



IT'S A TOUGH WORLD.

MENA Executive SITREP

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**MAX
INTELLIGENCE**



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

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.

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 16. The ceasefire continues, and Iran is refraining from attacking Israel or any of its regional neighbors.

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) stated that on April 15, an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel tried to evade the US blockade after leaving Bandar Abbas and exiting the Strait of Hormuz along the Iranian coastline. The USS Spruance redirected it back to Iran. CENTCOM indicated that ten vessels in total have been turned around, and that no ship has breached the naval blockade since it was implemented.

Meanwhile, the US Treasury Department announced the launch of Operation Economic Fury on April 15. The campaign is aimed at "intensifying pressure on Iran's illicit oil transportation infrastructure by sanctioning more than two dozen individuals, companies, and vessels operating within the network of Iranian oil shipping magnate Mohammad Hossein Shamkhani. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent also indicated that Washington had notified countries and firms about the risk of secondary sanctions "against those that continue to support Tehran's terrorist activities." He also pointed out that in light of Iran's attacks on Gulf states, these nations are now "willing to be much more transparent" in terms of the funds that are being held in their banking systems.

Negotiations-related developments:

On April 15, Pakistan's Chief of Staff traveled to Tehran and met with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to discuss the potential for a second round of negotiations in Islamabad. As of April 16, there is no formal acknowledgment that these talks will take place. In parallel behind the scenes, negotiations between the US and Iran appear to be ongoing. An unconfirmed April 15 report suggests that both parties are considering a two-week ceasefire extension to facilitate further peace talks, though a senior US official noted that such an extension is not guaranteed. Meanwhile, Vice President JD Vance, Steve Witkoff, and Jared Kushner are reportedly maintaining active communication channels and exchanging draft proposals with Iranian officials.



On the Iranian side, reports indicate that Tehran may consider allowing safe, unhindered transit through the Omani side of the Strait of Hormuz as part of the negotiations. Concurrently, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson clarified that while their right to enrich uranium is non-negotiable under pressure, the specific level and type of enrichment remain open to discussion.

Other notable developments

US military buildup: An unconfirmed April 15 report citing unnamed US officials reported that the US is deploying thousands of additional troops to the Middle East in the coming days, including 6,000 troops aboard the USS George H.W. Bush aircraft carrier. About 4,200 troops in the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group are expected to arrive toward the end of the month.

Israel-Lebanon: Following the US-mediated meeting between the Israeli and Lebanese Ambassadors in Washington, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated on April 15 that negotiations with Lebanon have two primary objectives: "the dismantling of Hezbollah and sustainable peace." Additionally, during the late evening hours of April 15 (US time), President Donald Trump stated that "it has been a long time" since Israeli and Lebanese leaders have spoken, but that "it will happen tomorrow." Subsequent reports indicate that Israeli PM Netanyahu and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun will speak directly via phone on April 16.

Meanwhile, on April 15, Israeli media reported advanced negotiations for a temporary ceasefire in Lebanon, potentially starting within days and lasting a week, with the caveat that fighting would resume if no agreement is reached with Iran. While unconfirmed reports suggest the US is pushing for this calm to focus on Iranian negotiations, a senior US official denied that such a request was made or linked to the Iran talks.

Alongside the diplomatic track, the Israeli campaign in Lebanon and retaliatory Hezbollah attacks toward Israel continued. On April 16, the IDF reiterated its evacuation order for all residents of southern Lebanon to move north of the Zahrani River, while the IDF announced that it had struck over 200 Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon on April 15. April 16 reports indicate that Hezbollah launched a projectile overnight that exploded in an open area south of Haifa.

Iraq:

In Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)-administered territory, a UAV attack targeted the KDPI headquarters in the Degalla area of Erbil Province on April 15. Additionally, the Kurdistan Region Security Agency announced that five UAV attacks occurred within the KRG area over the past 24 hours, targeting refugee camps in Surdash (Sulaymaniyah Province) as well as Koya and Degalla (Erbil Province).

Travel & Security Aspects



- No notable change in Home Front Command regulations or airspace conditions was reported as of April 15-16.

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