

# Middle East Situation

**Information Cut-Off:** 1130h (BST), 16 April 2026

## Executive Summary

Informal talks between the US and Iran have continued, but no substantive developments have been reported ahead of the ceasefire deadline on 22 April.

Iran has instructed all schools nationwide to adopt remote learning on 21 April, the day before the end of the ceasefire deadline. US markets nevertheless rallied yesterday (15 April) to record highs, suggesting broad confidence in an eventual deal.

Amid the ongoing US blockade of Iranian ports, Iranian military officials have threatened to disrupt maritime traffic in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Red Sea if the restrictions continue.

## Diplomacy

President Trump said yesterday evening (15 April) that Israeli and Lebanese officials will meet again today (16 April) to discuss a ceasefire.

Iranian state media reported yesterday that Iranian and Pakistani officials have met and that further talks will be held today. Pakistan is mediating negotiations between Iran and the US.

Unconfirmed reports released yesterday suggest that during talks held on 11 April the US called on Iran to halt uranium enrichment for 20 years, but this was rejected by Iran, which instead proposed a five-year suspension.

Iranian state media, citing military commanders, warned yesterday that Iran would block sea lines of communication in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Red Sea if the US blockade on Iranian ports continues.

World leaders are scheduled to travel to Paris tomorrow (17 April) to discuss reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Iranian officials this morning that the reopening of the strait is an international demand.

The S&P 500 and Nasdaq closed at record highs yesterday, buoyed by market optimism that a peace deal is close.

## Iran

The spokesman for the Ministry of Education said this morning that schools will transition to remote learning from 21 April, one day before the end of the ceasefire.

Authorities have arrested four suspected spies in Gilan, state media announced today.

## United States

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced yesterday (15 April) that the US plans to increase economic pressure on Iran, including the application of secondary sanctions on entities buying Iranian oil.

Unconfirmed reports suggest the Pentagon has approached manufacturers, including General Motors and Ford Motor Company, to increase weapons production.

## Israel

Hezbollah rocket fire targeting Haifa this morning (16 April) landed in an open area, causing no injuries or damage. Sirens were also triggered by Hezbollah rockets in the Kiryat Shmona area, but no casualties have been reported.

The Health Ministry reported this morning that 7,791 people have been admitted to hospital due to the ongoing conflict. Currently, 83 people remain hospitalised; one is in critical condition, 15 are in serious condition, 26 are in moderate condition, and the remainder are in good condition. These figures include both civilians and military personnel.

## Maritime

As part of ongoing negotiations, unconfirmed reports suggest that Iran has proposed that ships exit the Omani side of the Strait of Hormuz without interference.

The US Navy claimed yesterday (15 April) that US forces have “completely halted” Iran’s naval imports and exports via the Strait of Hormuz.

## Regional

### Lebanon

Consecutive Israeli airstrikes on Mayfadoun yesterday killed at least four rescue workers, including those responding to previous attacks on their colleagues. Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire were also reported in Bint Jbeil, where Israeli forces have encircled Hezbollah militants.

This morning (16 April), Israeli airstrikes were reported in Zawtar al-Sharqiya, Bint Jbeil, Touline, Qabrikha, Qalawiyeh and Khirbet Selm. Injuries and damage remain unconfirmed.

The Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) called for the protection of healthcare practitioners and infrastructure this morning, citing Israeli attacks damaging the Tebnine Government Hospital on 12 and 14 April. Over 133 attacks on healthcare have led to 88 deaths and the closure of 56 health centres, according to the WHO.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said yesterday that he has authorised the military to expand infantry operations from Bint Jbeil eastwards. This follows ongoing ground operations against Hezbollah strongholds in the area.

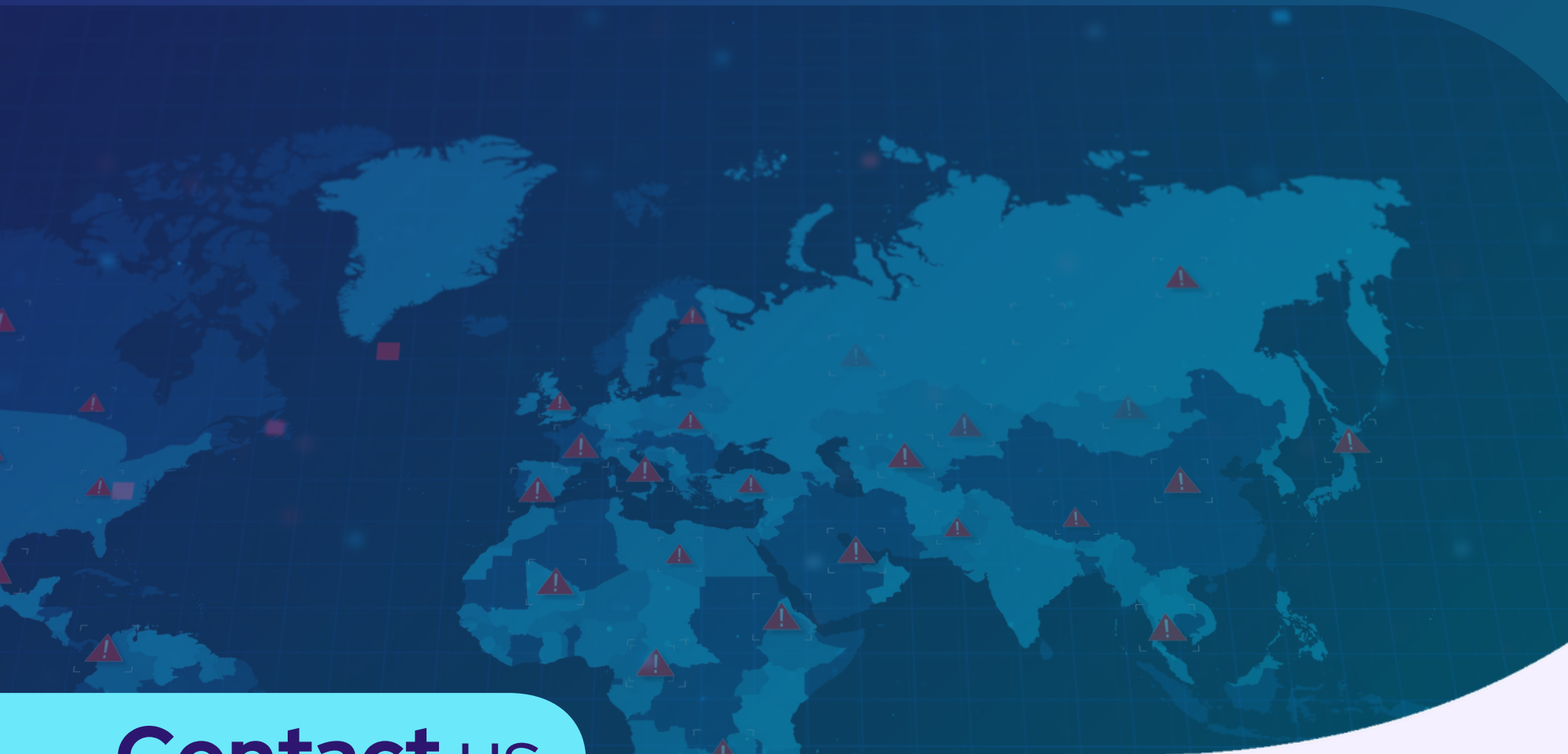
The Israeli military reiterated evacuation orders this morning, advising that all civilians head north of the Zahrani River. Hezbollah has claimed attacks on Israeli forces south of Khiyam earlier today.

### United Arab Emirates

In-person schooling will resume from 20 April, the Ministry of Education announced yesterday (15 April).

## Advice

- Do not travel to Lebanon, especially south of the Litani River, Dahiye in Beirut, and in the Beqaa Valley.
- Reconsider travel to the Middle East, especially Israel, Iran and Iraq, but also the wider Gulf region.
- Remain aware of ongoing tensions, given the possibility of a sudden resumption in fighting.
- Monitor instructions from local authorities and any national embassy guidelines.
- Avoid any demonstrations or gatherings in the region.
- Globally, reconsider travel to any locations with links to Israel or Judaism.
- If you need further support, or wish to discuss options for evacuation, call NGS.



## Contact us

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