

Members of the United Nations Security Council listen as Ambassador Danny Danon, Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN, speaks during a meeting on the conflicts in Iran at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The Security Council is holding meetings on the ongoing conflict in Iran that has escalated with Israel attacking Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. The Council will also be voting on draft resolutions that call for an immediate end to all strikes and threats against neighboring states, including through proxies, the first since Israel and the U.S. launched airstrikes on Iran.



Residents receive aid from World Food Programme (WFP) at Al-Omada neighbourhood of Omdurman, the twin city of Khartoum. A pick-up truck carrying dozens of people to a funeral in Sudan's southern Kordofan region was hit by a drone strike, killing 40, a medical source at the local hospital told AFP



# All eyes on Hormuz

## Iran military says ships of US, Israel, allies in Hormuz strait 'legitimate targets'

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran's military on Wednesday said any ships belonging to the United States, Israel or their

allies passing through the strategic Strait of Hormuz will be targeted.

"Any vessel whose oil cargo or the vessel itself belongs to

the United States, the Zionist regime or their hostile allies will be considered legitimate targets," said the military's central operational command,

Khatam Al-Anbiya, in a statement carried by state TV.

It reiterated that Iran's armed forces "will not allow a single litre of oil to transit" through the

strait, adding that the "closure of this strait is the result of conditions imposed by the US and the Zionist regime," referring to Israel.

Analysts say a prolonged closure of the strait, which also carries a third of the fertiliser for world food production, would have a devastating effect on the global economy, particularly in Asia and Europe.

### Iran hits two commercial ships, one vessel on fire

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran fired on two commercial ships in the Gulf on Wednesday, setting at least one vessel on fire, as it pressed its campaign against its energy-exporting neighbours and forced world governments to dip into their strategic oil reserves.

As the conflict entered its 13th day, Iran vowed to target "economic centres and banks" that it deems wmlinked to US

and Israeli interests, and all eyes were on the Strait of Hormuz, the vital sea lane connecting Gulf oil and gas export terminals to the world economy.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it had struck the Liberian-flagged container ship Express Rome and the Thai bulk carrier Mayuree Naree because they had entered the Strait of Hormuz "after ignoring the warnings of the IRGC naval forces".

Thailand's navy said the Mayuree Naree was attacked while transiting the strait. Oman's navy rescued 20 crew members, but efforts were underway to find three more. Pictures shared by the Thai navy showed black smoke pouring out of the vessel.

IRGC naval commander Alireza Tangsiri said in a social media post that "any vessel intending to pass must get permission from Iran".

Saudi Arabia intercepted drones targeting the Shaybah field, crucial to its production, while explosions also rang out over Qatar. Saudi Arabia also said it intercepted seven ballistic missiles targeting its eastern region and the Prince Sultan Air Base, where an American service member was fatally wounded on March 1.

In the past few days, Saudi Aramco's sprawling Ras Tanura facility, home to one of the Middle East's largest refineries, was targeted as well as the UAE's Ruwais refinery -- one of

the largest in the world.

Iranian attacks already forced state-owned QatarEnergy, one of the world's largest producers of liquefied natural gas, to halt production last week and

declare force majeure.

Energy producers in Kuwait made similar declarations, which are a warning that events beyond their control may lead them to miss export targets.

### US has 'practically nothing left to target' in Iran, Trump

There is "practically nothing left to target" and the war will end "soon," Trump was quoted as saying in an interview with Axios. "Any time I want it to end, it will end."



smoke rising from the Thai bulk carrier 'Mayuree Naree' near the Strait of Hormuz after an attack

### IEA says members to release 400 mn barrels from reserves

The International Energy Agency said Wednesday its member countries would unlock 400 million barrels of oil from their reserves to ease the impact of the Middle East war, the biggest such release ever.

"The oil market challenges

we are facing are unprecedented in scale, therefore I am very glad that IEA member countries have responded with an emergency collective action of unprecedented size," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said.



Soldiers of an Israeli artillery unit are deployed at a position in the upper Galilee in northern Israel near the Lebanon border

### 16 mine-laying vessels destroyed

The Pentagon said US forces had carried out strikes that destroyed 16 mine-laying vessels that could have been used to block the strait, but Iranian attacks with drones or missiles continued on Wednesday with at least

three ships hit. "If for any reason mines were placed, and they are not removed forthwith, the military consequences to Iran will be at a level never seen before," US President Donald Trump posted on social media.

### Ukrainian anti-drone teams working in Qatar, UAE, Saudi: Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukrainian anti-drone experts have begun working in three Gulf states targeted by Iranian attacks, President Volodymyr Zelensky said Wednesday.

Kyiv has sought to leverage its expertise in downing Russian drones to help the Gulf nations, which are being at-

tacked with the same Iranian-designed Shahed drones that Russia fires on Ukraine.

"Three of our teams have gone -- strong teams of experts, military personnel, engineers, different people. Today the military are already communicating and already working," Zelensky told reporters, including journalists from AFP.

● Switzerland said Wednesday it was temporarily closing its embassy in Tehran due to the Middle East war but was maintaining its "open line" of communication between the United States and Iran.

● Drones struck fuel tanks at Oman's Salalah port on Wednesday, state media reported, as Iran continues to target Gulf infrastructure in retaliation for US-Israeli attacks. "A security source reported that several drones were shot down, while others struck fuel tanks at the port of Salalah," the Oman News Agency said, adding that no casualties were reported.

● Deloitte evacuates staff at Dubai office as Iran threatens US, Israel-linked economic targets

● PwC closes offices in Gulf countries this week as a 'precaution'

### UAE refinery

The region's biggest single-site oil refinery, at Ruwais in the United Arab Emirates, was closed as a precaution after a drone attack on the industrial complex that houses a fire, a source familiar with the situation told AFP.

A driver working at the complex, who asked not to be named, told AFP they saw "bursts of fire rising from the complex, with loud sounds like explosions".

### Fuel queues

Tanker drivers in Pakistan said they were facing long waits at depots due to a shortage of fuel, as the government played down fears of another rise in prices over the war.

### Iran's armed forces threaten to target regional ports if its own attacked

Tehran, Iran

Iran's armed forces threatened on Wednesday to target regional ports if its own ports were attacked during the war with Israel and the United States.

"If our ports and docks are threatened, all ports and docks in the region will be our legitimate targets," state television quoting an armed forces spokesman as saying, without naming him.



About one-fifth of the world's oil consumption passes through the Strait of Hormuz, making it the most important oil transit chokepoint in the world.

The strait connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

It is bordered by Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates to the south.



Around 17-20 million barrels of oil per day move through it on tankers. At its narrowest point, the strait is only about 33 km wide, with shipping lanes even narrower.