



**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 19. Iran is still refraining from attacking Israel or any of its regional neighbors directly.

An American report cited US military and intelligence officials in estimating that Iran retains around 40 percent of its UAV arsenal and above 60 percent of its missile launchers.

On April 18, Washington reiterated that the naval blockade in Iran persists. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) stated that the naval blockade on Iran has completely halted economic trade going into and out of Iran by sea.

### Iran's actions

On April 18, Iran [announced](#) that, following the US decision to continue the naval blockade against Iran, the Strait of Hormuz would be closed. In subsequent hours, the IRGC Navy targeted multiple vessels in and around the Strait using gunboats and projectiles, including at least one Indian vessel that had a previous clearance from the IRGC to pass.

**Overall, this constitutes the most fragile situation under the temporary truce. Iran's attacks likely reflect a desire to bolster its leverage and destabilize the Strait of Hormuz again, due to the fact that Washington retained its hardline posture by continuing the naval blockade on Iran. The renewed maritime attacks would not necessarily prompt US strikes in Iran before the truce's expiration on April 22, but it is liable to prompt the US to engage in further escalatory measures, such as board-and-seize operations against Iranian commercial vessels and/or the targeting of the IRGC's small attack boats in the Persian Gulf. This would render the truce fragile, especially amid Iran's continued stated refusal to give away its enriched uranium stockpile.**



## Other notable developments

**Israel-Lebanon:** On April 18-19, the IDF confirmed that two IDF soldiers were killed by IEDs within IED-held areas of southern Lebanon. The assessment is that these explosives were planted before the ten-day truce went into force. On April 18, the IDF also confirmed having eliminated Hezbollah militants that were perceived by IDF forces as a threat within the IDF-held “Yellow Line” in Lebanon in at least two distinct incidents. It also stated that eliminating threats is within the terms of the ten-day truce.

On April 18, Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem stated that Hezbollah “will respond to any [Israeli ceasefire] violations accordingly.” Qassem described the US’s announcement of a ceasefire on April 16 as “an insult to our country,” noting that “the Lebanese government had neither convened nor approved the statement.”

On the same day, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) announced that gunfire from “non-state actors” killed one peacekeeper and wounded three in southern Lebanon’s Ghandouriyeh. French President Emmanuel Macron identified the UNIFIL peacekeeper killed as a French soldier and ascribed responsibility to Hezbollah. The IDF also pointed a finger at Hezbollah.

**Overall, the latest developments underscore significant tensions and the potential for friction. It is primarily driven by Hezbollah’s frustration with the IDF’s retention of control over territories and continued military operations within these territories, in a “Gaza-like” situation. The broader fragility of the US/Israel-Iran truce will also likely increase tensions and render the temporary truce highly fragile at the current juncture.**

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