

Executive Summary

Despite issuing aggressive messages on social media, President Trump did not order any attacks against Iran over the weekend, reportedly after interventions from regional leaders. Over the weekend, the Iranian government increased its diplomatic efforts as tensions with the United States remain high.

The Iranian and Omani governments are reportedly in the final stages of negotiations over the future management of the Strait of Hormuz.

Iranian drone attacks have been reported against northern Iraqi territory and in Kuwait over the weekend.

Israeli attacks in southern Lebanon have continued.

Diplomacy

Iranian President Pezeshkian said yesterday (02 August) that the June memorandum of understanding with the United States will be the basis for future discussions, and that future peace talks will build on this agreement.

Yesterday evening, Tehran announced that its negotiations with Muscat over the future management of the Strait of Hormuz were in their “final stages”, with talks having been ongoing for the last seven days.

Last night, President Trump said that negotiations with Iran would begin today (03 August), to include a deal on Iranian denuclearisation.

On Saturday (01 August), the Iranian foreign ministry held talks with the Pakistani military and the Turkish government over the ongoing tensions.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, have discussed protection freedom of navigation and stability across the Gulf region.

United States

The Pentagon commented to the media on Friday afternoon (31 July) that the US military is “locked and loaded” and “ready for anything” at any time. President Trump told reporters that the US military would hit Iran “very hard” over the coming four weeks, and on Saturday (01 August) there were indications on social media that President Trump intended to increase attacks on Iran. However, on Sunday (02 August), he said he had decided to cancel a planned attack “subject to being able to rapidly make a deal” with Tehran. Some media agencies reported that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed had called Trump to express his concerns, prompting the de-escalation, along with emergency calls from the UAE and Qatar.

On Saturday the US State Department issued a new travel warning for the Middle East, urging US nationals in the region to be on “heightened alert” and to “seriously reconsider travel to and through the region”, given the “fluid” situation and the unpredictability of the Iranian regime.

A Democrat party member of Congress has introduced a bill to remove funding from military operations in Iran.

A US media report on Saturday morning reported that the conflict in the Middle East has left the Pentagon with a critical shortage of air defence weapons to intercept missiles.

Iran

On Saturday morning (01 August), Tehran’s National Security Council made a statement that if the United States continues its naval blockade on Iran’s southern ports, the Iranian lock on the Strait of Hormuz will be tightened, and “other straits” (interpreted as the Bab al-Mandeb Strait) could also be closed.

Iranian media reported this morning (03 August) that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) shot down a Reaper drone over the Strait of Hormuz, likely a US weapon.

On Saturday evening, the Iranian government warned Gulf states against allowing the US and Israeli militaries to use their territory to conduct attacks against Iran.

Israel

The Israeli media has reported that the US military will deploy about 10 more refuelling aircraft to Israel this week, the majority to be stationed at Ben Gurion airport, Tel Aviv (where 30 refuelling aircraft are already present).

Emergency military mobilisation has been extended until 30 September, giving the army the right to call up as many as 240,000 reservists.

Regional

Iraq

Iranian drones were launched on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on Saturday evening (01 August), all of which were reportedly intercepted, according to Iraqi media.

On Sunday morning (02 August), a drone attack on Sulaimaniyah led to a large fire in the city. A drone targeting a local Peshmerga headquarters was intercepted, but falling debris reportedly led to the fire. Local media reported that the attack had been carried out by Tehran-backed groups within Iraq.

On Saturday evening, Baghdad issued a statement to confirm the readiness of its military to prevent attacks on neighbouring regional countries.

Kuwait

The Kuwaiti military reported on both Friday and Saturday (31 July – 01 August) that it had successfully “engaged and destroyed” drones in its airspace. The Iranian army said it had targeted US military facilities at the Ahmad al-Jaber airbase outside Kuwait City; however, some damage to a government facility and civilian vehicles on Bubiyan Island prompted condemnation from the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Lebanon

The Israeli military conducted attacks on southern Lebanon on Saturday (01 August), which were condemned by the Lebanese government. The Israeli army claimed to have killed several Hezbollah militants near Nabatieh al-Fawqa.

Yesterday morning (02 August), Israeli attacks were reported on Kunin, al-Mansouri and Haddatha, including artillery shelling, air strikes and controlled detonations. Israeli media reported that five Israeli soldiers were wounded in an attack on Bint Jbeil in Nabatieh. Lebanese media accused the Israeli military of dropping phosphorus bombs in the area, causing large fires to break out.

Travel

Maritime

On Saturday morning (01 August), the Houthi militia in Yemen denied media reports that it intended to impose fees on commercial vessels transiting the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

On Saturday morning, a tanker was reportedly hit by a projectile 11nm north-east of Oman. Shortly afterwards, an explosion was reported on a tanker 21nm north-east of Oman.

On Saturday morning, the Houthis reported they had forced eight Saudi oil tankers to change course as part of their maritime blockade of Saudi Arabia. However, two tankers carrying Saudi crude oil reportedly crossed the Bab al-Mandeb strait over the weekend. A maritime intelligence data company has reported that 22 Chinese-linked vessels have crossed the Bab al-Mandeb strait and docked at Saudi port since 20 July, suggesting different access rules for Chinese ships.

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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