

Middle East Update

Information Cut-Off: 1200h (BST), 16 July 2026

Executive Summary

The US military conducted another wave of attacks on Iran overnight (15–16 July), and Iran launched new attacks on US military facilities in the Gulf in response, the fifth consecutive day of strikes since the signing of the memorandum of understanding. The US military said it attacked targets associated with Iran’s military control of the Strait of Hormuz.

The US also conducted a strike against a Curacao-flagged vessel in the strait as part of its blockade of Iranian ports.

At least five drones have been launched at the northern Iraqi city of Erbil.

Latest Exchanges

Early this morning (16 July), the US military confirmed it had completed a seven-hour wave of strikes across Iran in order to “degrade Iran’s ability to threaten vessels freely transiting through the Strait of Hormuz”. The US targeted command centres, air defence locations and coastal surveillance facilities, including at the port of Bandar Abbas and Greater Tunb island on the strait. Ahvaz, Chabahar, Khondab, Semnan, Pakdasht, Konarak, Rask, Khorramabad and Qeshm Island were also attacked. Air defences were also activated in Tehran, according to Iranian media. Iranian media reported that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) destroyed a US MQ–9 drone over Andimeshk.

In response, the Iranian military launched drones at Kuwait, where the government reported that it had intercepted at least four Iranian missiles and 21 drones throughout yesterday (15 July): no injuries were reported, but the projectiles all targeted key facilities. The IRGC confirmed it had carried out attacks on the Ali Salem airbase.

The Iranian military also launched missiles and drones at Jordan, targeting US communications systems and fuel storage facilities at Azraq airbase. The Jordanian military said it had intercepted eight Iranian missiles. The IRGC emphasised that it is focused on destroying US military infrastructure in the region.

Sirens were activated in Bahrain last night, where the IRGC claimed to have launched drone attacks on the Sheikh Isa airbase. The Bahraini military claimed to have detected and intercepted Iranian air strikes.

Iran

At least 35 people have been reported killed and over 300 wounded in the latest US attacks on Iran, according to Iranian media.

The US Treasury Department has issued its latest list of sanctioned individuals, which includes Iranian nationals and businesses, many linked with the purchase of weapons.

Strait of Hormuz

Yesterday evening (15 July), the US conducted a strike on a Curacao-flagged tanker that the military claimed was sailing to an Iranian port, currently under blockade. Two other vessels approaching Iran were also reportedly stopped.

As a response to the reimposition of the US naval blockade of Iranian ports, the IRGC yesterday threatened to cut off all energy exports from the Middle East.

Diplomatic

President Trump has said that Iranian officials have requested a meeting with US negotiators, but has also reiterated that strikes will continue, potentially into the Iranian interior, if there is no agreement in the next few days.

The Pakistani government said this morning (16 July) that it is pressing both US and Iranian negotiators to resume talks under the memorandum of understanding.

Regional

Iraq

Iraqi air defences intercepted a drone over the northern city of Erbil late yesterday evening (15 July), reportedly in the vicinity of the US consulate. Two other drones crashed near a US military base on the edge of the city. Another drone hit the outer wall of Erbil airport, causing some delays to flights. A fifth drone was intercepted over Hariri airbase to the east of Erbil.

Lebanon

Yesterday evening, the Israeli military said that it had encircled two towns in southern Lebanon – Bint Jbeil and Aitaroun.

Travel

Aviation

Aegean Airlines, Air France and KLM have announced the suspension of scheduled flights to destinations in the region, including Dubai and Tel Aviv.

Advice

- Reconsider all travel to Israel, Iran and Lebanon (especially south of the Litani River, Dahiyeh in Beirut, and in the Beqaa Valley).
- Be aware that US facilities throughout the Gulf are potential targets for Iranian attacks, and avoid all such sites whenever possible.
- Monitor international media and relevant embassy/diplomatic advisories to remain aware of any fresh developments and to ensure receipt of all attack warnings, and follow all guidelines.
- Ensure awareness of the nearest shelter in the event of air sirens.
- Avoid any demonstrations or gatherings in the region that appears to be linked to the US/Israel – Iran conflict.
- Globally, reconsider travel to any locations with links to Israel or Judaism.
- Aviation travellers should anticipate schedule changes and limited seat availability, should allow additional connection time and should confirm flight status directly with the operating airline before travelling to the airport.
- If you need further support, or wish to discuss options for evacuation, call NGS.

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