

US-Iran Conflict Briefing

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Iran is prolonging talks to influence the U.S. midterms, officials tell Reuters

- Three senior Iranian officials and an Iranian insider told Reuters on October 20, 2026 that Iran has deliberately prolonged talks with the United States to try to weaken President Trump politically ahead of November's U.S. midterm elections, that Tehran is preparing for renewed Israeli and U.S. attacks rather than a deal to end the war, and that there is little chance of a breakthrough before the elections. — [Reuters](#)
- Reuters reported that U.S. negotiators Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff have held two rounds of talks with Iranian officials, that the talks are in stalemate, and that an Iranian official described Iran's objective as buying time, while U.S. officials say Washington is also preparing for renewed attacks and Israel may strike Iran before Israel's October 27 election. — [Reuters](#)
- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, speaking alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Tehran on Monday, October 19, 2026, blamed the United States for insecurity and tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, said regional issues should be resolved through diplomacy, and called for regional countries to work toward a joint security arrangement, Reuters reported. — [Reuters](#)
- Pakistan's army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir is due to visit Tehran on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, according to a Pakistani official and Iranian media, Reuters reported on Monday, October 19, 2026; no outcome from the visit had been reported by early Tuesday. — [Reuters](#)

Shabwa camp death toll revised to 58 killed, more than 200 injured

- 58 people were killed and more than 200 were injured in the attack on Monday, October 19, 2026 by the Houthis on a government security forces training camp in Yemen's Shabwa province, Reuters reported on October 20, 2026, revising earlier tolls of at least 18 killed and a syndicated local-authority figure of 53 killed. — [Reuters](#)
- The Associated Press reported that Houthi missiles hit a gathering of trainees at a military camp in Ataq, the capital of Shabwa province, that the Houthis claimed responsibility for the attack, and that the Saudi-led coalition condemned it. — [AP](#)
- The Shabwa camp attack targeted soldiers during a morning training session and was carried out using three ballistic missiles, Yemeni government sources told Reuters. — [Reuters](#)

Iran's Hormuz toll plan is the concrete sticking point in the stalemate

- Iran's parliament has given the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps full authority over the Strait of Hormuz under a draft bill reported by Reuters on October 4, 2026, with tolls of \$1.25 million for large vessels, \$714,000 for medium-sized ships and \$285,000 for small ships, ships required to report their cargo ten days before transit, and the framework in force for ten years. — [Reuters](#)
- Under the draft bill reported by Reuters, U.S.-flagged ships, ships linked to Israel and ships that participated in attacks on Iran would be barred from the strait, coast guard units could deny entry or exit, and President Trump derided the toll proposal and warned that U.S. warships would blow Iranian boats 'out of the water' if they interfered with shipping. — [Reuters](#)

- Ships reported 12 incidents to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre around the Strait of Hormuz last week, the highest weekly figure since the war began, Reuters reported on October 19, 2026. — [Reuters](#)

Markets

- Brent crude futures settled at \$111.40 a barrel on October 19, up \$2.97 or 2.74%, Reuters reported on October 20. — [Reuters](#)
- The benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury yield was 5.14% on October 19, Reuters' global markets coverage reported. — [Reuters](#)

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