

Iran has stated that ships must follow a designated route through the Strait of Hormuz.



Western Asia in Flames – The ticker on July 18 (12:30 pm)

July 18, 2026, [Peter F. Mayer](#) / [Jochen Mitschka](#) 10.4-minute read

US President Donald Trump is only permitted to wage wars of aggression for a limited time without congressional approval. Therefore, after 60 days of war against Iran, he declared it over, only to escalate it again a few days later. Trump is exploiting a legal loophole to circumvent the constitutional requirement of congressional approval by formally ending the conflict and then promptly initiating a "new" period.

Trump used the [War Powers Resolution](#) as a legal loophole to avoid a congressional vote, only to now fully re-enter the war. On July 7, Donald Trump officially declared the agreements with Iran [over](#) ("it's over"). Shortly thereafter, he submitted a new formal notification to Congress regarding the resumption of hostilities. As reported by the news magazine [POLITICO](#) and the [Reuters](#) news agency, this formal re-notification tactically grants the Trump administration **an entirely new 60-day window**.

The military escalation in the West Asian war has reached a new peak in the past 24 hours, following the expansion of US air strikes and Iran's massive counterattacks on US bases in the Gulf states.

US airstrikes on Iranian infrastructure

The US regional command CENTCOM has **carried out heavy air strikes** against targets in Iran for the seventh night in a row.

- - **Bridge destruction:** The focus was on civilian logistics [transport routes](#) in the south of the country. According to Iranian sources, at least six strategically important transport bridges were destroyed or severely damaged in Hormozgan province, including the Kahurestan and Gariveh bridges. These bridges connect the port city of Bandar Abbas with the interior of the country. At least seven people died in the attacks in Bandar Khamir.
 - **Hits on civilian and logistical targets:** were also hit [The airport of Iranshahr, a railway station and a control tower of the port of Shahid Kalantari in Chahbahar](#).
 - **Attacks on energy and healthcare services:** Local sources and reports from [Al Jazeera](#) reported significant damage to civilian electricity and water supplies, prompting the Iranian Energy Ministry to urge the population to conserve electricity due to extreme heat. There were also reports of damage to medical facilities, **including a children's cancer hospital**. UN Secretary-General António Guterres strongly condemned the attacks on civilian infrastructure as "unacceptable."

Iranian retaliatory strikes against US bases in the Gulf States

In direct response to the bombings, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) launched **waves of ballistic missiles and drones at US military infrastructure** the US stationing and overflight rights [in the surrounding Gulf states that grant](#).

- - **Kuwait:** Kuwaiti air defenses were under [constant attack](#). According to Iranian state media, US radar installations and missile launch sites caught fire. A Kuwaiti power and seawater desalination plant was also hit, causing fires and grid disruptions.
 - **Bahrain:** The Interior Ministry triggered a nationwide siren alert. The IRGC reported attacks on a US drone center and on Sakhir Air Base, where US reconnaissance aircraft and helicopters [are stationed](#).
 - **Qatar:** Air defenses intercepted missiles over the capital, Doha. Falling [debris](#) injured a child, according to the Qatari Interior Ministry.
 - **Jordan:** The Jordanian armed forces stated that they had intercepted at least ten incoming Iranian missiles by Saturday morning. Iran, however, claimed to [have](#) destroyed several US fighter jets and tanker aircraft on the ground at Al-Azraq Air Base.
 - **Naval operations:** The Iranian navy also fired a surface-to-air missile at a US warship in the northern Indian Ocean, forcing it to change course. Simultaneously, the IRGC is holding four international [merchant tankers](#) as part of the escalation of the naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

Handelsblatt reports that Iran has declared the Strait of Hormuz open, provided the prescribed route (see cover image) is followed. According to the report, it is now being de facto closed by the US, threatened secondary sanctions, and the US blockade.

The leadership of the Revolutionary Guard formally threatened neighboring Arab states with a "*devastating destruction of the entire regional infrastructure* as of Saturday morning [" should US attacks continue from their territory. Without the support of these states, the US war of aggression would be impossible. Mediation attempts by Pakistan and China remained unsuccessful](#) .

Speculation about the deployment of ground troops is met with head-shaking and incomprehension by US military officials and analysts. The expected casualties among the attackers would be devastating, it is widely reported. Iran, for its part, is bombing the potential staging area of Kurdish rebel groups in Iraq, who had been considered for such an operation, while attacks on the Iranian coast have recently been discussed.

9:00 AM

This is what US military propaganda sounds like:

America ends its seventh consecutive night of attacks on Iran, reaching underground weapons depots. - CENTCOM confirmed that the seventh consecutive night ended early Saturday local time. - The targets: surveillance sites, military logistics infrastructure, underground weapons depots, and maritime capabilities. - Fighter jets, drones, and warships all fired in the wave. - It caps a week with over 300 targets hit, seven bridges destroyed, and a blockade that has repelled four ships. The underground depot line is the signal of the night. After seven days, the surface war is essentially won, the radars, launchers, and boats destroyed, so the campaign is digging for what Iran has buried: the tunneled arsenals designed precisely for this purpose, to survive. Each night extends the longest sustained bombing of the entire war, and each target list reads deeper into Iran's remaining capability. Source: CENTCOM / Author: Daniel



This is what the propaganda of the Iranian military sounds like:

IRGC: Countries hosting aggressive US troops should prepare for an appropriate response.

Full statement from the press office of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: In the name of God, the vanquisher of tyrants. The treaty-breaking American regime, in the midst of negotiations and under the illusion that Iran was weakened, officially resumed the war it never truly ended last week.

However, after several days of fighting with the armed forces, devastating counterattacks, and the realization that the Iranian armed forces had significantly increased in strength since the start of the war on February 28, the United States refused to honorably admit defeat or to acknowledge another mistake.

Instead, it has been avoiding direct confrontation since yesterday and is pursuing a new approach. It has attempted to conceal its military defeat through war crimes. Through destructive attacks on hospitals, bridges, railway lines, airports, ports, telecommunications centers, and similar facilities, as well as through the killing of civilians, the country has tried to secure its position through crime and cowardice rather than fighting.

Since there is no international institution that can prevent the brutality of the US military, we have no other option than to follow the commandment of the Quran: "Whoever attacks you, attack him in the same way he attacked you."

Therefore, the countries hosting the aggressive US troops and making their territory available to these invading criminals to attack Iran should prepare for an appropriate response. **They should activate their civil defense units to protect their citizens and keep them away from potential targets.** However, to give the American adversary the opportunity to abandon this cowardly course of action, we decided last night, for the time being, to respond with military targets.

In the 18th wave of Operation Nasr 2, codenamed "O Abolfazl al-Abbas," powerful ground forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) attacked a concentration of invasion forces at their logistics center in Arifyan, killing several of them. Simultaneously, a drone strike destroyed the radar at the U.S. Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait. The ground forces also attacked and destroyed an arms depot and a drone hangar.

The fighters' reprisals continue. "If God is with you, no one can defeat you." — End —

IRGC: Countries Hosting Aggressive U.S. Forces Should Prepare to Receive a Proportionate Response

Full Statement by the Public Relations Department of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps:

In the name of God, the Vanquisher of the tyrants.

The treaty-breaking American [Mehr anzeigen](#)



8:12 form. · July 18, 2026



Kuwait Airways announces that most flights have been rebooked due to the airspace closure.

Kuwait Airways has rebooked most of its flights due to the airspace closure on Saturday, the airline said in a post on X.

"Kuwait Airways urges all passengers to stay informed about their flight status. Notifications and SMS messages will be sent to the phone numbers provided during booking to inform them of any changes," the statement read.

Earlier, the Kuwaiti army had stated that it was responding to Iranian missile and drone attacks for the third time and urged the population to "follow the safety instructions of the authorities".

According to MarineTraffic, ships with ties to India are among the most frequent users of the Hormuz transit route.

According to MarineTraffic, ships traveling to and from India accounted for one of the largest shares of applications to use the routes through the Strait of Hormuz designated by Iran.

Citing data published by Iran, MarineTraffic stated that in the three weeks following the peace memorandum between the US and Iran on June 17, ships bound for India accounted for 20 percent of exit transit requests, ranking second only to China with 21 percent.

India was the largest country of origin for ships entering the Gulf, accounting for 21 percent of applications.

MarineTraffic reported that the Iranian Persian Gulf Navigation Authority (PGSA) received more than 200 transit permits and insurance applications from non-Iranian vessels during this period.

Tankers accounted for 41 percent of the applications, followed by bulk carriers at 27 percent and container ships at 18 percent.

9:30 a.m.:

What else happened

- The Jordanian military said its air defenses shot down ten Iranian missiles that had entered the country's airspace early Saturday morning.
- The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Esmail Baqaei, described the US attack on Hormozgan province, in which eight civilians were killed, as a “blatant war crime”.
- The Gaza Civil Defense Authority and a hospital stated that an Israeli airstrike on a funeral in the Al-Balata market area of the Nuseirat refugee camp killed eight people and injured several others.

Iranian official: US attacks disrupt water supply to 20 villages

The drinking water supply to 20 villages with nearly 10,000 inhabitants has been interrupted after US attacks damaged desalination pumps in the coastal village of Bunji in Iran's Jask district, according to Abdolhamid Hamzhepour, managing director of the Hormozgan Water and Wastewater Company.

The Iranian news agency Tasnim quoted Hamzhepour as saying he described the US attacks as "a series of crimes and terrorist attacks".

He said a pumping station for extracting water from the sea and a power transformer at the Bunji desalination plant had been "completely destroyed".

Israel continues to routinely kill children in Gaza

The Israeli daily newspaper "Haaretz" stated yesterday that Israel *has* killed 274 children since the ceasefire came into effect on October 10.

This figure means that, on average, one child per day has been killed since the ceasefire began. She added that more than 21,000 children have been killed in Israeli attacks since October 7, 2023.

According to Haaretz, the vast majority of the children were killed in air raids, while others died from sniper fire, collapsing buildings, or shrapnel.

Haaretz also highlighted the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, reporting that houses continued to be destroyed and that approximately 1.7 million people were still living in tents without electricity, running water or sanitation facilities.

Iranian official: US airstrikes disrupt water supply to 20 villages

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10:00 AM

The US base in Kuwait, one of the largest US bases in West Asia, appears to have been badly damaged. A large fire has broken out.



In Iran, by contrast, important bridges have been destroyed, severely disrupting civilian trade and transport. But Iran is threatening further escalation.

Major General Mohsen Rezaei, a senior military advisor to the Iranian leadership, issued a stark warning today that Iran would launch a full-scale offensive if the US continues its bombing campaign in the coming days. The warning, broadcast by Iranian state television IRIB, marks a significant shift in Iranian military strategy amid escalating tensions in the region.

Rezaei declared that Iran would no longer limit itself to retaliatory measures and made it clear that no political border would be safe from potential Iranian actions. He emphasized that the era of diplomacy during an active conflict was over and that the policy of negotiating in war was officially history.

According to the general, Iran's previous military maneuvers, including the capture of Hormuz, were aimed solely at deterrence and ending the conflict, not at regional expansion. With this latest ultimatum, Tehran is signaling that it is abandoning its focus on de-escalation and will instead launch an unqualified military response should the US continue on its current course. (Source: The Cradle)



The Cradle 
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Iran threatens full scale offensive after ongoing US strikes

Major General Mohsen Rezaei, a senior military adviser to the Iranian leadership, issued a stark warning today that Iran will transition to full scale offensive operations if the United States persists with its [Mehr anzeigen](#)



9:45 form. · July 18, 2026



An X post claims to depict Iran's attacks of the last 12 hours:



Atul Kumar

@LearnerAtul · Follow



#Pakistan does not have guys to attack #Iran ==Loud blasts heard in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia
#Pakistan can oly beg from #SaudiArabia #Qatar and #Gulf Half_Nabhao_Barderjao#
Moulana_Shan_Pakistan# Iin_Shaken_Maqds_Gaye#
Selection_Mafia_Namanzoor# Fazlo_Maafi_Mango#

aa.com.tr/en/middle-east ...



10:09 form. · July 18, 2026



11:00 AM

IRGC reports missile and drone attack on US base in Jordan

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) claimed to have launched a "devastating and simultaneous missile and drone attack" on fighter jet shelters and a large aircraft parking area at the US base in al-Azraq, Jordan.

The IRGC stated that the attack "completely destroyed" at least two US fighter jets and caused significant damage to several others. These claims have not yet been independently verified.

In the same statement, the IRGC called on the Jordanian military to attack US forces, describing them as "legitimate targets".

"It is your religious and humanitarian duty to destroy them by all necessary means and to rid the holy land of Jordan of these murderers of innocent Muslims," the statement read.

Kuwait postpones flights due to airspace closures

Kuwait Airways announced in a statement published on social media that it would be rescheduling some flights due to airspace closures.

Similar disruptions occurred during the regional escalation earlier this year, when airspace closures in several Gulf states led to widespread travel disruptions affecting hundreds of thousands of passengers.

Many travelers passing through the region were stuck for days, in some cases even weeks, as flights were suspended or diverted.

US attacks on the Iranian province of Hormozgan claim eight lives: Report

Local Iranian media report that "about seven to eight people" were killed in US attacks on the southern Iranian province of Hormozgan over the past two nights, all of them civilians, according to Ahmad Moradi, a representative of the province, speaking to the Iranian news agency Tasnim.

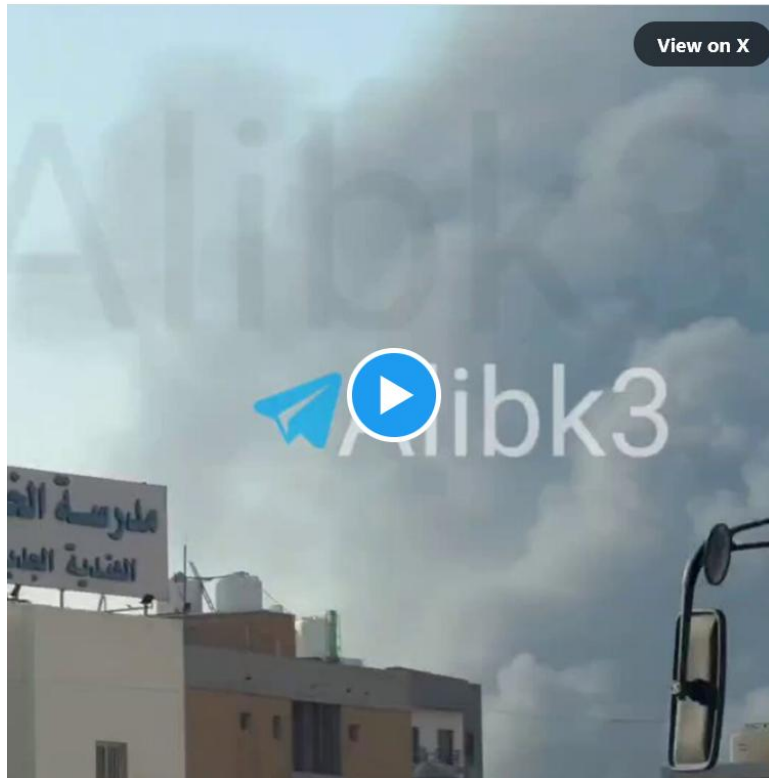
Tasnim reported that an attack targeted a bridge in the province, hitting two family cars and killing six people.

The agency also reported that the Tappeh Allah-o-Akbar neighborhood in Bandar Abbas was hit, resulting in the death of one woman and the amputation of a one-year-old child. It added that a driver delivering fuel to gas stations died in a fire.

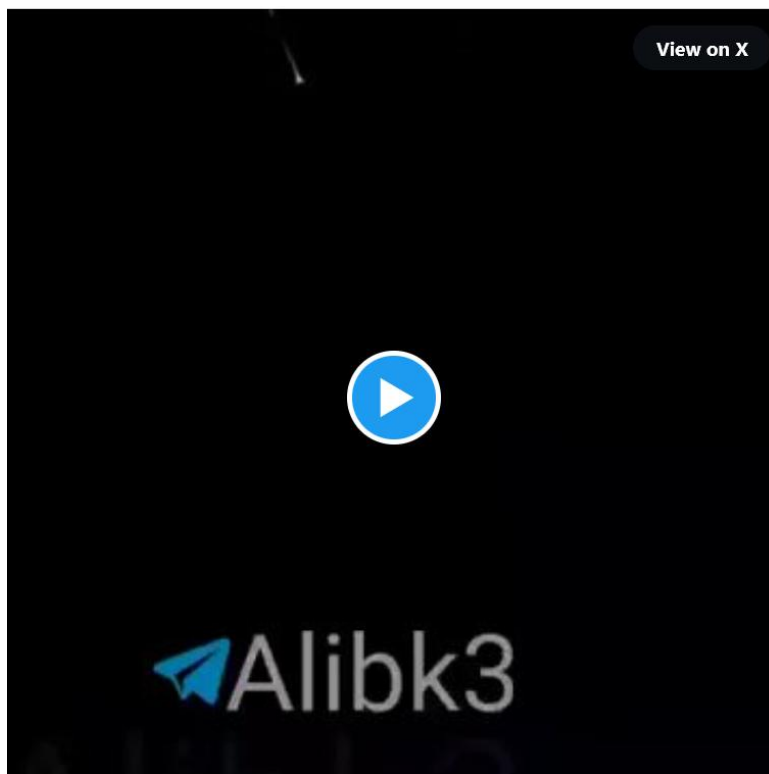
12:30 pm

10,000 Iranians have no access to water.

US strike [cuts](#) 10,000 people in southeastern Iran off drinking water — Approximately 10,000 people in Iran's Hormozgan province have been without drinking water since a US attack on a desalination plant in the coastal village of Bunji, a provincial official said on July 18. The CEO of the Hormozgan Water and Wastewater Company told the Tasnim News Agency that the attack had "completely cut off the drinking water supply to 20 villages with a population of about 10,000 people." "These villages are facing a water shortage crisis," the official added. Retaliation may have already begun, as Iran has reportedly struck a desalination plant in Kuwait.



Large fire also at US base in Jordan, following Iran's retaliatory attacks.



One [comment](#) :

"An airbase in Jordan currently exists in three versions. Iran says its fuel and ammunition depots are burning. Jordan says every missile was intercepted, only debris, no damage. Commercial satellites say Iranian missiles, fired from more than 1,000 kilometers away, tore holes in two newly built hangars. The base, Muwaffaq Salti near Azraq, is Jordanian-run, houses thousands of American troops and coalition jets, and has been repeatedly attacked since June. Amman's official report reads like a perfect season: five missiles intercepted in one wave, four in another, no casualties, no damage, each time."

US officials have privately told CBS that several American soldiers were injured this week at Jordanian bases. Satellite images confirmed damage to a THAAD radar at the same base as early as March 2026. The photos continue to support the private account. In most eras of military history, the host government possessed the truth about its own territory. Commercial satellites ended that monopoly.

Jordan cannot admit to non-American-related damage without simultaneously admitting three things: that its air defenses are leaky, that hosting it has made it a target, and that the war its enraged population in Gaza is witnessing has physically arrived on Jordanian soil. Amman even insists that there is no American base in the kingdom at all, only Jordanian facilities with foreign guests under Jordanian supervision.

No damage is no claim. It's the last foreign policy Jordan has left. Every host in this Gulf War is pursuing a different survival strategy. Kuwait is publicizing its wounds and asking citizens to conserve electricity. Riyadh is allegedly parking America's planes. Amman denies that the hits ever land. Same landlord, three rents, and Tehran keeps reassessing all three.

Kuwait reports one of the worst nights of the war

Kuwait reports one of its worst nights in Iranian retaliatory strikes, with a second power plant hit in two days, flights suspended, and injuries and damage reported in the oil sector. Explosions and air defense activity were also reported at US bases in Jordan. (Rasd Akhbar Shehaba, citing Reuters and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, IRIB News)

Everything indicates that Iran is making good on its warning to assume escalation dominance. But the US destruction is also reaching ever greater proportions.