

DAILY BRIEFING

The Dispatch

DATE: 29 June 2026 ISSUED BY: Core Group — OSINT Unit
ANALYSIS LEVEL: Operational, Level 2 CLASSIFICATION: **Limited Distribution**

MAIN STORY: THE US-IRAN CEASEFIRE COLLAPSES INTO RENEWED STRIKES

- **The breakdown.** US Central Command struck ten Iranian military targets at and near the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, hitting missile and drone storage, coastal radar and surveillance posts, air defenses, communications nodes and mine-laying facilities at Sirik, Bandar-e Lengeh and Qeshm Island. CENTCOM cast the operation as a direct response to “unwarranted aggression against commercial shipping,” after an Iranian drone struck a Panama-flagged tanker on the Omani side of the strait, and said Tehran had “clearly violated the ceasefire.” Iran’s foreign ministry called the strikes a “blatant violation” of the June 17 memorandum of understanding meant to end the war, putting the eleven-day-old truce back on a war footing.
- **Iran’s retaliation on the Gulf.** The IRGC fired ballistic missiles and drones at US bases across the Gulf early Sunday, between roughly 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. local time, naming Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait and the US Fifth Fleet headquarters at Bahrain’s Port Salman among eight targeted sites. Kuwait intercepted two ballistic missiles with no casualties or damage, and a strike in Bahrain’s Muharraq province damaged a residential building near the international airport with no one killed. The Guards warned that “if the aggression is repeated, our response will be broader than this.” Kuwait condemned the strikes as a violation of its sovereignty, Bahrain said they undermined de-escalation, and Jordan’s foreign ministry separately condemned them.
- **Trump’s annihilation threat.** Trump claimed the upper hand after Saturday’s strikes and warned Washington could abandon diplomacy outright. “There may come a point when we are no longer able to be reasonable, and will be forced to militarily complete the job that we very successfully started,” he posted, adding that if that happened “the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist.” Vice President Vance reinforced the line hours before the exchange, saying that with or without a final deal Iran’s nuclear program is destroyed and the country much weaker, so “America wins either way.”
- **The memorandum that is unraveling.** The 14-point memorandum signed June 17 was deliberately broad on its two hardest questions, the Lebanon ceasefire and the strait, on the bet that trust would let a working arrangement emerge. Under it Iran pledged its best efforts to allow safe passage through Hormuz and Washington lifted its blockade of Iranian ports. At talks in Switzerland the US delegation under Vance agreed with Tehran to stand up a military hotline between CENTCOM and the IRGC to coordinate traffic, but as of Saturday that channel was still not operational. The opaque wording has buckled under competing interpretations, each side accusing the other of breaching the terms.

- **Talks cancelled, then revived in Doha.** Mahdi Fazaeli of the supreme leader's office said Tehran would not attend the technical talks set for Sunday, citing the strikes of the prior two nights and unmet conditions. A US official then denied any suspension, insisting the technical track would convene on schedule. Within hours both governments agreed to stop the fighting, standing down "for now," halting "all the kinetic activity," and affirming that "vessels can move freely," with a meeting set for Tuesday in Doha. The venue moved from Switzerland and the agenda narrowed from the nuclear file to navigation security in the strait.
- **The funds dispute and the eroding pro-deal camp.** Fazaeli tied Tehran's hesitation to a second condition, verification that previously frozen Iranian funds released under the deal had actually become accessible. Tehran sent "strongly worded messages" to Washington through mediators over the past two days, framing US moves around Hormuz, including the push for an alternative shipping corridor, together with the strikes as a "fundamental threat" to the memorandum's survival, and weighed diplomatic countermeasures alongside direct military options. Inside Tehran the deal's defenders are on the back foot, with the argument that Iran should never have agreed to reopen the strait now spreading beyond the usual hardliners.
- **The mediation track.** Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian traveled to Islamabad on Tuesday for talks with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Pakistani officials mediating a permanent end to the war, in his first foreign trip since the conflict began on February 28. Technical teams were working through the details following the high-level Switzerland round led by Vance and Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf. Vance said those talks secured agreement for IAEA inspectors to visit Iranian nuclear sites, but Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said no such visits had been scheduled.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The ceasefire is functionally suspended rather than dead, both capitals signaling escalation and an off-ramp in the same 48 hours. Calibrated strikes on storage and radar sites, set against intercepted missiles and a single damaged building, read as coercive bargaining over the strait rather than a decision to resume full war, and the rapid pivot to a Doha meeting confirms both sides still prefer a managed outcome. The binding constraint is the memorandum's deliberate vagueness on Hormuz, which neither the hotline nor the released-funds verification has operationalized, leaving each incident free to be read as a violation. The next observable is whether Tuesday's Doha meeting convenes and brings the CENTCOM-IRGC hotline online, with a no-show or a third strike on shipping signaling that Tehran's pro-deal camp has lost the argument and the war is resuming. Watch equally whether Trump's "complete the job" threat hardens into a stated deadline, marking a shift from coercive signaling to war planning.

IRAN

C O R E G R O U P

- Iran hardened its insistence on sovereign control of the Strait of Hormuz, casting the waterway's reopening as conditional on its own "exclusive management" and on a right to levy fees for services along the route. A joint Tehran-Oman statement said the two would study administration of the corridor and the charges to be set while asserting sovereignty over the strait, through which a fifth of global oil supply moved before the war. Marco Rubio, opening a Gulf tour in the UAE,

rejected any levy outright, saying no country may charge tolls or fees on an international waterway and predicting Gulf states would line up with Washington. The fight centers on Article 5 of the memorandum, which guarantees safe commercial passage. The IRGC warned vessels away from a non-Tehran-approved corridor that Oman and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) opened without consulting Iran, and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in Baghdad, said any move to bypass the agreed routes would “increase tensions” and delay the strait’s reopening, pairing the warning with a call for a regional security framework with Gulf states.

- Montenegrin police, in a joint operation with the FBI, arrested an Iranian national in the Adriatic resort of Kotor over a years-long hacking campaign that targeted US universities and infrastructure and caused an estimated \$3.4 billion in losses. The suspect, a 39-year-old dual Iranian-Turkish citizen wanted by a New York federal court on computer-fraud, hacking and identity-theft charges, faces extradition proceedings in Podgorica.
- IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said “very strong” verification must be installed in Iran as soon as practicable to ensure it does not build nuclear weapons, calling Tehran’s stated lack of intent insufficient on its own. Agency talks with Iran on the fate of its uranium stockpile have barely begun. Before the war the IAEA assessed Iran held 440 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 percent, near the 90 percent weapons threshold and far above the 3.67 percent ceiling of the defunct 2015 accord.
- Parliament speaker and lead negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf told Berri that Iran will keep pressing diplomatically to force an end to Israel’s war on Lebanon and to activate the memorandum’s implementation mechanisms, calling an end to the Lebanon war “as important” as ending the war on Iran. He said Lebanese sovereignty was among the top items in the Switzerland round and falls under Article 1 of the Islamabad memorandum, and that after Iran flagged violations the parties agreed to stand up a tripartite Iran-US-Lebanon conflict-control unit to monitor its implementation, with the stated aims of ending the war, returning the displaced and forcing an Israeli withdrawal. Addressing a conference in Baku, Qalibaf framed the accord as “America’s declaration of defeat” won by Iranian resistance rather than coercion, and named the withdrawal of foreign forces from the region a strategic goal.

ISRAEL

- Israel’s Republican firewall is cracking. A growing share of Republicans, especially younger voters, has turned on Israel over the Gaza campaign, and Netanyahu compounded the damage by resisting Trump’s drive to end the Iran war, erasing the cushion he spent 15 years cultivating to offset eroding Democratic support. Trump warned him in September that “all the Jews are sick of you” and that the two countries faced a “divorce” if he rejected a Gaza deal, separately calling him “fucking crazy” and cautioning that his conduct risked isolating Israel further. Vice President JD Vance rebuked Israeli officials who opposed the Iran deal. Days after the truce, Netanyahu told reserve officers in the West Bank that Israel must “break free from dependency” and build its own armaments industry, a push against the 2016 aid deal that runs to 2028 and supplies roughly \$3.8 billion in weapons a year, about 15 percent of the defense budget.
- Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz cast the framework with Lebanon as license for an open-ended deployment, not a path out. Netanyahu said Israeli forces will hold the security zone “as long as Hezbollah has not disarmed,” and Katz ordered the military to prepare for an “extended stay” up to 10 kilometers inside Lebanon, with no redeployment or withdrawal until Hezbollah dis-

arms nationwide. A confidential security annex, kept secret at Beirut's request, ties any Israeli pullback to field conditions and met objectives rather than a fixed timetable, and preserves IDF freedom to operate against "immediate and developing threats" inside the Yellow Line. Expanding beyond the two agreed pilot handover zones requires Israeli consent. Katz said there is "no American demand" for Israel to leave, a condition Tehran had pressed Washington to impose, and that the army will not quit the Beaufort position, which he called vital to protecting the Galilee. The IDF has received no withdrawal order for any sector, even as Israeli state broadcasting flagged the villages of Zoutar al-Gharbiyeh and Froun for an initial pullback. Katz warned Israel would strike Iran "with great force" if it moved to disrupt the deal. IDF chief Eyal Zamir and CENTCOM commander Admiral Brad Cooper set the rules of engagement against ceasefire violators and the conditions for the Lebanese army to assume control in a previously undisclosed meeting.

- Israel's cabinet voted unanimously to recognize the Ottoman-era killing of some 1.5 million Armenians as genocide, advancing Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar's resolution to a final Knesset vote and joining 32 states that formally acknowledge it. Successive governments had withheld recognition to protect ties with Ankara, making the move a deliberate rebuke amid the rupture since the Gaza war. Turkey rejected the decision as a political maneuver to deflect from Gaza.
- Israel praised incoming Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa for pledging to move his country's embassy to Jerusalem and reverse Ljubljana's recognition of a Palestinian state, which he called unlawful, and Energy Minister Eli Cohen welcomed the reversal as a mark of friendship.
- Defense Minister Katz moved to freeze arrests of ultra-Orthodox draft evaders for 90 days as the haredi parties threatened to boycott coalition votes, with the Knesset simultaneously advancing a Basic Law to enshrine yeshiva Torah study. Government Secretary Yossi Fuchs argued that jailing evaders had set back rather than advanced broader haredi enlistment. The Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chaired by Boaz Bismuth takes up the measure this week.
- Ben-Gurion Airport reopened Terminal 1 to domestic flights, with international service resuming July 1, four months after the terminal was shuttered at the outbreak of the Iran war and all traffic shifted to Terminal 3. The airport has been running at a third of capacity, costing the Airports Authority some 700 million shekels, and US Air Force refueling aircraft based there are being relocated to Israeli Air Force bases to free capacity.
- The Hind Rajab Foundation petitioned the US Justice Department to investigate and arrest National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir when he arrives in New York next month, citing incitement to genocide and responsibility for torture and deaths in Israeli prisons since he took office in 2022, including alleged harm to US citizens. The group framed the visit as a test of whether Washington upholds the law over Israeli immunity.

LEBANON

- A Hezbollah fighter killed Captain David Hazutt, a Golani Brigade platoon commander, in a roughly 2 a.m. firefight at Deir Seryan in Marjeyoun district, the first direct ground clash since Friday's framework agreement and the first to draw blood. A second soldier was lightly wounded, and Israeli troops later tracked the fighter to a nearby building and killed him. Hazutt's death raises Israel's military toll to 38 soldiers and one civilian contractor since the war began in early March. In a separate action Israel said it eliminated seven Hezbollah operatives moving weapons near its declared security zone in the Nabatieh area, several armed with rocket-propelled grenades,

and destroyed a launcher and the structure they used. The strikes track a week-long pattern at Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa, where IRGC-linked vehicles carrying fighters and weapons arrive to fortify the position and are hit as they unload. Israeli forces also blew up residential buildings in Taybeh and Hadada, dropped stun grenades near civilians in Burj Qalawayh and Baraashit and near farmers at Ibl el-Saqi, and struck the outskirts of Deir Seryan and Taybeh. One person was killed Saturday in a strike on Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa, the first death since the deal. Drones flew over Baalbek and warplanes staged a mock raid over nearby highlands.

- Israel's nearly four-month air and ground campaign has damaged or destroyed heritage sites across the south, Culture Minister Ghassan Salame said. Strikes sheared the crown off an ancient column at the UNESCO-listed site in Tyre, leveled a pilgrimage site revered by Muslims and Christians alike, and pummeled Nabatiyeh's Mamluk-era market. Heavy bombing of Tebnin raised fears for its Crusader fortress, and the occupation zone holds the medieval Beaufort Castle and villages Salame described as completely bulldozed. Authorities cannot yet assess the full damage because Israeli troops still hold a belt about 10 km deep that is off-limits to Lebanese.
- The framework signed Friday in Washington after five rounds of talks is the most significant Israel-Lebanon political agreement in four decades, differing from failed predecessors by conditioning Israel's withdrawal on Hezbollah's removal from the south. The Lebanese Army is to take over two pilot zones, Froun in Bint Jbeil and Zoutar al-Gharbiyeh in Nabatiyeh, where it will attempt to disarm Hezbollah within weeks under CENTCOM commander Admiral Brad Cooper and a US monitoring team. Four days of nonstop negotiations were propelled by a shared interest in weakening Hezbollah and Iran, though the text appears to contradict the US-Iran understandings reached in Switzerland and carries deep concern that a violent Hezbollah response could tip Lebanon back toward civil war. President Joseph Aoun told Trump the Lebanese state "will assume its responsibilities" and asked Washington to pressure Israel to withdraw, calling it a first step toward restoring full sovereignty. Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said it aims at Israel's withdrawal from all Lebanese territory and the return of the displaced, and Trump said he looked forward to hosting Aoun in Washington. The Lebanese Army vowed to keep public order after Hezbollah supporters blocked roads with burning tires and rode motorcades through Beirut in protest. The EU's Ursula von der Leyen called the deal a critical step and pledged €100 million for the displaced, France said it stood ready to help implement it, and Egypt's foreign minister told Speaker Nabih Berri that a full Israeli withdrawal is the key to Lebanon's stability.
- Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem branded the agreement "null and void," a "grave blunder" and a "surrender of sovereignty," vowing to keep fighting until Israel leaves and demanding an unconditional withdrawal from every inch of Lebanese territory with no normalization, insisting the Iranian-American memorandum govern instead. Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, said the deal "will not pass" and cannot be implemented in its current form, calling it a set of "dictates" worse than the abrogated May 17, 1983 accord with Israel. Hezbollah said it is monitoring and recording Israeli violations and reserves the right to defend the country, while political-council deputy head Mahmoud Qamati called the deal "born dead" but signaled no move to the street.
- Berri warned Lebanese against being dragged into "sedition," as Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah predicted the deal would not be implemented and said the authorities could not impose it without American backing for a slide into civil war, casting the Washington text as an attempt to derail the US-Iran Islamabad track. Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea fired back that the real sedition was the selective application of the Taif Agreement to some and not to others.
- Trump is pressing Syria to take on Hezbollah in Lebanon's place, suggesting the Islamist-led government that toppled Assad would root out the group more effectively than the Israeli army. Syrian

President Ahmad al-Sharaa said he has no interest and that the remarks were misconstrued, but Trump has doubled down, and the prospect of a Syrian incursion has alarmed Beirut and Israel, which distrusts al-Sharaa's government and convened top security officials on the question.

SYRIA

- Israeli forces pressed a widening ground campaign across southern Syria's Quneitra and Daraa provinces, combining artillery shelling, helicopter attacks and armored incursions that drew clashes with villagers and displaced civilians. A six-vehicle column pushed up Wadi al-Raqqad to Jamla village in the Yarmouk Basin of western Daraa, while a second force pitched tents at Tel al-Maghr, west of Abdeen, extending a pattern of property demolition, civilian arrests, farmland bulldozing and infrastructure destruction that amounts to a systematic effort to fix new facts on the ground beyond the 1974 disengagement lines. The IDF's 6th Etzioni Brigade, under the 210th Division, said it killed several "armed terrorists" inside the southern Syria security zone on Saturday. Syria's Foreign Ministry condemned the operations as a flagrant violation of its sovereignty, the UN Charter and the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, and called on the United Nations and the wider international community to halt the violations, with the Arab Parliament backing Syrian sovereignty.

PALESTINE

- Gaza's sanitation collapse has become a public-health emergency across the 2.1-million-person enclave. More than 125,000 cases of skin infection tied to rats and parasites were recorded between January and May as garbage piles up and sewage spills into streets and camps. Nearly 90 percent of water and sanitation infrastructure is damaged or destroyed, leaving roughly 80 percent of the population dependent on trucked drinking water, with temperatures reaching 34 to 35 degrees Celsius. A joint World Bank, EU and UN damage assessment puts recovery and reconstruction at \$71.4 billion over the decade, \$26.3 billion of it in the first 18 months.
- Israeli strikes continued across Gaza in violation of the ceasefire. A drone killed two Palestinians and wounded one in the al-Salatin area west of Beit Lahiya in the north. In the south, an airstrike on a displacement tent in Khan Younis killed one man and wounded several, and 13-year-old Eileen al-Farra died of shrapnel wounds from tank shelling. Artillery and tank fire hit eastern Khan Younis and the Zeitoun district of Gaza City. The toll since the October 11 ceasefire took effect has reached 1,041 killed and 3,372 wounded, with 786 bodies recovered from rubble, against a cumulative 73,054 killed and 173,480 wounded since October 2023.
- Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich claimed personal credit for the hostages' return, saying that without his veto the war would have ended before Rafah and that he forced Netanyahu to kill a January 2025 deal that would have freed only eight hostages. Smotrich had opposed prioritizing hostage talks throughout and voted against the October 2025 release deal alongside Ben-Gvir and three other far-right ministers. Separately, Arab American Council chairman Bishara Bahbah said he told Hamas it must choose between its weapons and the people of Gaza, and projected Palestinian legislative elections in November and a presidential vote in the first quarter of 2027.
- Settlers intensified attacks on Palestinian homes and farmland across the occupied West Bank

as Israeli forces launched widespread raids and arrests and bulldozed olive groves. In Hebron, Smotrich announced that administration of the Ibrahimi Mosque/Cave of the Patriarchs shrine, including planning and construction powers, would pass to Israeli authorities, a shift alarming the roughly 40,000 Palestinians who live there under separate movement and security rules from the some 200 settler families.

- The UAE delivered 817 tonnes of food and shelter supplies into Gaza in five convoys totaling 68 lorries under Operation Gallant Knight 3, staged through its logistics centre in Al Arish, Egypt. The Emirates also announced a second medical centre in the enclave, adding to an existing field hospital, and has flown thousands of Gazans abroad for treatment.

KEY REGIONAL EVENTS

Qatar

- An explosion at Ras Laffan, the world's largest LNG refinery, killed 13 workers (12 Indian, one Pakistani) and injured more than 60 during start-up operations on June 21. The blast hit Qatar's principal liquefied natural gas processing complex, the backbone of its export economy, with the cause not yet stated. India has repatriated its dead and discharged most of the 35 Indian workers wounded.

Saudi Arabia

- An Aramco helicopter crashed at 6 a.m. Sunday in Ras Tanura on the eastern Gulf coast, killing all 14 aboard, all Saudi nationals, with the cause unknown and an investigation opened. The crash struck the kingdom's largest oil refinery and export terminal two days after Aramco resumed crude loading there on Friday, ending a nearly four-month halt imposed during the war.

United Arab Emirates

- Abu Dhabi is navigating a tightening bind between Jerusalem and Tehran as the war's fallout settles. The UAE deepened military cooperation with Israel during the fighting, reportedly on both defensive and offensive measures, even as it absorbed some of the heaviest Iranian attacks of the conflict. Washington's choice of a diplomatic off-ramp that leaves the Iranian regime intact has pushed Gulf states back toward accommodation with Tehran, eroding Emirati trust in US protection and making any visible embrace of Israel harder to sustain. No formal policy shift has followed yet.
- A training accident inside the country killed soldier Issa Ghuloom Al Balushi, the second fatal training incident this year after a March helicopter crash that killed two service members.

Iraq

- Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi launched the largest anti-corruption sweep since 2003, with Counter Terrorism Service units sealing Baghdad's Green Zone before dawn Sunday and raiding homes across Karkh, Rusafa and several provinces. Around 47 lawmakers, officials and businessmen were detained, many tied to former Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani's coalition, includ-

ing Azm Alliance leader Muthanna al-Samarrai and MP Alia Nassif, who had built her profile on anti-corruption rhetoric. The campaign followed the arrest and confessions of former Deputy Oil Minister Adnan al-Jumaili, who ran the North Refineries Company and the Baiji refinery. Investigators have seized more than 98 billion dinars and \$11 million in cash, some of it buried on farms, and frozen 70 properties along with vehicles, gold and weapons caches.

- Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein invited the six GCC states and Iran to an eight-party summit in Baghdad on regional security, de-escalation and economic cooperation, pressing a region-led framework that Tehran has endorsed as an alternative to outside military intervention. Gulf states, struck by Iran during the war, remain wary. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's tour of the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait drew "very concrete concerns" that the deal fails to curb Iranian power projected through Hamas, Hezbollah, Iraqi militias and the Houthis. Saudi Arabia is reportedly preparing to host its own Gulf-Iran talks, though Gulf diplomats call such discussions premature.

KEY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- Two earthquakes (magnitudes 7.2 and 7.5) struck northern Venezuela within a minute of each other Wednesday night, killing roughly 1,450 people and injuring about 4,300, with La Guaira state north of Caracas worst hit. Rescue teams from the United States, France and Venezuela joined the recovery.
- The European Union disbursed the first €3 billion (\$3.4 billion) tranche of a €90 billion (\$101 billion) two-year loan to Ukraine at a post-war recovery conference in Poland attended by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, days after Kyiv opened EU membership talks on June 15. A Russian guided-bomb strike on Zaporizhzhia killed one person and wounded 14, with another feared trapped under rubble.
- The Rapid Support Forces intensified their assault on el-Obeid, capital of Sudan's North Kordofan and the primary gateway from Khartoum to Darfur, with drone strikes knocking out the main power station, fuel depots and water pumps in a city of half a million that shelters nearly 100,000 displaced. The UN warned of substantial RSF troop movements around the city ahead of a possible ground assault, raising fears of a repeat of the atrocities in El-Fasher.
- Sudan's leadership shut the door on a truce, with Sovereign Council head and army commander Abdel Fattah al-Burhan refusing any negotiation until "military victory" and army chief of staff Yasser al-Atta accusing Israel of backing the RSF. The move followed US adviser Massad Boulos charging the council before the Security Council with rejecting a US humanitarian-truce proposal, and a new round of US sanctions on eight individuals and entities tied to arms supplies plus a second tranche over chemical-weapons use.
- Pakistani forces carried out a ground operation and "calibrated" airstrikes on Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan hideouts across the Afghan provinces of Paktia, Paktika and Kunar, killing 29 militants. The operation followed a Jamaat-ul-Ahrar assault on the Rangers' regional headquarters in Karachi that killed three soldiers, and Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid called the strikes a "cowardly aggression" that killed dozens of civilians.
- The US Senate passed a concurrent resolution 50-48 on Tuesday directing Trump to withdraw US forces from hostilities with Iran absent explicit congressional authorization, a rebuke Trump dismissed as "poorly timed and meaningless." After Trump pressured Republicans at a closed-door lunch, the Senate the next day rejected a follow-on resolution 50-47, with Rand Paul and Bill

Cassidy reversing to back him, though that vote did not nullify Tuesday's record against the war.

- The Houthis stepped up threats against Somaliland and renewed warnings to countries they accuse of backing Israel in the Red Sea. Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Irro), in his first interview since Israel's recognition of his government, said Somaliland is seeking help to strengthen the coast guard protecting Gulf of Aden shipping lanes and declined to rule out a future Israeli military base, citing his Jerusalem visit and Somaliland's first embassy there as a historic milestone.

MARKETS

- Oil rose Monday after renewed US-Iran strikes again slowed Strait of Hormuz shipping, with Brent up 58 cents (0.8%) to \$72.57 a barrel and WTI up 88 cents (1.3%) to \$70.11. The gain only partly reversed last week's 10.6% Brent drop, a third straight weekly decline driven by recovering Hormuz crude flows, and analysts flagged significant upside risk if that supply recovery proves slow. Gold moved the other way, spot down 0.7% to \$4,061.35 an ounce and August futures down 0.5% to \$4,076.40, heading for a fourth consecutive monthly loss of 10.4% as higher oil stoked inflation fears and expectations of continued Fed tightening, with investors awaiting this week's ADP and nonfarm payrolls prints. Silver, platinum and palladium were mixed. Gulf bourses closed mixed Sunday amid the escalation, while the Egyptian exchange fell on broad selling. Trump ordered an investigation into major oil companies for not cutting pump prices in line with falling crude, charging that customers were being "gouged," though gasoline remains above prewar levels and economists expect oil to take months to return to pre-war prices.
- Hormuz flows stayed open but thin, with a series of tankers exiting the strait Thursday via a new route hugging Oman's shore and traffic up in recent days yet still well below prewar levels, even as the IRGC threatened vessels using the channel without Tehran's permission. A cargo ship transiting the same UN-backed route was struck by a projectile off Oman, sustaining damage but no casualties or environmental impact, and AIS tracking data for a tanker off Oman went dark. The market read the reopening as easing pressure, with oil briefly dipping below its last prewar price of just under \$73 a barrel on Thursday before the renewed strikes lifted it again.
- A Ukrainian drone strike set fire to a major oil refinery at Slavyansk-na-Kubani in Russia's Krasnodar region, killing at least one person, with Zelensky also claiming a hit on a second refinery in Yaroslavl roughly 700 kilometers from the border, part of a long-range campaign that has choked Russian fuel supplies.