



**IT'S A TOUGH WORLD.**

# **MENA Executive SITREP**

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**MAX  
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## Executive Brief: US – Israeli Operations Against Iran and Regional Implications

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**Explainer:** This daily report provides an executive summary of major developments related to the ongoing war in the Middle East. It complements MAX Security's more in-depth Situation Update reports. If you haven't yet received our situation updates and other reporting amid the current escalation, or would like to receive more details, join our [WhatsApp community](#). For operational support, please contact our Protection Division at [operations@max-security.com](mailto:operations@max-security.com).

### Operational Overview

US and Israeli military operations in Iran are still suspended since the entry into force of the 14-day ceasefire, as of April 18. The ceasefire continues, and Iran is refraining from attacking Israel or any of its regional neighbors directly.

On April 17, US President Trump suggested that Iran had agreed to give away its nuclear dust [enriched uranium]. He further stated that "Iran has agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again," and that Iran is removing the mines it laid in the waterway.

Parallely, President Trump stated that the US's naval blockade on Iran will persist until the parties reach a full negotiated settlement. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed on April 17-18 that the naval blockade on Iran continues. CENTCOM indicated that since the blockade began, 21 ships have been forced to turn around and return to Iran.

### Iran's actions

On April 17, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced that "in line with the ceasefire in Lebanon," commercial vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is possible for the remaining period of the ceasefire, in accordance with Iran's "[coordinated route...](#)" The IRGC emphasized that the "temporary opening" is contingent on vessels meeting certain conditions, including that only commercial vessels may transit while military vessels are prohibited, and that all transits must be coordinated with the IRGC Navy.

Meanwhile, Speaker of Parliament and top Iranian negotiator Ghalibaf stated on April 18 that if the US's naval blockade on Iran continues, the Strait of Hormuz will not remain open. Iran Deputy Foreign Minister Baghaei was also quoted as stating that Iran refuses to surrender its enriched uranium.

**Overall, Iran's statements indicate that it still seeks to retain operational control over the Strait of Hormuz, with the conditions set for movement contradicting the notion of complete and free passage in the waterway. Furthermore, Ghalibaf's latest statements also highlight the tension emanating from the continued US naval blockade on Iran, which US CENTCOM confirmed to have**



**continued to implement. As a whole, these issues underscore discrepancies between the American and Iranian discourses and, hence, the volatility surrounding the ongoing ceasefire.**

### **Other notable developments**

**Israel-Lebanon:** Israel and Hezbollah continue to uphold the ten-day ceasefire that commenced on April 16-17. No Hezbollah launches against Israel were identified following the commencement of the ceasefire during the overnight hours of April 16-17. Convoys of residents returning to some southern Lebanese cities were recorded on April 17. On April 17, US President Donald Trump stated that he had “prohibited” Israel from conducting further bombings in Lebanon. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun stated in a televised speech that the truce should be translated into "permanent agreements" [a reference to Washington’s efforts to facilitate a peace agreement between the states].

**Overall, the latest developments will likely incentivize Israel to uphold the truce, especially amid Trump’s personal involvement and pressure. Hezbollah will also likely adhere to the ceasefire, with the pause giving the organization some respite to regroup and reconstitute at least some capabilities after it lost around 1,700 operatives in the current round, according to Israel’s security establishment. However, tensions and the potential for friction will persist, driven by Hezbollah’s desire to ultimately derail successful Israeli-Lebanese peace negotiations, the continued Israeli ground operations within its held territory in southern Lebanon (termed the Yellow Line), and the broader fragility of the US/Israel-Iran truce.**

### **Travel & Security Aspects**

- On April 17, Israel’s Home Front Command (HFC) lifted all wartime restrictions nationwide, except for frontline areas (referring to northern border communities), in which a gathering limit of up to 1,000 people will remain in place at least until 20:00 on April 18. The new guidelines will remain in effect until 20:00 on April 23.

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