

ISRAEL WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY

Week #133 April 19 - April 25, 2026

This is a product of the IDSF Habithonistim Research Department, distributed by the David Institute for Security Policy in coordination with IDSF USA



Account of the main events in the Israel-Hamas war and hostilities by the Iranian Axis



Guided-missile destroyer USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115) enforces the U.S. blockade on Iranian ports against an Iranian-flagged ship attempting to sail to a port in Iran, April 24.

Source: CENTCOM on X

Trump declared that the United States controls the Strait of Hormuz and that it is locked down. He later stated that he had ordered the killing and destruction of anyone trying to lay mines while American forces clear the naval mines. The struggle is now centered in the maritime arena.



SECURITY BRIEFING WEEK 133


**DAVID
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FOR SECURITY POLICY

50

IDF strikes in
Lebanon this
week

25

terrorists killed
during the
ceasefire.

5

Iranian shadow
fleet tankers
seized



33

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) reports that the blockade on Iranian ports is holding firm, with 33 Iranian ships and tankers forced to turn back



100,000

Treasury Secretary warns blockade could lead to the unemployment of approximately 100,000 Iranian civilians as oil production is forced to a halt.



594-square-kilometer

The IDF continues to consolidate control over a 594-square-kilometer (230 sq mi) security zone in southern Lebanon, where five divisions are actively clearing Radwan Force infrastructure.



+1,000

Hamas is reportedly only prepared to surrender several thousand light weapons to a new government, provided they maintain autonomy in the "red zone."

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- According to ISW, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf is reportedly at risk of removal because of a dispute with the country's de facto leader, new IRGC commander Mohammad Vahidi. Vahidi has access to Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who, by virtue of his position, can authorize approval or cancellation of a nuclear deal. Vahidi represents the hardline side of Iran's political map, while Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi are trying to reach a compromise deal to end the operation. Vahidi is attempting to create a new status quo in which the Strait of Hormuz belongs to Iran, the blockade is not lifted before an arrangement connected to Hormuz, and there are no talks before the American blockade is removed.
- It appears that Vahidi and the senior IRGC leadership that emerged from the generation that lived through the Iran-Iraq War, have taken control of the state leadership. They appear to be the only actors with access to the Supreme Leader, who is reportedly seriously wounded and undergoing rehab. This new leadership either believes fully in Shiite purity and the values of the Islamic Revolution, despite the economic damage, or is presenting itself that way politically. After a dispute in which Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian declared that Iran had lost \$300 billion and needed sanctions relief and the unfreezing of assets and funds, he, along with Ghalibaf and the head of the judiciary, were forced to walk back the statement and express loyalty to the values of the revolution out of fear of a political purge.
- The cracks inside the Iranian leadership point to a possible wave of internal collapse within the regime, driven by American military pressure and economic pressure as part of Operation Economic Fury. This pressure may lead to internal disputes inside the Iranian leadership, weaken the regime, and encourage defections.

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- Talks between Vice President Vance and an Iranian team, mediated by Pakistan, were supposed to take place but were canceled because Iran was unwilling to send representatives. The Americans were expected to present a deal that included stopping enrichment for 20 years, removing uranium from Iran, and ending the blockade of Hormuz. The Iranians sought sanctions relief, a pause in enrichment for only a few years, and full control of the Strait.
- Iran is trying to project strength through parades displaying ballistic missiles, while in practice it is preparing for another round of fighting and using the time to remove missiles from the mountains or redistribute its launchers. Iran is also hinting at renewed attacks on Gulf states. At this stage, there is no longer a real ceasefire, but rather limited fighting in the maritime arena, with high likelihood of escalation.
- The American destroyer USS Spruance fired at, and hit the engine room of an Iranian-owned vessel that was heading toward Bandar Abbas and had broken the American blockade. After the strike, a team airlifted from the USS Tripoli boarded the ship, took control of it, and transferred it to American custody.
- On April 22, the IRGC Navy used fast attack boats to seize two container ships that tried to leave Hormuz. The ships were taken to Iranian ports, while a third ship was hit by fire but was not captured. Through this move, Iran is trying to signal that this is its territory, that it is ready to resume fighting, and that it can keep maritime insurance prices high as a pressure lever until there is a deal in which it receives control over Hormuz.

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- The aircraft carrier USS George H. W. Bush arrived in the Indian Ocean, the USS Gerald R. Ford returned to the Red Sea after repairs, and the USS Abraham Lincoln is deployed in the Arabian Sea. The presence of three aircraft carriers in the southeastern Middle East represents the largest concentration of naval power in the region since the Gulf Wars. This force is meant to enforce the naval blockade and manage the front if fighting resumes.
- The Iranian tanker seized on Sunday, April 19, had departed from China and had previously been used to transport sodium perchlorate for the production of solid fuel for ballistic missiles. U.S. Indo-Pacific Command seized an Iranian vessel under sanctions in the Bay of Bengal that had traveled between Iran and China five times since 2023. The United States is hunting down Iran's shadow fleet in order to choke off its ability to smuggle oil.
- Iran attempted to advance attacks through Shiite terror cells in Azerbaijan, that were planning on using explosives and UAVs to target the synagogue in Baku, the Israeli embassy, and even the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. This pipeline supplies much of Israel's oil and, if attacked successfully, could indirectly deepen the global energy crisis.
- In Baghdad, the commander of the Quds Force, met with senior officials from the Shiite militias, who were reportedly offered economic assistance and manpower support. They discussed the renewal of fighting, while it was also reported that the militias had launched around 500 UAVs into Saudi territory during the operation. In the United Arab Emirates, a 27-member terror network was exposed, reportedly prepared to carry out attacks on Emirati soil.

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- There is a coordinated U.S.-Israeli strategy that uses diplomacy to reach an arrangement with the Lebanese government, alongside military force designed to degrade Hezbollah and incentivize the Lebanese government to reach a long-term peace arrangement with Israel.
- Hezbollah attacked the Israeli force inside the Lebanese yellow line around 10 times, using UAVs, FPV drones, and rockets. Hezbollah is trying to hit the Israeli engineering force operating there to destroy villages and terror infrastructure, and to force the IDF to withdraw from that strip. On Thursday, April 23, the IDF Spokesperson confirmed that in recent days Israel had carried out 50 strikes enforcing ceasefire against Hezbollah violations and have killed at least 25 terrorists. In addition, more than 100 infrastructure sites were destroyed inside the yellow line during the ceasefire.
- Syrian President al-Sharaa met in Jeddah with Mohammed bin Salman. They discussed relations between Saudi Arabia and Syria, as well as regional developments. Later, al-Sharaa continued his tour of the Gulf states and met with the leaders of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.
- According to a New York Times report, Hamas is preparing to give up only several thousand light weapons and hand them over to the new Gazan government, on the condition that the government does not try to disarm Hamas inside the red zone.
- While negotiations over a deal to disarm Hamas, led by Nickolay Mladenov, appear stuck, the militia of Hossam al-Astal captured a limited area in Khan Younis from Hamas and distributed food to residents. The militia controlled the area for only three hours, and after a short clash with Hamas in which one person was killed, it withdrew. This was likely also a test of possible future operations.

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- The militias of Ashraf al-Mansi and Ghassan al-Dahini launched an operation called “Deterring the Aggression” from the direction of Beit Lahia and eastern Khan Younis against Hamas.
- The Spanish foreign minister said that Spain, Slovenia, and Ireland asked the European Union to discuss suspending the cooperation agreement with Israel.
- German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said that the European Union would be prepared to ease sanctions if Iran is willing to compromise. He also said that Tehran is “buying time” and emphasized that pressure on Iran must be increased. Merz added that at the European Union summit, none of the leaders disputed that sanctions could be eased if Iran changes its approach and shows willingness to compromise.
- Reuters reported that an internal Pentagon email discussed the possibility of suspending Spain from NATO as part of the American response to NATO’s failure to assist the United States against Iran. The United States is also reconsidering its position regarding recognition of British sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.
- Anwar Gargash, adviser to the president of the United Arab Emirates, said that it is now very clear to the region, to the UAE, and to other states, that Iran is the primary long-term threat to regional stability [and not Israel].