

# Washington targets IRGC oil network

12 individuals and firms accused of facilitating Iranian oil sales to China targeted by US Treasury

Washington | United States

The United States on Monday issued sanctions against 12 individuals and entities that it said facilitated the sale and shipment of Iranian oil to China, days ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit to Beijing.

In a statement, the US Treasury alleged that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) "relies on front companies in permissive economic jurisdictions to obfuscate its role in oil sales and funnel the revenue to the Iranian regime."

It listed three Iran-based individuals and nine companies -- based in Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates -- as being subject to the new sanctions.

Sanctioned entities will see any US-based assets blocked, with all transactions with them by US entities and individuals also banned.

As part of its war on Iran, the United States has tightened sanctions against Tehran's government and the IRGC in an attempt to economically stifle them.

"As Iran's military desperately tries to regroup, Economic Fury will continue to deprive the regime of funding for its weapons programs, terrorist proxies, and nuclear ambitions," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said, referring to the economic measures the US is imposing on Iran alongside its military pressure.

The war has roiled global energy markets, with Tehran having virtually blocked the key Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly a fifth of the world's oil and gas normally flows.

Washington eased some sanctions on Iranian oil in March in an attempt to address global supply shortages, but it has since



People record footage as a US Air Force C-17 Globemaster III lands at Beijing Capital Airport in Beijing on May 11, 2026, ahead of a visit by US President Donald Trump. President Trump will visit China from May 13 to 15, with the US leader expected to discuss Iran and trade with his Chinese counterpart

tightened restrictions again.

Much of Iran's oil is bound for Asia, with China a major importer. Beijing is one of Tehran's biggest trading partners overall.

US President Trump is due in Beijing later this week for key talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, with a full slate of trade disputes on the agenda.

The US-Israeli war on Iran will also top the agenda, with Washington seeking greater pressure on Tehran from Beijing.

The US State Department sanctioned three China-based satellite firms on Friday for enabling Iran's military operations.

The US Treasury Department earlier sanctioned several mainland China- and Hong Kong-based firms for aiding Iran's weapons supply.

The latest sanctions come as Washington continues to escalate financial pressure on Tehran.

## Israel jails soldiers for desecrating Virgin Mary statue in Lebanon



Jerusalem, Undefined

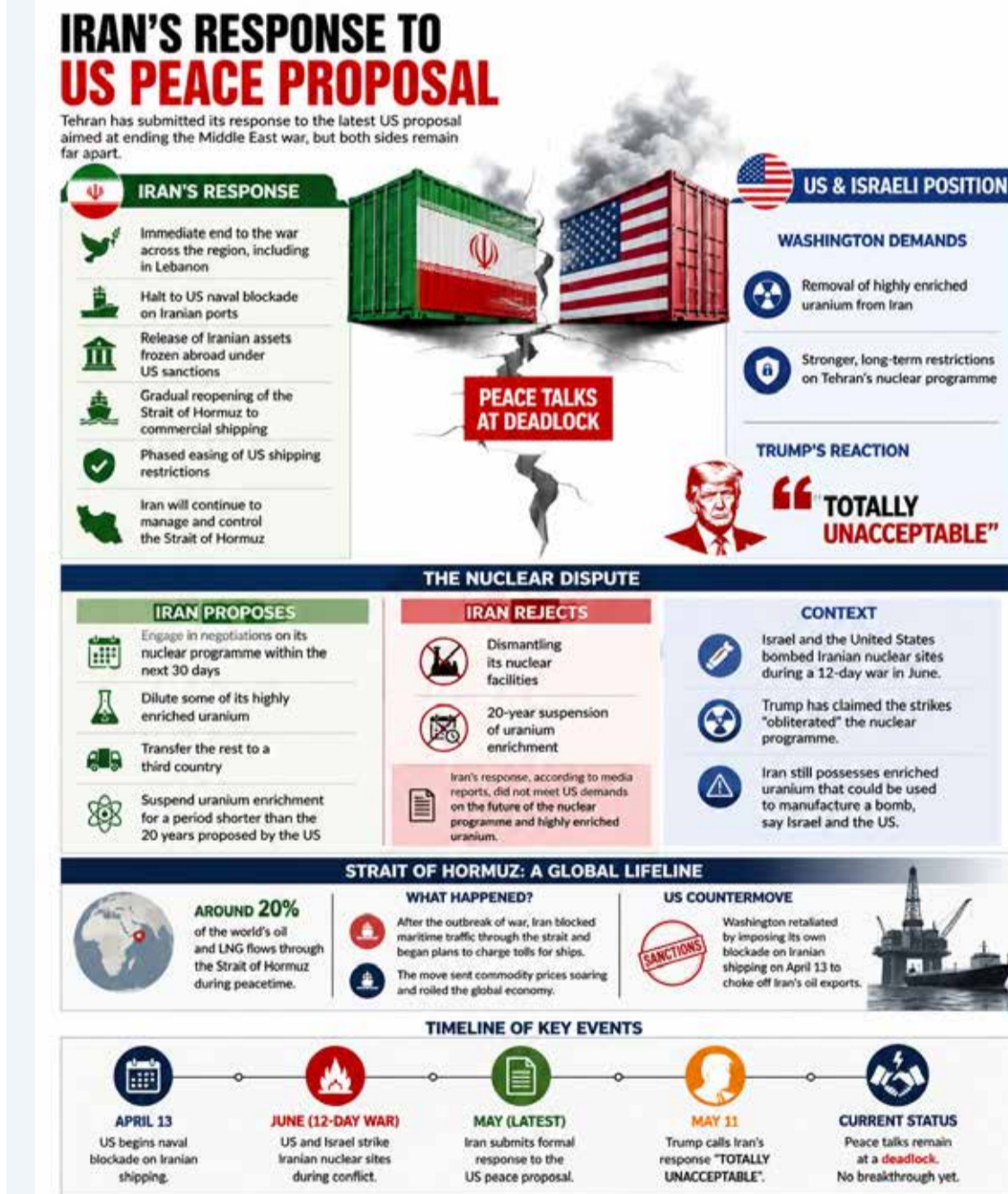
The Israeli military said on Monday it had sentenced two soldiers to imprisonment after one of them was photographed placing a cigarette in the mouth of a statue of the Virgin Mary in southern Lebanon.

An image widely shared online last week showed an Israeli soldier with his arm around the statue of the mother of Christ while holding a cigarette up to her mouth.

According to the military, the incident took place several weeks ago in southern Lebanon and was investigated by commanders on the ground.

"At the conclusion of the investigation, the soldier documented carrying out the act was sentenced to 21 days of military prison, and the soldier who filmed the incident was sentenced to 14 days of military prison," the military said on Monday.

In a separate post on X, military spokeswoman Lieutenant Colonel Ariella Mazor said: "The IDF views the incident with utmost severity and emphasises that the conduct of the soldier completely deviates from the values expected of its personnel."



# Peace hopes dashed for quick deal

## Lebanese canvass US envoy

Lebanese leaders urged the US ambassador to Beirut to pressure Israel to halt its attacks as it pounded the country from the air despite a truce in the Israel-Hezbollah war.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun

and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam separately met ambassador Michel Issa in preparation for a third direct meeting between Lebanese and Israeli representatives set to take place in Washington on Thursday and Friday.

The sharp exchange of messages raised the spectre of a return to open conflict in the Gulf, dashed hopes of a quick negotiated deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping and sent oil prices higher.

Trump described Tehran's response to the latest US outline for peace talks as "TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE" in a social media post.