbollah requests.[48]

Multiple Hezbollah officials told Lebanese and international media that the group would agree to the ceasefire on the condition that Israel completely ceases military operations in Lebanon.[49] Hezbollah parliamentarian Ibrahim al Moussawi told AFP on April 16 that Hezbollah would abide by the ceasefire provided Israel halts its operations and airstrikes targeting Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon.[50] Hezbollah-affiliated media reported that the Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon, Mohammad Reza Sheibani, informed Hezbollah that Trump would inform Netanyahu and Aoun of the ceasefire beginning on April 16.[51] Sheibani reportedly confirmed to Hezbollah that Iran would adhere to the ceasefire in Lebanon as a part of the broader US-Iran ceasefire. Hezbollah reportedly said that it would continue to monitor Israel’s commitment to “halting all hostilities against Lebanon.”[52] Unspecified Hezbollah sources told Qatari media that the ceasefire in Lebanon must not allow the IDF to maintain “freedom of movement” in Lebanon.[53]

Trump separately announced on April 16 that he had invited Netanyahu and Aoun to a meeting at the White House at an unspecified future date to discuss peace negotiations.[54]

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi called his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on April 15, likely in part to discuss the ongoing blockade in the Strait of Hormuz.[55] Araghchi thanked Yi for the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) efforts to “reduce tensions,” while Yi affirmed Iran’s “rights and interests” in the Strait of Hormuz “must be respected and protected.”[56] The PRC may be concerned with the blockade’s effect on its ability to get Iranian oil. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent stated on April 14 that the US blockade on Iranian ports will ensure that no vessels from the PRC are “able to get their [Iranian] oil.”[57] China gets about 13.4 percent of its imported oil by sea from Iran.[58]

US and Israeli Air Campaign

The US-Israeli combined force struck a crude oil storage tank at an oil export terminal on Sirri Island, Hormozgan Province, before the ceasefire. Satellite imagery from April 15 shows damage to the storage tank.[59]

Iranian Response

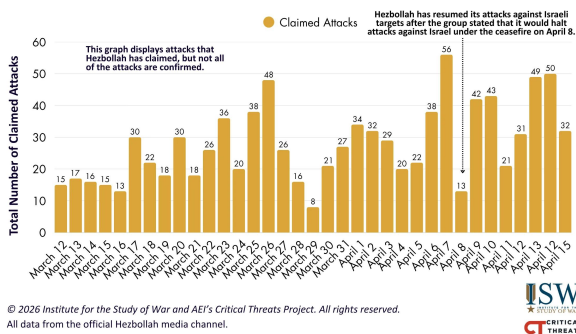
Nothing significant to report.

Israeli Campaign Against Hezbollah and Hezbollah Response

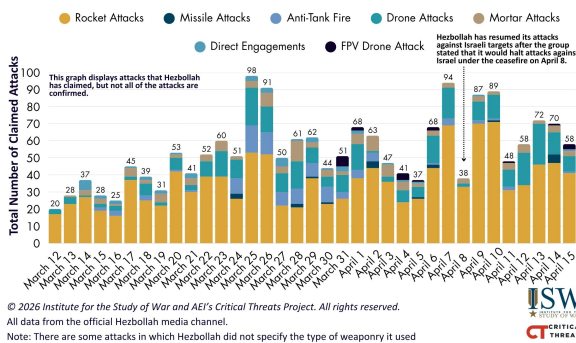
Hezbollah claimed that it conducted 30 attacks targeting IDF infrastructure and Israeli communities in northern Israel since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on April 15.[60] All claimed Hezbollah attacks occurred before the April 16 ceasefire went into effect. Hezbollah claimed that it conducted multiple rocket attacks on Kiryat Shmona and Haifa city in northern Israel.[61] Hezbollah also claimed that it fired rockets at an IDF naval officer school in Acre and an IDF barracks in Nahariya.[62]

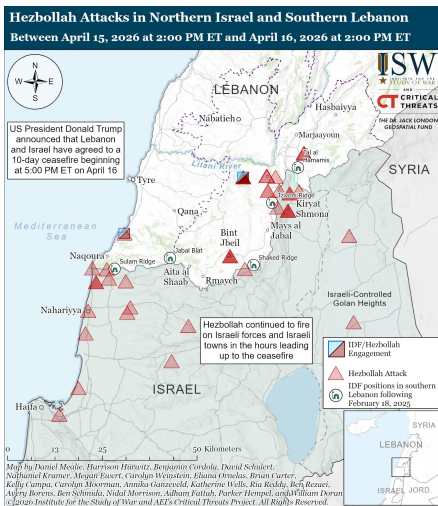
Hezbollah claimed that it conducted 37 attacks targeting Israeli forces in southern Lebanon since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff on April 15.[63] All claimed Hezbollah attacks occurred before the April 16 ceasefire went into effect. Hezbollah claimed at least 11 attacks on IDF forces in the vicinity of Bint Jbeil on April 15 and April 16.[64] The IDF said that it completed its "siege" of Bint Jbeil, southeastern Lebanon, on April 15.[65] Hezbollah claimed that it conducted at least three FPV drone attacks on IDF vehicles, such as Merkava Tanks and a D9 bulldozer in Southern Lebanon.[66] Hezbollah also claimed that it conducted several anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) attacks on IDF Merkava Tanks.[67]

Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Targeting Israeli Forces and Positions in Israel Between March 12, 2026 and April 15, 2026



Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Between March 12, 2026 and April 15, 2026 By Type





The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah infrastructure and fighters across Lebanon. All IDF strikes occurred before the April 16 ceasefire went into effect. The IDF said that its strikes in Lebanon have destroyed the majority of Hezbollah’s anti-ship missile stockpile.[68] The IDF added that it targeted Hezbollah’s stockpiles and warehouses of anti-ship missiles in Lebanon since the start of the war.[69] The IDF estimated that Hezbollah had around 100 anti-ship missiles before the war began, but assessed on April 16 that the group only had a few remaining.[70]

Israeli special operations forces conducted the first amphibious raid into Lebanon since 2000 on April 14. Israeli media reported on April 16 that the Shayetet 13, an Israeli Navy special forces unit, conducted an amphibious landing operation in Naqoura, southern Lebanon, on April 14.[71] Naqoura is 3 kilometers from the border with Israel. The operation was reportedly the first amphibious landing in Lebanon conducted by the IDF since 2000.[72]

Ground operations continued elsewhere in southern Lebanon. The IDF reported that Hezbollah rocket fire injured five IDF soldiers in southern Lebanon on April 16, according to an Israeli military correspondent.[73] The IDF’s 769th Brigade (91st territorial division) seized a Hezbollah weapons cache in southern Lebanon, which included small arms, ATGMs, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortar shells.[74] The IDF’s 869th Field Intelligence Battalion also directed a drone strike on nearby Hezbollah fighters amid the 769th’s weapon seizure.[75] The IDF’s 98th Division Givati Brigade separately seized a cache of Hezbollah small arms at a school near Bint Jbeil.[76]

Other Axis of Resistance Response

Kurdish media reported on April 16 that unspecified actors conducted 16 drone and missile attacks targeting anti-Iranian regime Kurdish groups in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region since April 8.[77] No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks. The Kurdish Counter Terrorism Service previously reported on April 14 that Iran launched two one-way attack drones aimed at Erbil Province, which unspecified fighter jets intercepted.[78] Iran has repeatedly attacked anti-regime Kurdish groups in Iraqi Kurdistan since the start of the conflict.[79]

Iran Internal

The regime’s inability to profit from closing the Strait of Hormuz has exacerbated internal divisions within the regime. Anti-regime media reported on April 16, citing informed sources, that the

regime formed a “Strait of Hormuz Traffic Licensing Committee” at the beginning of the war in order to generate funds from tankers that the regime allowed to pass through.[80] Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr headed the committee. The informed sources added that the committee charged about \$2 million per tanker, but that the regime has not received any payments thus far due to “mismanagement.” This mismanagement has reportedly caused “serious dissatisfaction” among senior Iranian officials and the Supreme Leader’s office. Some officials have proposed to reassign the responsibility of payment collection from Zolghadr to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Likely Mobarizoun Popular Front (MPF) fighters killed three Iranian Law Enforcement Command (LEC) in Sarivan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province on April 16.[81]

The MPF is a coalition of anti-regime Baloch militias formed on December 10, 2025.[82] This is the first MPF attack against Iranian security forces since March 3.[83]

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Iran Update Special Report, April 17, 2026



Ben Rezaei, Katherine Wells, Avery Borens, Parker Hempel, William Doran, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), which is the Iranian entity that has disrupted shipping in the Strait of Hormuz during the war, outlined specific conditions on April 17 for vessels to transit the strait that amount to Iran retaining control over maritime traffic through the strait. These conditions include: 1) only commercial vessels not “related to belligerent countries” may transit the strait, 2) vessels must transit the strait via Iran’s approved transit route through Iranian territorial waters, and 3) vessels must coordinate their passage through the strait with Iranian forces. These conditions indicate that the IRGC seeks to retain operational control over transit through the strait, likely to continue to use the strait as a point of leverage to try to extract concessions from the United States.
2. The IRGC harshly criticized Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi after Araghchi announced on X that the Strait of Hormuz is “completely open.” The IRGC’s criticism of Araghchi is reflective of broader divisions within the Iranian regime, which CTP-ISW has consistently reported on in recent weeks.
3. Commercially available maritime data shows that no Iranian-linked vessels approached the US blockade line on April 17, and US officials have stated that US forces will engage Iranian-linked vessels beyond this line. CENTCOM announced on April 17 that 19 vessels have complied with US direction to turn around and that zero vessels have successfully breached the blockade. Commercially available maritime data shows that some non-Iranian-linked vessels have approached the US blockade line to exit the strait. These ships do not fall under the US blockade and are able to freely transit in and out of the strait.
4. There continue to be significant gaps between the US and Iranian negotiating positions, and the status of the negotiations remains unclear. The two sides disagree on several core issues, according to US, Iranian, and other officials and sources on April 16 and 17.
5. Some Iranian regime officials seek a preliminary agreement to extend the ceasefire to continue negotiations for a more comprehensive agreement. CTP-ISW previously noted that Iran is exploiting

the current ceasefire to reorganize and regenerate its ballistic missile force, and Iran would almost certainly continue to do so if the United States and Iran agreed to a preliminary agreement and extended the ceasefire.

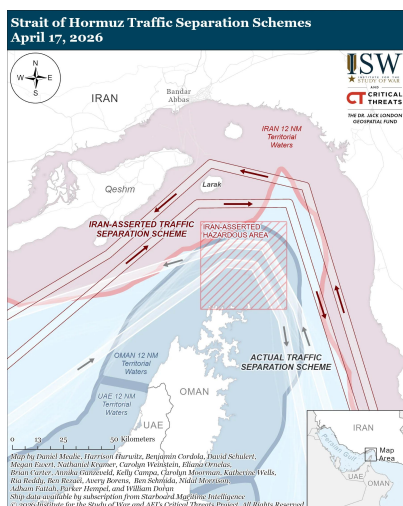
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The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), which is the Iranian entity that has disrupted shipping in the Strait of Hormuz during the war, outlined specific conditions on April 17 for vessels to transit the strait that amount to Iran retaining control over maritime traffic through the strait.[1]

IRGC- and Armed Forces General Staff- affiliated media emphasized that the “temporary opening” of the strait is contingent upon vessels meeting certain conditions.[2] An informed source close to the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) told IRGC-affiliated Fars News that Iran’s conditions include:

1. Only commercial vessels can transit the strait, and military vessels are prohibited from doing so. Vessels and the cargo they carry cannot “be related to belligerent countries.”[3]
2. Ships must pass through the Iranian-approved transit route, which forces vessels to transit the strait through Iranian territorial waters.[4]
3. Vessels must coordinate their passage through the strait with Iranian forces, particularly the IRGC Navy.[5]

These conditions indicate that the IRGC seeks to retain operational control over transit through the strait, likely to continue to use the strait as a point of leverage to try to extract concessions from the United States. The source close to the SNSC added that Iran will “close” the strait again if the naval blockade continues.[6] Iranian forces have not conducted an attack on international shipping since April 7.[7] Ten non-Iranian-linked vessels transited along the Omani coast outside the Iranian-approved transit route on April 17, and CTP-ISW has not observed any reports of the IRGC attempting to disrupt these vessels’ movements.[8]

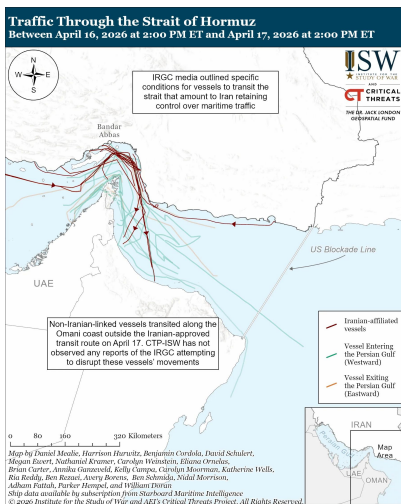


The IRGC harshly criticized Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi after Araghchi announced on X that the strait is “completely open.”[9] Araghchi stated that, in line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the Strait of Hormuz is “completely open” to “all commercial vessels” for the duration of the ceasefire.[10] Araghchi added that vessels must transit along Iran’s “coordinated route,” in reference to the Iranian-approved transit route.[11] US President Donald Trump amplified Araghchi’s statement that the strait is open.[12] IRGC-affiliated media outlets, including Fars News and Mehr News,

criticized Araghchi's post and argued that his statement created confusion, which allowed Trump to shape the narrative about the Strait of Hormuz.[13] Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei defended Araghchi's statement and said that the decision to "open" the Strait of Hormuz was "not solely the decision of the Foreign Affairs Ministry." [14]

The IRGC's criticism of Araghchi is reflective of broader divisions within the Iranian regime, which CTP-ISW has consistently reported on in recent weeks.[15] Anti-regime media previously reported that internal disagreements within the regime disrupted the Islamabad talks and prompted senior Iranian officials to order the Iranian negotiating delegation to return to Tehran.[16] These reports suggest that different factions within the Iranian regime have very different negotiating positions. The factional infighting in the regime has been exacerbated by the death of former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who used to cohere the regime's various factions and act as an arbiter between the factions. The absence of a strong leader to keep IRGC factions in line means that these factions will likely continue to play a dominant role in shaping Iranian decision-making.

Commercially available maritime data shows that no Iranian-linked vessels approached the US blockade line on April 17, and US officials have stated that US forces will engage Iranian-linked vessels beyond this line.[17] US forces are enforcing a blockade on Iranian ports, not the strait itself.[18] CENTCOM announced on April 17 that 19 vessels have complied with US direction to turn around and that zero vessels have successfully breached the blockade.[19] Commercially available maritime data shows that some non-Iranian-linked vessels have moved toward the US blockade line to exit the strait.[20] These ships do not fall under the US blockade and are able to freely transit in and out of the strait. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on April 17 that at least five Iranian-linked tankers heading from the Gulf of Oman to Malaysia altered course after the US Navy warned that it could intercept ships transporting Iranian oil in international waters.[21]



There continue to be significant gaps between the US and Iranian negotiating positions, and the status of the negotiations remains unclear. The two sides disagree on several core issues, according to US, Iranian, and other officials and sources on April 16 and 17.[22] US President Donald Trump has continued to press for the complete removal of Iran's highly enriched uranium (HEU) stockpile from Iran, while Iran appears unwilling to surrender all of its enriched uranium.[23] The parties also remain divided over Iran's ability to enrich uranium. Iran has proposed a five-year pause in enrichment, while previous reports indicated that US negotiators discussed a 20-year moratorium on uranium enrichment.[24] President Trump said on April 17 that any agreement must go beyond a fixed timeframe and ensure that Iran can never acquire a nuclear weapon, however.[25] Trump also denied claims that the United States would unfreeze \$20 billion USD worth of Iranian assets in exchange for Iran's HEU

stockpile.[26] Iranian officials have argued that a ceasefire in Lebanon must be part of Iran's ceasefire with the United States, a demand that Trump rejected on April 17 by insisting that a US-Iran deal would "in no way [be] subject to Lebanon."[27]

Some Iranian regime officials seek a preliminary agreement to extend the ceasefire to continue negotiations for a more comprehensive agreement. A senior Iranian official told Reuters on April 17 that Iran is pursuing an interim agreement to "create space for more talks on lifting sanctions on Iran and securing compensation for war damages."[28] The official added that Iran would provide "assurances" to the international community about the peaceful nature of its nuclear program in exchange.[29] CTP-ISW previously noted that Iran is exploiting the current ceasefire to reorganize and regenerate its ballistic missile force, and Iran would almost certainly continue to do so if the United States and Iran agreed to a preliminary agreement and extended the ceasefire.[30]

US and Israeli Air Campaign

The IDF killed around 1,000 Basij members and other unspecified internal security personnel during its campaign against Iran.[31] The IDF targeted internal security and political figures at every echelon, from senior leaders such as Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani, and Basij Organization Commander Brigadier General Gholamreza Soleimani to low-ranking Basij members manning checkpoints.[32] CTP assessed on March 19 that Israeli strikes on internal security forces likely caused shock and confusion within the Iranian internal security apparatus to some degree.[33] This effect may have been temporary, however, given that shock will dissipate if strikes on internal security targets subside.

Combined force strikes severely degraded Iran's steel and petrochemical production capacity.[34] The IDF estimated that combined force strikes during the campaign damaged 40 percent of Iran's steel production capacity and 75 percent of Iran's petrochemical production capacity.[35] Steel and petrochemicals are among Iran's most important exports and support both economic and military activity. The US naval blockade is currently disrupting Iran's ability to export these goods and imposing further economic costs on Iran.[36] Iran halted petrochemical exports on April 13, at least in part due to the blockade. Strikes on Iran's steel and petrochemical production facilities will also likely make it more difficult for Iran to reconstitute its ballistic missile program.[37]

The IDF estimated that it damaged 23 percent of Iran's gas processing capacity.[38] The IDF struck some of Iran's most important energy infrastructure, including facilities at the South Pars Gas Field in Bushehr Province.[39] These facilities are central to Iran's domestic natural gas supply and broader energy system.[40]

The IDF destroyed Iran's two satellite launchers during the campaign.[41] The Iranian Space Agency oversees satellite launches with the IRGC Aerospace Force and Iranian Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL).[42] The IDF struck the Iranian Space Research Center, which is a subsidiary of the Iranian Space Agency, on March 14, likely to disrupt Iranian space and missile-related research that could support long-range strike capabilities.[43] The US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) has assessed that Iran's space launch vehicle program could enable the regime to develop a militarily viable intercontinental ballistic missile by 2035 if it chose to pursue the capability, which highlights US concerns about the overlap between Iran's space launch vehicle program and intercontinental ballistic missile development.[44] The combined force destroyed the satellite launch site at the Shahroud Space Complex in Semnan Province during the war.[45] The IDF also noted on March 29 that it struck a site in eastern Tehran that produces satellite launchers.[46]

Iranian Response

Nothing significant to report.

Israeli Campaign Against Hezbollah and Hezbollah Response

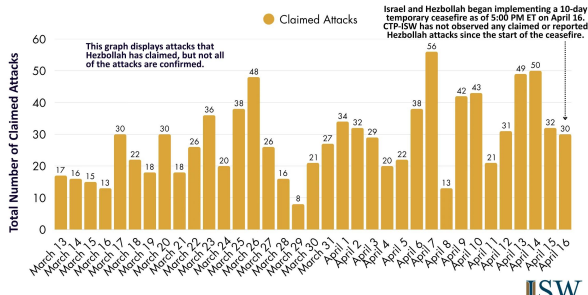
Israel and Hezbollah began implementing the 10-day temporary ceasefire at 5:00 PM ET on April 16. Israeli and Lebanese officials agreed to a 10-day temporary ceasefire, which includes six provisions, on April 16.[47] The temporary ceasefire stipulates that Israel will not conduct any offensive military operations but reserves the right to act in self-defense against any “planned, imminent, or ongoing” Hezbollah threats against Israel.[48] This provision is similar to the clause in the November 2024 Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire that also granted Israel the right to self-defense.[49] Some OSINT journalists have noted that the April 16 ceasefire grants Israel a broader scope to operate against Hezbollah.[50] US President Donald Trump stated on April 17 that Israel will not “be bombing Lebanon any longer” and that the United States is prohibiting Israeli forces from doing so.[51] Israeli forces have continued to conduct ground operations to destroy Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon since the ceasefire took effect on April 16.[52]

Israeli, Lebanese, and Hezbollah officials continue to disagree on long-standing issues despite the temporary ceasefire. The April 16 ceasefire does not stipulate that Israeli forces must withdraw from Lebanese territory or that Hezbollah must disarm.[53] Israeli officials, including Defense Minister Israel Katz, have stated that Israel will respect the ceasefire, but noted that Israeli forces will retain positions in southern Lebanon.[54] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the IDF is “not done” in Lebanon and that progress depends on Hezbollah’s disarmament.[55] Lebanese President Joseph Aoun reiterated on April 17 that the Lebanese government seeks to halt Israeli operations in Lebanon, secure an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, extend the state’s authority over all Lebanese territory, and secure the return of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel.[56] Hezbollah Political Council member Wafiq Safa told the BBC on April 17 that Hezbollah will “never, ever” disarm.[57] Safa added that Hezbollah will not disarm until Israeli forces withdraw from Lebanon, return Lebanese prisoners, and agree to a “real” ceasefire.[58] Hezbollah parliamentarian Hassan Ezzedine noted on April 17 that Hezbollah is committed to the ceasefire under the condition that it “restricts the [IDF’s] freedom of aggressive movement” and leads to an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.[59]

CTP-ISW has not observed any claimed or reported Hezbollah attacks since the start of the ceasefire at 5:00 PM ET on April 16. Hezbollah claimed 16 attacks targeting IDF infrastructure and Israeli communities in northern Israel between 2:00 PM ET and 5:00 PM ET on April 16. [60] Israeli journalists reported that Hezbollah rocket barrages, which included around 30 rockets in total, injured three civilians in Karmiel and Nahariya, both in northern Israel, on April 16 prior to the start of the ceasefire.[61] CTP-ISW has not observed any Israeli reports of Hezbollah attacks or impacts in northern Israel since the start of the ceasefire. Hezbollah claimed that it conducted 2,184 operations against IDF targets in southern Lebanon and Israel between March 2 and April 16.[62] Hezbollah claimed that it conducted, on average, 49 attacks per day against Israeli targets.[63] The IDF announced on April 17 that Hezbollah launched around 8,000 rockets and missiles at Israeli targets in Israel and Lebanon since March 2.[64] The IDF said that a third of Hezbollah missile and rocket launches targeted sites in Israel and two-thirds targeted IDF units operating in Lebanon.[65] The IDF reported that 75 rockets struck locations in Israel.[66] The *Wall Street Journal* reported that nearly half of Hezbollah’s 8,000 rocket launches since March 2 originated from south of the Litani River, according to Israeli security officials.[67] The IDF also said that Hezbollah launched 300 drones at Israeli targets, 25 of which hit their intended

targets.[68] Hezbollah also fired 140 anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM), 15 of which hit their intended targets, according to the IDF.[69]

Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Targeting Israeli Forces and Positions in Israel Between March 13, 2026 and April 16, 2026

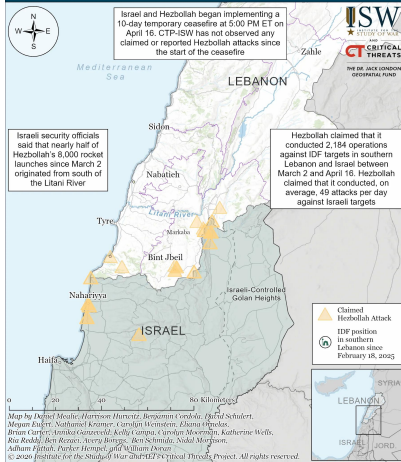


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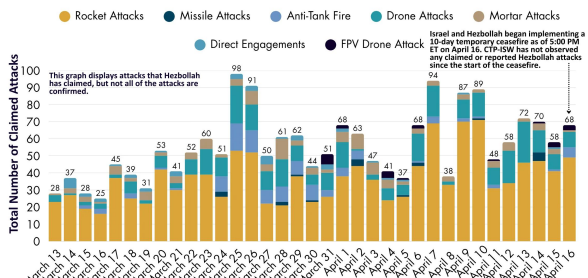


Hezbollah claimed 13 attacks targeting Israeli forces in southern Lebanon between 2:00 PM ET and 5:00 PM ET on April 16.[70] Hezbollah claimed that it conducted rocket and anti-tank guided missile attacks targeting IDF units in the vicinity of Bint Jbeil and Ainata, Bint Jbeil District, southeastern Lebanon, before the start of the ceasefire.[71] The IDF said that it completed its “siege” of Bint Jbeil, on April 15.[72] Hezbollah also claimed that it detonated multiple improvised explosive devices (IED) targeting four IDF tanks attempting to advance north from Tayr Harfa to Majdal Zoun, both located in Tyre District, southwestern Lebanon.[73]

Hezbollah Attacks in Israel and Lebanon Before the Ceasefire Strikes Observed Between April 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET and April 17, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET



Hezbollah-Claimed Attacks Between March 13, 2026 and April 16, 2026 By Type



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Note: There are some attacks in which Hezbollah did not specify the type of weaponry it used



The IDF and Israeli officials provided an overview of the IDF's recent operations against Hezbollah. Netanyahu said that the IDF has destroyed 90 percent of Hezbollah's 150,000 rocket and missile stockpile that Hezbollah built up under former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah.[74] The IDF announced on April 17 that it has dropped 5,000 munitions on targets in Lebanon since the beginning of the campaign on March 2.[75] The IDF also said that it killed around 1,700 Hezbollah operatives and destroyed "hundreds" of rocket launchers.[76] The IDF separately announced that it struck over 380 Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon in the 24 hours prior to the ceasefire.[77] The IDF reported that it targeted Hezbollah fighters, command centers, and rocket launchers in the strikes.[78]

Israeli Air Force Unit 5101 "Shaldag" special forces soldiers captured the Christophani Ridge near Mount Hermon on April 16, prior to the start of the ceasefire.[79] The IDF capture of this ridge provides Israel with a key reconnaissance position as the ridge overlooks the Bekaa Valley region in Lebanon and the Beirut-Damascus highway.[80]

Lebanese media reported that the IDF conducted two separate airstrikes on vehicles in Haris and Kounine, both in Bint Jbeil District, southeastern Lebanon, after the start of the ceasefire on April 16 and 17, respectively.[81] The IDF has not commented on either reported strike at the time of this writing.

Other Axis of Resistance Response

Nothing significant to report.

POWERED BY:  BABEL STREET

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Iran Update Special Report, April 18, 2026



Kelly Campa, Carolyn Moorman, Parker Hempel, Ben Rezaei, Avery Borens, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi and members of his inner circle have likely secured at least temporary control over not only Iran's military response in this conflict but also Iran's negotiating position and approach within the past 48 hours. The IRGC Navy attacked several commercial vessels on April 18 and declared that no vessel of "any type or nationality" is permitted passage through the strait, a reversal of Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi's announcement on April 17 that the strait was "completely open" to commercial traffic. IRGC-affiliated media also announced on April 18 that Iran has not agreed to participate in another round of negotiations with the United States due to "excessive" US demands.
2. Vahidi and individuals close to him may have effectively controlled the negotiations process throughout the war, which is traditionally a role reserved for political leaders. Vahidi likely intended to impose IRGC oversight over the recent US-Iran talks in Islamabad. The IRGC continued to play an outsized role in Iran's negotiations after the Islamabad talks.
3. The IRGC's consolidation of control over Iranian decision-making indicates that the Iranian political officials currently negotiating with the United States do not have the authority to independently determine Iran's negotiating positions. The IRGC appears to have sidelined more pragmatic figures with whom the United States has negotiated.
4. The IRGC attacked several commercial vessels and halted traffic in the Strait of Hormuz on April 18, likely in order to both gain leverage over the United States and consolidate the IRGC's control over Iran's negotiations policy as part of an internally-motivated maneuver. The IRGC likely aims to secure leverage over the United States by halting traffic and driving up shipping and oil prices to impose economic pressure on the United States. The IRGC's actions are also likely intended to be an internal demonstration of power designed to exhibit the IRGC's control within the regime, and in particular, its control over Iran's negotiations policy.
5. The US Navy's blockade of Iranian ports remains in place as of April 18. US CENTCOM said that it forced two ships to turn around and return to Iran between April 17 and 18. The US Navy has forced 23 ships to turn back since the United States began the blockade. No Iranian vessels have

attempted to approach or test the blockade line as of this writing.

Toplines

Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi and members of his inner circle have likely secured at least temporary control over not only Iran's military response in this conflict but also Iran's negotiating position and approach within the past 48 hours. The IRGC Navy attacked several commercial vessels on April 18 and declared that no vessel of "any type or nationality" is permitted passage through the strait, a reversal of Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi's announcement on April 17 that the strait was "completely open" to commercial traffic.[1] Traffic through the strait has virtually halted as of this writing except for Iranian vessels, according to maritime tracking data. No Iranian vessels have approached the US blockade line, however. IRGC-affiliated media also announced on April 18 that Iran has not agreed to participate in another round of negotiations with the United States due to "excessive" US demands.[2] The IRGC is responsible for coordinating and conducting military actions, but has historically not directly interfered in Iranian diplomacy and negotiations to the extent it currently is.

Regime institutions aligned with Vahidi are presenting a cohesive front against Araghchi and in support of the IRGC's actions to halt traffic in the strait. The Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters, which is functionally controlled by the IRGC, cited the US naval blockade on Iranian ports as the reason for the IRGC's reimposition of "control" over the strait.[3] Vahidi and Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters Commander Ali Abdollahi Aliabadi are reportedly driving the regime's military decision-making, according to anti-regime media on April 7.[4] A source close to the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) previously warned IRGC-affiliated Fars News on April 17 that Iran would "close" the strait if the United States continued its blockade.[5] The SNSC released a statement on April 18 that Iran will "exercise supervision and control" over traffic in the strait until the war ends.[6] The SNSC would almost certainly not have released this statement without the approval of SNSC Secretary Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, which indicates that Zolghadr supports the IRGC's actions in the strait. Zolghadr, who is a hardline IRGC veteran and long-time power broker with deep ties to Iran's security and judicial apparatuses, was appointed to his position during the war after Vahidi reportedly pressured Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to appoint him.[7]

Vahidi and individuals close to him may have effectively controlled the negotiations process throughout the war, which is traditionally a role reserved for political leaders. Vahidi likely intended to impose IRGC oversight over the recent US-Iran talks in Islamabad. Vahidi attempted to insert Zolghadr into the Iranian negotiating team in Islamabad despite protests from delegation leaders Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Araghchi over Zolghadr's lack of experience with diplomatic negotiations.[8] Vahidi presumably wanted to send Zolghadr to keep an eye on the negotiations and to inform leaders in Tehran if the negotiating delegation strayed from his or Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's directives.[9] Zolghadr sent a complaint to senior IRGC leaders, almost certainly including Vahidi, that Araghchi had surpassed his mandate during the negotiations by expressing flexibility regarding Iran's support for the Axis of Resistance.[10] Zolghadr's anger caused senior leaders in Tehran, including former IRGC Intelligence Organization Chief and long-time member of Mojtaba's inner circle, Hossein Taeb, to call the negotiating delegation back to Tehran.[11]

The IRGC continued to play an outsized role in Iran's negotiations after the Islamabad talks. Pakistani Army Chief Field Marshall Asim Munir recently met with Ghalibaf and Aliabadi in Tehran on April 16 as part of his mediation efforts.[12] Aliabadi is not a member of the Iranian negotiating team, and it is highly unusual for the Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters commander to be involved in diplomatic

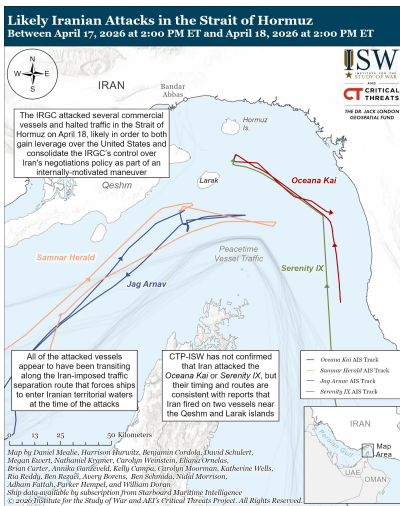
discussions about negotiations. The Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters is formally responsible for joint and wartime operations.

The IRGC's consolidation of control over Iranian decision-making indicates that the Iranian political officials currently negotiating with the United States do not have the authority to independently determine Iran's negotiating positions. CTP-ISW recently assessed that the United States is negotiating with a divided committee of hardliners and pragmatists that lacks a cohesive, unified position.[13] The IRGC appears to have sidelined more pragmatic figures with whom the United States has negotiated. Araghchi and Ghalibaf's negotiating team reportedly did not have full authority to finalize a deal with the United States in Islamabad, for example.[14]

This current dynamic likely reflects Vahidi's position, relationships, and control over IRGC military elements, which has enabled him to wield significant authority over decision-making compared to other senior regime leaders such as Ghalibaf. Vahidi holds the most influential position in the regime at this time, apart from the Supreme Leader, who is reportedly seriously injured or incapacitated.[15] Vahidi is a long-time and experienced IRGC commander, having served as Iran's first IRGC Quds Force commander between 1988 and 1997 and currently serving as the senior-most IRGC commander.[16] Vahidi was one of the senior IRGC commanders who pushed the Assembly of Experts to select Mojtaba as Supreme Leader in March.[17] Vahidi and his affiliates have reportedly fought with more pragmatic regime officials such as Ghalibaf over Iran's national security and foreign policy decisions throughout the conflict.[18] Ghalibaf, in contrast, is a former IRGC commander who transitioned into politics in the early 2000s and lacks the influence and control over military elements that Vahidi has.[19] Vahidi and his inner circle appear to have marginalized Ghalibaf, although he is publicly reiterating IRGC rhetoric.[20] Ghalibaf likely lacks the leverage or formal executive authority to shape decision-making.

The IRGC Navy attacked several commercial vessels and halted traffic in the Strait of Hormuz on April 18, likely in order to both gain leverage over the United States and consolidate the IRGC's control over Iran's negotiations policy as part of an internally-motivated maneuver.[21] The IRGC appears to have intervened and reasserted Iranian "control" over the Strait of Hormuz after Araghchi announced on April 17 that the strait was open to commercial shipping.[22] At least nine vessels exited the strait through Omani territorial waters and outside of Iran's imposed traffic separation scheme on April 17 and early on April 18 following Araghchi's announcement.[23] The IRGC, however, harshly criticized Araghchi's statement and outlined specific conditions for vessels to transit the strait that amount to Iran retaining control over maritime traffic through the strait.[24] The IRGC Navy later announced that "no vessel of any kind" should approach the strait, or it will be targeted.[25] The IRGC likely aims to secure leverage over the United States by halting traffic and driving up shipping and oil prices to impose economic pressure on the United States. The IRGC's actions are also likely intended to be an internal demonstration of power designed to exhibit the IRGC's control within the regime, and in particular, its control over Iran's negotiations policy.

The IRGC Navy likely used fast attack craft to attack and intimidate at least four vessels in order to deter vessels from transiting the strait on April 18.[26] All of the attacked vessels appear to have been transiting along the Iran-imposed traffic separation route that forces ships through Iranian territorial waters at the time of the attacks.[27] IRGC Navy "gunboats" fired on a likely Indian-flagged tanker east of Larak Island, and "unknown projectiles" struck a likely Iranian-flagged container ship in the same area.[28] Reuters also reported that two vessels reported being struck by gunfire between Qeshm and Larak islands.[29] All four vessels turned around.[30] The IRGC also broadcasted radio messages to vessels in the strait, warning them that the strait is "closed." [31] Numerous vessels traveling toward the strait turned around after the Iranian attacks, according to maritime tracking data.



The US Navy's blockade of Iranian ports remains in place as of April 18. US CENTCOM said that it forced two ships to turn around and return to Iran between April 17 and 18.[32] The US Navy has forced 23 ships to turn back since the United States began the blockade.[33] Commercially available maritime tracking data shows that Iranian-flagged tankers and cargo ships continued to transit inside the strait on March 18 after the IRGC attacks, but no Iranian vessels have attempted to approach or test the blockade line as of this writing.

US President Donald Trump warned on April 18 that the ceasefire may not be extended if no agreement is reached by April 22.[34] The Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretariat stated on April 18 that Iran has received a new US proposal conveyed through Pakistani Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir during his recent visit to Tehran and is currently reviewing the US proposal.[35] Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatib Zadeh stated on April 18 that no date has been set for further talks and emphasized that Iran and the United States must first agree to a framework before they can hold another round of talks.[36] Khatib Zadeh described US demands as “maximalist” and unacceptable and stated that the transfer of Iran’s enriched uranium is a “non-starter.”[37]

US and Israeli Air Campaign

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Response

Nothing significant to report.

Israeli Campaign Against Hezbollah and Hezbollah Response

CTP-ISW has not observed any claimed or reported Hezbollah attacks against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in southern Lebanon or Israeli communities in northern Israel since the start of the 10-day ceasefire at 5:00 PM ET on April 16.[38]

The IDF conducted military operations against Hezbollah fighters and infrastructure within

the Israeli security zone in southern Lebanon in accordance with the temporary ceasefire agreement.[39] The IDF stated on April 18 that IDF soldiers directed airstrikes and artillery fire targeting Hezbollah operatives who “violated the ceasefire” and posed an “immediate threat” to IDF forces in the Israeli security zone in southern Lebanon in the past 24 hours.[40] The IDF said that it also destroyed Hezbollah infrastructure in the area.[41] The IDF separately said on April 18 that 401st Armored Brigade (162nd Armored Division) forces identified and directed a strike against a Hezbollah cell that approached IDF units within the IDF’s forward defense line in southern Lebanon.[42] The 401st Armored Brigade was most recently operating in the vicinity of Bint Jbeil, southeastern Lebanon, as of April 14.[43] The IDF also said that it struck the entrance to a Hezbollah underground tunnel in southern Lebanon.[44] The ceasefire agreement contains a provision that permits Israel to act in self-defense against any “planned, imminent, or ongoing” Hezbollah threats against Israel.[45] US officials confirmed to Axios and Israeli media on April 17 that Israel has the right to self-defense under the ceasefire agreement.[46] US President Donald Trump had previously stated on April 17 that Israel would not “be bombing Lebanon any longer” and that the United States was prohibiting Israeli forces from doing so.[47] Lebanese sources reported on April 17 and 18 that the IDF has demolished buildings in Lebanese towns within Israel’s “security zone” in southern Lebanon.[48] An Israeli geospatial analyst published footage on April 18 showing the IDF demolishing buildings in Bint Jbeil, southeastern Lebanon.[49]

Likely Hezbollah fighters engaged a UNIFIL patrol in southeastern Lebanon on April 18, killing one French UNIFIL peacekeeper and injuring three others.[50] UNIFIL reported on April 18 that “non-state actors” engaged a UNIFIL patrol with small arms in a “deliberate attack,” killing one UNIFIL peacekeeper and injuring three others in Ghandouriyeh, Bint Jbeil District.[51] UNIFIL has commonly used the term “non-state actors” to refer to Hezbollah when the group has previously fired on UNIFIL positions.[52] French President Emmanuel Macron said on April 18 that “everything suggests” that Hezbollah fighters killed the UNIFIL peacekeeper, who was a French soldier.[53] Macron called on the Lebanese government to arrest the perpetrators immediately.[54] Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam released a statement on April 18 condemning the attack.[55] Salam said that he ordered an “immediate” investigation into the incident to hold the perpetrators accountable.[56] The Lebanese Armed Forces confirmed on April 18 that it has begun to investigate the incident.[57] Hezbollah denied that its fighters conducted the attack.[58]

Other Axis of Resistance Response

An Iranian delegation headed by IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani discussed Iranian-backed Iraqi militia disarmament and Iraqi government formation with Shia Coordination Framework and militia leaders in Baghdad on April 18.[59] An unspecified source told Iraqi media that Ghaani held a series of separate meetings with unspecified militia and framework leaders to discuss Iraqi political developments, including integrating militias into the Iraqi security establishment and selecting a “consensus” candidate for the Iraqi premiership.[60] The United States has continuously pressured the Iraqi federal government to disarm Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and dissolve the Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), which is an Iraqi state security service that consists of numerous militias that answer to Iran instead of the Iraqi Prime Minister.[61] The framework continues to debate State of Law Coalition head and former Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki’s nomination to the premiership.[62] The Iraqi Parliament elected Nizar Amidi as President on April 11, following months of deliberations by the main Iraqi Kurdish parties.[63] The Iraqi constitution stipulates that the newly elected President will select the candidate of the largest parliamentary bloc—the framework—to attempt to form a government within 15 days of the President’s election, which corresponds to April 26.[64] Ghaani also reportedly discussed disassociating some unspecified political leaders from their affiliated militias.[65] Multiple Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, such as Asaib Ahl al Haq

and Kataib Hezbollah, have political wings in the framework.[66]

Ghaani likely also coordinated with Iraqi militia leaders about their involvement in a potential resumption of the war between the United States, Israel, and Iran. The Iraqi militias have launched drone and rocket attacks targeting US and foreign interests in Iraq, as well as the Gulf countries, during the war.[67] CTP-ISW assessed on April 13 that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias were likely responsible for at least some of the recent drone attacks against Gulf countries, following the Bahrain Defense Force’s interception of seven “Iranian” drones on April 13.[68] Iran supplies drones to its Iraqi partners, and Bahrain’s use of “Iranian drones” could refer to drones used by the Iraqi militias.[69] Saudi Arabia and Bahrain summoned the Iraqi ambassador to their countries on April 12 and 13, respectively, in response to Iraqi militia drone attacks targeting Gulf Cooperation Council states.[70]

The US Treasury Department sanctioned seven Iranian-backed Iraqi militia officials on April 17 for their involvement in attacks targeting US positions in Iraq.[71] The Treasury Department sanctioned three Kataib Hezbollah members, including one “operational leader” and two officials involved in operations, two senior Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada officials, and a Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba military trainer.[72] These three militias are part of the Islamic Resistance Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias that has claimed regular attacks targeting “enemy” bases in Iraq and the region during the war.[73] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also conducted over a hundred attacks targeting both Israel and US bases in Iraq and Syria during the October 7 War.[74] The Treasury Department also sanctioned on April 17 a senior Asaib Ahl al Haq official and military commander who also serves as the group’s head in Salah al Din Province.[75] The Treasury Department stated that Asaib Ahl al Haq conducted drone attacks targeting US and coalition forces in northern Iraq in March 2026.[76] Iraq analysts have long noted that Asaib Ahl al Haq’s leadership, particularly its founder Qais al Khazali, has focused on politics more than kinetic action in recent years.[77] The US-Israeli combined force has struck positions belonging to all of the militias that the Treasury Department sanctioned on April 17 during the war in order to degrade the militias’ ability to attack the United States and Israel.[78]

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