

US-Iran Conflict Briefing

2026-09-18 · Evening edition · Issued 20:00 CDT

Iran claims it struck and detained a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz

- Iran's Revolutionary Guard claims it intercepted the Togo-flagged tanker Trend as it made an 'illegal attempt' to transit the Strait of Hormuz, warning unauthorized vessels would face 'destruction'; AP could not independently confirm the claim. — [AP](#)
- UKMTO separately reported a security incident overnight 16 nautical miles northeast of Khasab, Oman (crew safe, no environmental impact) and a tanker hit by an unknown projectile that set off a fire later extinguished (crew safe); AP could not verify either incident or say whether the Trend is one of them. — [AP](#)
- US-facilitated transits off Oman averaged 24 per day over the past week, but total Hormuz traffic remains roughly 90% below pre-war levels. — [AP](#)
- UKMTO reported no new Red Sea shipping attacks in the week since the Houthi island capture, but rated the southern Red Sea threat as 'substantial' with northbound and southbound transits down. — [AP](#)

Red Sea escalation: Italy prepares its own naval mission, breaks with EU caution

- Italian defence minister Guido Crosetto said Italy is preparing its own naval mission to protect merchant shipping through Bab el-Mandeb, declaring Italy 'cannot wait for the EU to respond' and calling for a stronger naval presence in the Red Sea. — [Reuters](#)
- 'After what I said, something moved within Aspides, but we need more ships,' Crosetto said; Italy and Greece are the only nations substantially supporting the security effort, and Rome did not detail ships or measures for its own mission. — [Reuters](#)
- Reuters notes Houthi rapid advances along Yemen's Red Sea coast (Mocha port, strategic islands near Bab el-Mandeb); the strait carries ~7% of global oil output and ~40% of Italy's external trade uses the Suez route. — [Reuters](#)
- Reports that EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas announced ASPIDES would raise the alert level of participating vessels after her call with Saudi FM Faisal bin Farhan have not been matched to a vetted outlet — frame as reported, not established. — [Reported \(unconfirmed\)](#)

Beijing angle sharpens: ISW assesses PLA-linked firms supplied the imagery used in the Jordan strike

- Unnamed US officials link high-resolution satellite imagery sold to Iran by unnamed Chinese entities to the July 17 ballistic-missile strike on Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan (3 US soldiers killed, 4 wounded and evacuated); Tehran procured imagery both before and after the attack. — [Wall Street Journal](#)
- Beijing called the report 'groundless' and demanded evidence; President Trump dismissed it aboard Air Force One ('They basically do what we do') ahead of a planned Trump-Xi meeting on September 24. — [Reuters](#)

- ISW's September 18 China-Taiwan Update republishes the claim framed as its own assessment — 'PRC entities likely linked to the PLA'; the PLA link is ISW's assessment, not a US official claim of direct Beijing involvement. It adds that PRC FM Wang Yi met Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi on September 16, urging Iran to limit conflict spread and possibly pressing restraint on Houthi activity at Saudi Arabia's request. — [ISW/AEI \(assessment, Sept 18\)](#)

Oil settles back above \$100 as Saudi workarounds offset escalation

- Friday settlement: Brent \$103.87, WTI \$100.30 — alternate exports and expected partial repairs outweighed escalation fears. — [Reuters](#)
- Three East-West Pipeline pumping stations were damaged — one more than previously assessed — yet the market took it in stride. — [Wall Street Journal](#)

South Korea weighs wider Gulf of Aden role — rules out joining the war

- South Korea is considering expanding its Cheonghae naval unit's operations in the Gulf of Aden to protect Korean shipping and oil routes, explicitly ruling out intervening in the war. — [AP](#)

Wartime mood: hundreds of thousands rally in Tehran; Yemen's toll climbs

- Hundreds of thousands attended Tehran's largest pro-government rally since the war began, per AP. — [AP](#)
- At least 23 Yemeni government soldiers killed in Houthi missile/drone attacks in two southwestern provinces over 24 hours; 40 Houthi fighters killed in Saudi airstrikes/ground fighting; Saudi civil defence reported the country's first fatality since the Houthis began targeting Saudi territory. — [AFP \(via aggregators, medium confidence\)](#)
- ~112,000 displaced inside Yemen in the last two weeks; nearly 3,000 fled across the Gulf of Aden to Djibouti; Djibouti preparing for up to 10,000 refugees; UNICEF says 57,000+ displaced children. — [UN agencies \(via non-vetted outlets, medium confidence\)](#)

What to watch next

- Whether Iran's detention of the Trend is confirmed by anyone other than Tehran, and whether the two UKMTO incidents are one event, two, or something else — attribution stays the open question. — [Briefing](#)
- Whether Italy's unilateral naval push triggers a wider European response or a confrontation around Bab el-Mandeb as the Houthis advance. — [Briefing](#)
- UNGA next week: possible Trump-GCC meeting Tuesday, Pezeshkian's address Wednesday, Netanyahu expected Thursday — against a deeply skeptical audience. — [Briefing](#)
- The sanctions panel mandate expires September 26 — a quiet clock about to get loud. — [Briefing](#)

Conflict map



Map of the Bab el-Mandeb strait — [view original](#)



Italian defence minister Guido Crosetto — [view original](#)

■ Oval Office press conference, Sept 18 — Trump says the Iran war will end 'soon' (NY Post footage; the claim has not been verified by a vetted outlet)

Sources: [AP](#) · [Reuters](#) · [Reported \(unconfirmed\)](#) · [Wall Street Journal](#) · [Reuters](#) · [ISW/AEI \(assessment, Sept 18\)](#) · [Reuters](#) · [Wall Street Journal](#) · [AFP \(via aggregators, medium confidence\)](#) · [UN agencies \(via non-vetted outlets, medium confidence\)](#)

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