US–Iran Conflict Briefing

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Iraq Moves on Kataib Hezbollah Oil-Smuggling Network at Jurf al-Sakhar

- Iraqi officials told Reuters that Kataib Hezbollah, an Iran-backed militia, has run an oil smuggling network for years, with accomplices among some security and oil officials, that has robbed the Iraqi government of hundreds of millions of dollars dating back to 2021. — Reuters
- Two security sources who took part in a Saturday inspection mission to Jurf al-Sakhar told Reuters investigators found evidence that smugglers had punctured a crude oil pipeline and siphoned crude into makeshift storage pits, with concealed pumping equipment in hangars and a small concealed refinery in the area. — Reuters
- Nine senior Iraqi security and oil officials have been dismissed following a high-level government investigation into oil smuggling focused on Jurf al-Sakhar in Babil province, a Kataib Hezbollah stronghold about 50 kilometres south of Baghdad, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi ordered all suspects in the Jurf al-Sakhar investigation referred to the courts and dismissed the Babil police chief, the province's intelligence and security commanders and the director of the state-run Oil Pipelines Company, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Al-Zaidi has ordered senior military and security commanders to deploy additional forces around Jurf al-Sakhar and prepare for the entry of government troops into the town, potentially bringing the government into direct confrontation with Kataib Hezbollah fighters, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Kataib Hezbollah denies the oil smuggling allegations and says the crackdown is a blackmail campaign aimed at forcing it to relinquish its weapons, according to a group statement reported by Reuters. — Reuters

Houthis Seize Ground on Yemen's Southern Coast, Edge Closer to Aden

- Five Yemeni military sources said on Monday, November 16, 2026 that Houthi fighters had advanced to the southern coastal area of Khor Omairh, some 100 kilometres west of Aden, and were 25 kilometres from government lines at Qawah, also on the coast, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- The Yemeni government said on Sunday it was withdrawing from areas near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to focus on defending Aden, and three government sources said the government's focus is to secure Aden and the province of Lahj, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Residents of Aden said government security forces had set up more checkpoints and were carrying out identity checks in the city, Reuters reported on Monday, November 16, 2026. — Reuters
- Al Jazeera reported on Monday, November 16, 2026 that Yemen's Houthis had seized territory in an advance towards Aden while government forces bolstered the city's defences. — Al Jazeera

Iran's Hormuz Mine Claim Still Unverified

- Iran's military said on Monday, November 16, 2026 that a tanker caught fire after hitting a mine in the eastern Strait of Hormuz and warned vessels to avoid restricted areas; Reuters could not independently verify the report. — Reuters

- By Monday evening, no maritime authority, the United States, or Bahrain had publicly verified Iran's mine claim or identified the tanker involved, and no second vetted outlet had independently reported the incident. — Reuters

Markets

- Brent crude was at $92.12 a barrel on Monday, November 16, 2026, as oil prices fell on expectations of a coming supply surplus, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- US West Texas Intermediate crude was at $85.38 a barrel on Monday, November 16, 2026, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- The US 10-year Treasury yield was 5.12% on Monday, November 16, 2026, Reuters reported. — Reuters

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