

## DAILY BRIEFING

# The Dispatch

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## MAIN STORY: US AND IRAN CONCLUDE FIRST IMPLEMENTATION ROUND IN SWITZERLAND

- The first round of talks to implement the Islamabad Memorandum, the interim US-Iran accord signed on 18 June, closed early Monday at the Qatari-owned Bürgenstock resort in Switzerland after a rupture two days earlier had nearly ended it. Mediators Qatar and Pakistan said the high-level committee agreed a roadmap to a final deal within 60 days, stood up four working groups covering sanctions removal, the nuclear file, reconstruction and economic development, and monitoring and implementation, and opened a communication line to prevent incidents in the Strait of Hormuz. Technical talks continue through the week. The Iranian delegation, led by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, returned to Tehran after roughly 18 hours of negotiations.
- The US Treasury issued a temporary 60-day general license authorizing the production, delivery, and sale of Iranian crude oil and petrochemicals through late August, the first meaningful US authorization of Iranian oil since the 1979 sanctions. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent tied the waiver to Iran's commitment to free and open transit through Hormuz and to readmitting nuclear inspectors. The license also covers the banking, transport, and insurance services attached to Iranian energy exports.
- Ghalibaf said the agreement to release \$12 billion in frozen Iranian assets was signed during the Switzerland round, two tranches of \$6 billion under the memorandum's Paragraph 11, one of them prepared earlier on a trip to Qatar. Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said the release had entered its executive phase. President Masoud Pezeshkian travels to Pakistan on Tuesday to thank Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for Islamabad's mediation and continue consultations.
- Trump declared the Strait of Hormuz "completely open" and said Iran was "doing very well" on the waterway, claiming the United States had eliminated Iran's first and second-tier leadership and that "the Iranians have nothing left." On Truth Social he said Iran would accept wide-ranging weapons inspections to guarantee long-term "nuclear integrity." Vice President JD Vance called the round a "good foundation" for a final deal, said unfrozen Iranian funds would be limited to purchases of US products, and declined to commit to an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, with nuclear talks set to begin this week.
- The two sides left the room describing the nuclear inspections differently. Vance said Tehran had agreed to invite International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors back, calling it a "major milestone" and the first step toward permanently ending Iran's nuclear-weapons program. Iran disputed the claim outright, its officials stating that neither the negotiating team nor senior leadership had

authorized any return of inspectors.

- A de-confliction cell linking the United States, Iran, and the Lebanese authorities was agreed to hold the Lebanon ceasefire, and the memorandum commits both capitals to Lebanon's territorial integrity. Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said the memorandum establishes an institutional framework for the negotiations, carries technical and political elements, and was built to survive parties working to sabotage the track.

## STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The first round delivered execution rather than intention, a signed release of frozen assets and a 60-day oil license already issued, which is what separates it from the collapse that nearly ended it on Sunday. The deliverables both capitals can independently verify, the sanctions waiver and the Hormuz communication line, are not the one Vance led with, Iran's readmission of nuclear inspectors, which Tehran flatly denies agreeing to. That gap is not cosmetic, because the inspection regime is the spine of any final accord and the two delegations walked out of the same negotiation describing it in opposite terms. The Lebanon clause still rests on a party outside the room, Israel, which spent the day reaffirming it will not leave the south even as the de-confliction cell formed. Whether this week's technical round reconciles the inspector dispute or lets it harden into the 60-day track's first broken commitment is the nearest read on whether the roadmap is one agreement or a set of separately branded wins.

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## IRAN

- Ghalibaf cast the outcome as an Iranian win, telling state television on his return that the talks produced "good achievements" on the Strait, Lebanon, the oil waiver, and the frozen funds. He said Hormuz would never return to its pre-war conditions and would be administered by Iran under international law, and that Tehran had agreed only to a communication line for safe passage, not to shared control. The framing lets Tehran sell the same de-escalation Trump is selling in Washington to an audience at home that was told it had won the war.
- Iranian commentary turned inward on what the war and the deal cost the system. Analysts weighed the regime's survival of the 47-day conflict against the question of whether it can now make peace with a population it continues to repress, and separated Tehran's declared gains, sanctions relief and an intact enrichment claim, from the strategic losses it does not advertise. The reckoning matters because the 60-day track requires the leadership to convert a wartime narrative of resistance into a negotiated settlement it must defend at home.

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## ISRAEL

- Netanyahu accused prosecutors of "setting a trap" and repeatedly misleading him during cross-examination as his attorney Amit Hadad opened the final stage of his testimony at the Tel Aviv District Court. The dispute centered on Case 2000 and on the limits of re-examination, with Hadad arguing prosecutors had shown the court selected excerpts of the premier's contacts with

Yediot Achronot publisher Arnon Mozes to paint a misleading picture.

- The Iran deal hardened into a domestic liability for Netanyahu. Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman called the US-Iran agreement “the biggest political disaster in Israel’s history,” and far-right ministers pressed the same line, with commentary warning that a government angered by the enforced calm on the Lebanon front may look to escalate in Gaza to satisfy its right flank. The widening Trump-Netanyahu rift, once the premier’s chief asset, is now feeding uncertainty into elections set for October.
- Netanyahu’s central wartime claim ran into the public record. Addressing the JNS International Policy Summit, he said Israel had prevented Iran from building atomic bombs and using them, crediting Operations Rising Lion and Roaring Lion with removing an existential threat. No public evidence supports the assertion that Iran was about to build or use a weapon, and it runs counter to the assessments of the IAEA and US intelligence.
- Domestic fractures deepened on two fronts. The Supreme Court held a heated hearing on Justice Minister Yariv Levin’s bill to reshape the judicial-selection committee, the core of the 2023 reform plan, amid warnings it would politicize the judiciary. Separately, ultra-Orthodox parties Shas and United Torah Judaism extended their boycott of coalition votes over the Torah Study draft-exemption bill, and soldiers clashed with Haredi protesters outside Military Prison 10 in Beit Lid, where draft evaders are held.
- A nationwide poll found 54 percent of Israelis back maintaining buffer zones and military positions and oppose withdrawals that lack Israeli-controlled security arrangements, a finding that underpins the government’s refusal to vacate the south. US Ambassador Mike Huckabee, at a Jerusalem conference, repeated his claim that the United States would not exist without Israel, days after Trump publicly stated the reverse.

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## LEBANON

- Direct damage to buildings in south Lebanon from the war reached an estimated \$1.38 billion, according to a rapid building-level assessment by the UN Development Programme and Lebanon’s National Council for Scientific Research. The survey counted 11,095 buildings completely destroyed, affecting 17,891 housing units, plus 2,242 partially damaged and 9,311 with minor damage, and about 3.1 million cubic meters of rubble. The worst-hit localities were Aynata and Bint Jbeil in Bint Jbeil district and Mais al-Jabal and Taybeh in Marjayoun, and the figures, drawn from late-April satellite imagery against October 2025, exclude the most recent weeks of fighting.
- Lebanese diplomacy moved to lock in the truce as the fighting paused. President Joseph Aoun held a video call with Vance, presidential adviser Jared Kushner, and the Qatari prime minister on consolidating the ceasefire and the new de-confliction cell, and insisted Lebanon “negotiates for itself” and accepts help to end the war but not interference, an allusion to Iran’s role through Hezbollah. A fifth round of direct Lebanon-Israel talks opens Tuesday in Washington under US auspices.
- Israel signaled it might announce a “symbolic” pullback of some forces from minor areas beyond the Yellow Line, the boundary it has held since the April ceasefire, as a gesture ahead of the Washington round. Netanyahu undercut the signal the same day, declaring the army retains “full freedom of action” and “no restrictions” in the south and will hold the security zone “as long as necessary,” a posture his defense minister and military chief reaffirmed in a joint statement. Israel

is also weighing handing the Lebanese army control of a Hezbollah tunnel complex at Tebnit as a test of Beirut's willingness to act against the group.

- Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri pledged on Hezbollah's behalf to make the area south of the Litani weapon-free if Israel commits to a ceasefire, and pressed for a fixed timeline for an Israeli withdrawal organized district by district rather than the "pilot zones" he dismissed as a delaying tactic. Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem rejected any truce that grants Israel freedom to strike, calling a continued Israeli presence on Lebanese soil impossible and ruling out any "safe zones."
- Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea urged Vance to reinforce the Lebanese state as the country's sole authority and to wall the Lebanon file off permanently from the US-Iran talks, sidelining Tehran. Defense Minister Michel Menassa received the new Saudi ambassador, Fahd Al-Dosari, in Beirut, the first change in Riyadh's envoy in over a decade and a marker of a more active Saudi role arriving on the heels of the US-Iran accord.
- Conditions in the south remained lethal even as the frontline quieted. Médecins Sans Frontières warned of deadly conditions in Nabatieh, reporting 25 killed and 37 wounded brought to one hospital since the morning of 19 June and rescue teams unable to reach the wounded under continued bombardment, and civil defense recovered 13 bodies from rubble in Nabatieh and Marjayoun. The frontline itself has held quiet since Saturday evening, with no cross-border fire recorded through Monday, the calmest stretch in weeks.

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## SYRIA

- The UN Security Council reviewed Syria's political transition, and Damascus used the session to put Israel in the dock. Syria's permanent representative Ibrahim Olabi called Israel the main obstacle to Syrian stability and accused Netanyahu of undermining the US-Iran deal by declaring, on the day it was announced, that Israeli forces would not withdraw from territory they seized in Syria. The Arab Group, speaking through Saudi envoy Abdulaziz Alwasil, urged Washington to remove Syria from its list of state sponsors of terrorism, a 1979 designation it called obsolete, and US Representative Joe Wilson said he had reached an understanding with Secretary of State Marco Rubio to delist Syria and would file legislation to that end.
- UN Deputy Special Envoy Claudio Cordone told the Council there had been no progress on the September 2025 roadmap to reintegrate Sweida, nearly a year after sectarian violence a UN investigation tied to more than 1,700 deaths, most of them Druze civilians, and to possible war crimes by government forces, tribal fighters, and Druze groups. Calls by some Druze for the province to secede continue to threaten Syria's unity.
- German journalist Eva Maria Michelmann, detained in January during the government's takeover of Raqqa from the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, was released from a Damascus prison on Friday and returned to Berlin.
- President Ahmed al-Sharaa again denied seeking any military role in Lebanon, telling an interviewer Syria wants "economic channels, not military ones" with Beirut, after Trump said he was close to handing Damascus the task against Hezbollah and "about to give the order" for Syria to enter the south. Sharaa said he remained open to dialogue with Hezbollah if it served both countries.

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## PALESTINE

- Gaza's Health Ministry recorded 3 killed and 11 wounded over 24 hours, with casualties still trapped under rubble and in streets that rescue crews cannot reach. Since the 11 October cease-fire took hold, Israeli fire has killed 1,024 Palestinians and wounded 3,260, with 784 bodies recovered, against a cumulative toll of 73,035 killed since October 2023. A famine has now been declared in Gaza City as food distribution and access collapse.
- Israel is holding the bodies of two Palestinian teenagers, Reda Sami Awad, 15, and Arafat Ismail Awad, 19, shot dead near the Karmeit settlement in Beit Ummar in the West Bank. The military said the pair were killed during a counter-terrorism operation after throwing firebombs and burning tires toward the settlement.
- Jerusalem's Latin Patriarch Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III made a pastoral visit to Gaza, telling worshippers at Gaza City's Holy Family Church they would not abandon the territory's dwindling Christian community. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child warned that Palestinian children are increasingly unprotected as aid groups and rights defenders, branded "terrorists," are forced to scale back across Gaza and the West Bank.
- Trump downplayed Hamas as a current problem, saying the group "isn't causing a lot of problems right now" and that other issues would resolve once a deal with Iran is reached. Israeli media reviews meanwhile concluded that Israel's year-long effort to build anti-Hamas armed militias has failed, with more than 99 percent of Gazans still under Hamas rule, and that obituaries published by Hamas and Islamic Jihad have begun naming as fighters several men previously presented as journalists.

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## KEY REGIONAL EVENTS

### Qatar

- The death toll from the explosion at the Barzan gas plant in the Ras Laffan industrial zone rose to 13 killed, all Indian and Pakistani nationals, with 66 injured, none in life-threatening condition. Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi called it an accident rather than sabotage or a hostile act, and QatarEnergy said the blast struck during the start-up of operations at the world's largest liquefied-natural-gas hub, a site Iranian strikes had already damaged during the war.

### Saudi Arabia

- The Ministry of Industry issued 322 new industrial licenses in April and saw 188 new factories enter production, drawing investment of 12.33 billion riyals (\$3.28 billion), continued evidence of the non-oil expansion Riyadh is pursuing under Vision 2030. Saudi Arabia's Masam demining project cleared 1,779 explosive devices across Yemen in a single week, including anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, raising its total since 2018 above 568,000.

## UAE

- India is in talks to sell the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile and other flagship systems to the Emirates, which is accelerating arms procurement after the regional war. New Emiratisation rules will require private healthcare providers with 50 or more staff to direct half their national-hiring targets to specialized medical roles, with enforcement starting in 2027.

## Oman

- Omani consumer prices rose 3.8 percent year on year in May, driven by transport and personal goods, leaving inflation above its Gulf peers, where Saudi Arabia ran at 1.8 percent and Kuwait at 2.49 percent.

## Egypt

- Security forces detained 223 people, 87 Egyptians and 136 foreigners, near the border with Sudan on accusations of illegal gold mining and smuggling, seizing extraction equipment. The crackdown targets unregulated mining feeding off the chaos of Sudan's three-year war across a gold-rich frontier.

## Yemen / Houthis

- The military adviser to the UN special envoy, Antony Hayward, arrived in Sana'a to prepare Military Coordination Committee meetings set for Amman this summer that bring together the internationally recognized government, the Houthis, and the Saudi-led Joint Forces Command on redeployment. The Houthi side called the new mechanism overdue and accused its rivals of continued escalation. Off the eastern coast, a product tanker reported five armed men in a small craft attempting to board it about 50 nautical miles southeast of Al-Shihr before evasive maneuvers shook them off.

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## KEY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- The United States joined the UN in warning that mass atrocities are imminent in Sudan as the Rapid Support Forces mass around El-Obeid in North Kordofan, the State Department citing alarming indications after the paramilitaries' encirclement of the besieged city. The warning invoked the precedent of the El-Fasher assault the UN said bore the hallmarks of genocide, in a war that has displaced more than 11 million people since April 2023.
- Russian drone and missile strikes killed at least six people across Ukraine, including three of one family in the northern Sumy region, and a strike on the Turkish-owned, Panama-flagged cargo ship Victress killed a 58-year-old Egyptian cook as eight other crew escaped. Ukraine struck a plant in Russia's Voronezh region that makes electronics for Iskander missiles, killing five. The leaders of Europe's five main military powers, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Poland, meet Wednesday in Berlin to coordinate support for Kyiv as US-led mediation stalls.
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced he would resign and stay on until a successor is chosen, prompting the European Union to reassess its planned 22 July post-Brexit summit with

London. Frontrunner Andy Burnham, long a vocal supporter of Israel, is among those positioned to succeed him.

- China imposed sanctions on ten US companies in defense and rare earths and barred their access to Chinese dual-use exports, retaliating for a Pentagon blacklist of Chinese firms a month after Trump's Beijing visit. The move complicates ties between the two largest economies even as the White House has invited President Xi Jinping to Washington in the autumn.
- Trump-backed lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella narrowly won Colombia's presidential runoff with 49.66 percent against leftist senator Iván Cepeda's 48.70 percent, a margin of about 250,000 votes, swinging the country sharply right. Cepeda and outgoing President Gustavo Petro are challenging the count, and Petro has alleged Israeli interference, claiming the IP addresses of national electoral servers were altered and demanding a forensic audit and recount.

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## MARKETS

- Brent crude fell about 1.5 percent to near \$79 a barrel after the Switzerland round closed with Iran securing oil and petrochemical waivers, easing supply-shortage fears, before ticking back up Tuesday toward \$78 as traders awaited clearer signs that crude flows through Hormuz are resuming. The waiver reopens a sales channel the United States had kept shut since 1979.
- Tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz picked up on Monday, with two crude tankers carrying just under two million barrels transiting after Sunday's sharp drop, though daily flows remain below pre-war norms and the questions of who administers the waterway and whether transit tolls are imposed still hang over the negotiations. The number of Japan-related vessels stranded in the Gulf fell to 37 from 45 at the start of the war as ships resumed transit, and the last of the Japanese crew left the area.
- Gulf and Asian equities firmed on the diplomatic progress. Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index held steady at 11,072, most Gulf markets edged higher, and Tokyo's Nikkei set a fresh record above 72,000 on technology stocks before US futures slipped. Gold held near \$4,191 an ounce as investors weighed the talks against expectations of a US rate move.
- Yemen's Safer Exploration and Production Operations Company said it is technically ready to resume liquefied-natural-gas production and exports once the government authorizes a restart and security conditions allow, signaling a gradual return for the country's largest oil and gas producer.