

Stress test for truce as Iran and US strikes

Bahrain, Kuwait intercept incoming missiles; Tehran says US endangers regional security, lacks will for stability

CAIRO IRAN fired ballistic missiles and drones toward Bahrain and Kuwait early on Saturday, Bahrain's government said, adding that they were intercepted. It called on Tehran to immediately cease attacks on Gulf neighbors that it deemed a "serious escalation."

The latest exchange of fire came as the Trump administration pressed Iran to make a deal to end the war that has strained the global economy and threatened a hunger crisis in some of the world's most vulnerable countries. The US military earlier said it shot down several Iranian missiles and drones launched toward the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf Arab allies, and struck some of the Islamic Republic's coastal surveillance radar sites in response.

"The attack drones posed an immediate threat to regional maritime traffic," U.S. Central Command said on social media. It confirmed it hit radar sites, including an island in the strait, "to defend against further attacks."

Earlier in the week, Iranian drones heavily damaged a passenger terminal at Kuwait's main airport, killing one person and wounding dozens. The US military kept up its blockade on Iranian ports in response to Tehran's chokehold on the crucial corridor for global oil and natural gas shipments, which has sent energy prices spiking and posed political problems for President Donald Trump's Republican Party ahead of midterm congressional elections.



People inspect the damage following Israeli bombardment on a building in the village of Saksakiyeh in southern Lebanon | AFP

Israeli attack kills three Lebanese soldiers days after US agreement

BEIRUT An Israeli strike on a vehicle in southern Lebanon killed three soldiers, Beirut's military said on Saturday, days after the countries agreed a conditional truce during talks in the United States. Israel has launched an operation into Lebanon to root out the Tehran-backed armed group Hezbollah, which dragged Lebanon into the wider West Asia war by launching missiles on behalf of its sponsor. Lebanon has vowed that it will disarm Hezbollah over time, but has also denounced Israel's invasion, accusing it of employing scorched earth tactics.

In the latest incident, the Lebanese army said, two officers and a soldier were killed in a strike on a military vehicle on the road between Khardali and Nabatieh. The Israeli military said the vehicle targeted was "moving suspiciously" in "an active combat zone" in an area that was ordered evacuated ahead of operations. But it insisted it "operates against the Hezbollah terrorist organisation, not against the Lebanese army" and added that it was "reviewing the incident".

Hezbollah dubbed the attack a "heinous crime" and accused the Lebanese government of exposing its own country to bloodshed through its "complete surrender to the enemy's demands in Washington". A ceasefire that took effect on April 17 has been repeatedly violated, with Israel and Hezbollah accusing each other of breaching the truce. A fresh US-backed deal calls for Hezbollah to halt attacks and withdraw from the border area, but the group has rejected it, insisting on a full Israeli pullout from Lebanon. The Lebanese army said Saturday that "the continuation of the deliberate and repeated brutal Israeli aggression... is aimed at thwarting all efforts to reach a solution".

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