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New attacks on shipping as Iran war talks hit fresh impasse

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[1/2] Damage on the cargo vessel Tihamah near Murad, Yemen, August 11, 2026. Media Office Of The Ministry Of Transport - Republic Of Yemen/Handout via REUTERS [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) 



Summary

Four crew members killed in suspected Houthi attack on cargo vessel, sources say
U.S. attacks ship in Gulf of Oman
Oil prices rise on likelihood of impasse

DUBAI, Aug 12 (Reuters) - The U.S. and Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis reported separate attacks on shipping on Tuesday as prospects for ending the Iran war appeared to dim, with Tehran saying the Strait of Hormuz would remain closed unless Washington accepts its conditions.

The attacks, in the Gulf of Oman leading to the strait and at the entrance to the Red Sea — both vital chokepoints for global oil supplies — come as the war shows no signs of ending despite repeated assertions from U.S. President Donald Trump of a deal being imminent.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up [here](#).

Oil prices gained and global shares retreated amid renewed pessimism about a quick end to the conflict. Brent crude futures climbed 1.4% to settle at \$88.91 per barrel and U.S. crude rose 1.3% to \$83.20.

At the southern end of the Red Sea, four crew members were killed in a suspected Houthi attack on a small cargo vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait on Tuesday, Yemen's Transport Ministry said. Two Yemeni rescuers from an anti-Houthi military group were also killed, Yemen's Coast Guard said.

The fatalities aboard the Egyptian-owned Tihamah, if confirmed, would be the first deaths on shipping by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis since the Iran war began.

The Houthi-run news agency Saba reported that the group, which said last month it would impose a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea, attacked a Saudi ship they said was carrying military equipment in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. It did not name the ship, and there was no immediate Saudi response to the report.

The U.S. military, meanwhile, said a U.S. Navy MH-60 helicopter fired two Hellfire missiles to disable the steering gear of a Panama-flagged cargo ship.

The ship ignored repeated warnings to stop violating a naval blockade on Iranian ports, the U.S. Central Command said. Maritime sources told Reuters the ship was hit off Pakistan while sailing into the Gulf of Oman.

STEPPED UP RHETORIC

Both Iran and the United States have stepped up rhetoric in the past two days.

Iran's top security official, Mohsen Rezaei, said on Tuesday that the vital Strait of Hormuz shipping route will remain closed unless the U.S. accepts Iran's conditions to end the war – the release of Iran's frozen assets and an end to conflicts throughout the region, including in Lebanon and Gaza.

That followed a new demand from Trump on Monday that Iran should pay compensation for people killed in 50 years of wars, attacks and protests.

Throughout the conflict, Trump has alternated between threats of escalation and claims that a peace deal is imminent.

In an interview released late on Monday, he suggested the uncertainty could last for a while, saying he might just "bop along" and let Tehran fail economically, or hit them "really, really hard."

"I'm sort of negotiating," Trump told Real America's Voice. "They're very devious negotiators."

Speaking to reporters after a visit to Ohio on Tuesday, Trump said "Iran is going fine, going just absolutely fine."

"We totally control the Strait of Hormuz ... Nobody else, only us," he said.

"At some point, maybe they'll do something and then they get blown away," he said of Iran. "But right now, we're in a very good position. We have a country that has been the bully of the Middle East for 50 years, really 51 if you think about it ... and they're no longer the bully of the Middle East."

Asked about an incident in which he switched planes in Turkey last month because of worries over reports of a potential Iranian assassination threat, Trump suggested the alternative aircraft may have faced greater risk.

"That would be the plane I think that they would be more likely to go for," he told reporters after The Washington Post broke the story about him secretly taking a military flight instead of Air Force One in an operation involving him being moved between aircraft in a catering truck.

"Any consequential president has a lot of threats," Trump added. "I don't worry about anything."

The comments from Rezaei, appointed on Sunday as second-in-command of the body that coordinates Iran's security and foreign policy, were the strongest indication the Strait of Hormuz would not reopen to shipping anytime soon. The waterway handled a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flow before the war.

"As long as America does not change its behaviour and does not accept Iran's conditions, the Strait of Hormuz will not be opened," Rezaei said, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

There was no immediate comment from Washington on Iran's latest comments.

Thousands of people have been killed in the conflict since the U.S. and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28.

Iran has struck U.S. assets and infrastructure in countries including Oman, Jordan, Kuwait, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Raising the prospect of further escalation, Mohammad Reza Naqdi, an adviser to the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, said on Iranian state TV on Tuesday that the corps was developing the ability to carry out operations "on enemy soil."

"We need to be able to move the operations to the enemy's soil, whenever this is needed and ordered," he said. "This is the characteristic of the offensive doctrine that has to be attained."

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