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# Iran

## *Digest*

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## The US-Israel war on Iran

On 28 February, US President Donald Trump launched "Operation Epic Fury" with the declared objective of crushing the Iranian regime and ending the nuclear threat. The joint US-Israeli operations began with a decapitation strike against political leadership, including the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Over the month, Israel assassinated Iran's security chief [Ali Larijani](#), head of the Basij paramilitary force Gholamreza Soleimani, intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib, and the IRGC Navy commander Alireza Tangsiri. The US and Israel have launched a sustained strike campaign against [Iran's security apparatus](#), targeting the headquarters and regional command of the IRGC and its affiliated Basij militia, police stations, and intelligence bases across the country, with the objective of encouraging Iranians to revolt against the regime. In the first two days, US forces struck more than a thousand targets, especially air defences and ballistic missile launchers and bases, to establish air superiority over Iran and degrade Iran's capabilities to launch missiles and drones. During the first phase of operations, the US hit the IRGC Naval bases in Chabahar and Minab, which resulted in a major incident killing at least 175 people, including children in an adjacent school. It also hit the Iranian drone carrier IRIS Shahid Bagheri.

Despite suffering leadership decapitation, Iran was able to mount immediate retaliation using missiles and drones to target the US bases in the Gulf States, Jordan, and Israel. Learning lessons from decapitation strikes during the 12-Day war with Israel, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary

Guard Corps (IRGC) had decentralised the command and control to ensure not only flexibility and speed but also survivability in the face of a superior force. At the beginning of the conflict, the IRGC Navy relayed radio messages to vessels stating that "no ship is allowed to pass the Strait of Hormuz". Following Iranian drone strikes on the UAE's [Jebel Ali port](#) and a fuel tank at Oman's Duqm Port, which serves as an alternative export route for Gulf oil, a Palau-flagged tanker Skylight, under US sanctions, was hit off Oman's Musandam peninsula. Iran reached a bilateral understanding with a select number of countries and began allowing a small number of approved ships – mainly Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese-flagged – to pass. Iran's sustained missile and drone strikes in the Gulf States have damaged multiple high-value US radar and missile defence systems, including damaging long-range radar at the [Al Udeid Air Base](#) and E-3 Sentry AWACS or flying radars at [Prince Sultan Air Base](#) in Saudi Arabia. From Tehran's perspective, the integration of Gulf States' Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance assets and missile defence capabilities integrated with the CENTCOM network and a regional early warning system, contributes to US operations against Iran. After degrading US radar and interception capabilities, Iran can deploy its advanced long-range missiles against Israel more economically and with greater effectiveness in a prolonged war of attrition.

On 21 March, after the Natanz nuclear enrichment facility was targeted, Iran launched retaliatory strikes on the cities of Dimona and Arad, close to a nuclear

research centre in southern Israel. Israel's military said it was not able to intercept missiles that hit Dimona and Arad. On 22 March, Trump, in a post on Truth Social, issued a 48-hour deadline to open the Strait of Hormuz or the US would "hit and obliterate" Iranian power plants. Two days later, Trump postponed the deadline for five days, saying Iran has "one more chance" and that the US and Iran have held talks on the "complete and total resolution of hostilities" in the Middle East. The Iranian side rejected a [15-point peace plan](#) proposed by the US, which included a one-month ceasefire, while the two sides negotiate terms to end the war, via Pakistan. The other key elements included dismantling of Iran's nuclear facilities, handover of Iran's stockpile of already enriched uranium to the IAEA and limits on range and number of Iran's missiles, which Iran had rejected before the war began. Iran responded with its own proposal, including concrete guarantees that conflict will no longer recur, reparations and compensation, the end of the war on all fronts, including Lebanon and a new legal mechanism to control transit through the Strait of Hormuz, formalising Iran's de facto dominance over the waterway. After the US and Israel targeted Iran's major steel plants in Isfahan and Ahvaz and several power plant units, Iran retaliated by strikes on an aluminium plant in Bahrain and a steel smelter in Abu Dhabi. An Iranian missile also caused damage to a [chemical plant](#) at Neot Hovav Industrial Zone in southern Israel. As Tehran downplays the prospects of a diplomatic resolution, Trump continues to call for a deal while renewing threats to strike Iranian power plants and other civilian infrastructure.

### **Bills on a new legal regime for the Strait of Hormuz and withdrawal from the NPT introduced in Iran's Parliament**

On 31 March, the national security and foreign policy commission of Iran's parliament approved a draft bill [formalising Iran's control](#) over the Strait of Hormuz. Elaborating on the bill, MP Alireza Salimi, a member of the parliament's presiding board, said the proposed legislation has four pillars: shipping security, environmental levies, navigation service fees paid in Iran's national currency, and a regional development fund. Other provisions include a ban on Israeli and US-affiliated vessels and prohibiting access for countries that have joined unilateral sanctions against Iran. The bill also outlines cooperation with Oman on "the structure of the legal regime." On 29 March, the First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref wrote on Twitter/X that "the regime of the strait has changed" and will not return to its prior form, pledging to convert claimed battlefield gains into lasting economic and security leverage.

Malek Shariati, a representative from Tehran, said that an emergency bill to withdraw Iran from the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been uploaded to an online parliamentary portal and will be reviewed soon. He further noted that the proposed legislation will withdraw Iran from the Treaty on the NPT, revoke a law that adopted nuclear restrictions linked with a now-defunct 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, and "support a new international treaty with aligned countries [including Shanghai Cooperation Organisation/BRICS] on developing peaceful nuclear technologies".