

News in brief

◆ **The United States** embassy in Qatar advised Americans there to “shelter in place” Monday, with other Western embassies echoing the warning after Tehran threatened to retaliate for US strikes on its nuclear sites. “Out of an abundance of caution we recommend American citizens shelter in place until further notice,” the US embassy said on its website. Britain and Canada later cited the US security alert in their own recommendations to nationals. In Bahrain, a close neighbour of Qatar that hosts the US Fifth Fleet, the American embassy “temporarily shifted a portion of its employees to local telework”, it said on X. Following the US warning in Doha, Qatar’s foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said warnings by foreign embassies “do not necessarily reflect the existence of specific or credible threats”. “We would like to reassure the public that the security situation in the state remains stable,” he wrote on X. “Qatar continues to exert intensive diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region.” On Sunday, the US State Department advised Americans worldwide to “exercise increased caution” because of the war between Israel and Iran.

UK moves to ban protest group Palestine Action

Britain’s largest air force base last week. The group denounced the proposed ban, announced by interior minister Yvette Cooper, as an “unhinged reaction” and its supporters scuffled with police in central London as they protested the move. On Friday, Palestine Action activists broke into the RAF Brize Norton base in southern England, raising questions about security at the site and embarrassing Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s Labour government. A video posted by the group showed two activists spraying a plane with red paint while roaming the base on scooters. Counter-terror police are investigating the incident.

◆ **An Israeli strike** on Evin prison in Tehran on Monday was irresponsible and put prisoners “in mortal danger”, Noemie Kohler, whose sister Cecile is being held in the jail, told AFP. Iran’s judiciary said Israeli strikes left sections of the facility damaged and Israel’s defence minister confirmed the army was targeting it. Cecile Kohler has been held along with her partner Jacques Paris in Iran since May 2022 on espionage charges their families reject. Overall, Iran is believed to hold around 20 European nationals in what some Western governments describe as a strategy of hostage-taking aimed at extracting concessions from the West. Most are held in Evin, a large, heavily fortified complex in the north of Tehran, notorious among activists for rights abuses.

Oil firms evacuate some Iraq staff over regional tensions: state-owned company



the biggest foreign players in Iraq’s oil sector, evacuated staff from the huge Rumaila field. The evacuation “has not affected” production since Iraqi staff are handling operations in coordination “remotely” with the British firm, Basra Oil Company said. The Italian firm ENI “has gradually reduced its staff from 260 to 98 employees”, while France’s TotalEnergies “evacuated 60 percent of its personnel in anticipation of an emergency”, the Iraqi company said. Russian oil giant Lukoil and Chinese companies have not evacuated their staff.

◆ **Russian President** Vladimir Putin yesterday slammed attacks on Iran as “unprovoked” and “unjustified” in a meeting with Tehran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, but did not announce any concrete support to his key ally in the Middle East. “This absolutely unprovoked aggression against Iran is unjustified,” Putin said in televised remarks to Araghchi at the start of their meeting. Russia was “making efforts to help the Iranian people”, Putin said in the meeting, without elaborating. The Kremlin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov downplayed the exchange after the talks by saying “they were unlikely to be effective” during such a “heated moment”. Araghchi later said the meeting was “very good” and that Russia’s stance on the issue remained “firm”, noting its role in the UN Security Council. He did not provide further details on the talks with the Russian leader.

‘No reason to criticise’ US strikes in Iran: Germany’s Merz

as they were was not an option either,” Merz said in a speech to the Federation of German Industries. Labelling Iran a “terror regime”, he added that “Israel has been under attack from Iran for years, if not decades, including through the financing of Hamas, Hezbollah, militias in Iraq and in many other places around the world”. The US strikes came after Israel launched large-scale attacks on June 13 targeting Iran’s missile and nuclear facilities, as well as military leaders and security services.



US citizens in Qatar told to ‘shelter in place’

◆ **The UK government** announced yesterday it would ban campaign group Palestine Action under anti-terror laws following a “disgraceful attack” on

Prisoners’ families dismayed at Israeli strike on Tehran jail



Uncertainty

Conflicting signals deepen uncertainty as Trump urges talks while Iran warns of firm retaliation

Iran Guards, Tehran prison

I srael carried out “strikes of unprecedented force against regime targets and agencies of government oppression in the heart of Tehran”, Defence Minister Israel Katz said as an AFP journalist heard loud blasts in the north of the Iranian capital.

Katz said the targets included the notorious Evin prison in the city’s north, known to hold political prisoners and dissidents as well as foreign detainees.

Iran’s judiciary confirmed Evin was struck, reporting “damage” and stressing the situation was “under control”.

Israel also carried out a strike on Fordo, according to the military and Iranian media, a day after US “bunker buster” bombs hit the underground nuclear site south of Tehran.

In Israel, air raid sirens sent people to bomb shelters on Monday, with the military reporting at least three missile



UGC image posted on social media on June 23, 2025 shows a plume of smoke billowing after Israeli strikes in Tehran the same day.

barrages in less than two hours.

The state power company said that “damage near a strategic infrastructure facility” in Israel’s south caused outages. In Tehran, authorities said electricity supply disrupted by

an Israeli attack was restored.

Israeli strikes on Iran since June 13 have killed more than 400 people, Iran’s health ministry said. Iran’s attacks on Israel have killed 24 people, according to official figures.

The Strait of Hormuz is a strategic waterway for seaborne oil.

Iran has threatened its closure after Israel launched a massive air campaign earlier this month targeting nuclear and military sites, with the United States also striking key nuclear facilities Sunday.

Iranian lawmakers floated the idea following the US attacks, though the decision remains with the National Security Council, Iran’s highest security body. Tehran has for decades threatened to close the strait every time tensions soared, but never acted on its warning.

Gateway to the Gulf

The Strait of Hormuz links the Gulf to the Indian Ocean and is situated between Iran and Oman’s Musandam exclave.

Its narrowness, at around 50 kilometres (30 miles), and shallow waters, at no more than 60 metres (200 feet) deep, make it vulnerable to being sealed off militarily.

The strait is dotted with sparsely inhabited or desert islands, which are strategically important, notably the Iranian islands of Hormuz, Qeshm and Larak. Among them are also the disputed islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Mussa, which have been under Iranian control since 1971.

Military presence

Last year, the Guards seized a container ship transiting the strait, accusing it of Israeli links, following a deadly attack on Iran’s consulate in Syria blamed on Israel.

In 2023, Western naval forces operating in the Gulf warned ships sailing in the strategic Strait of Hormuz against approaching Iranian waters to avoid the risk of seizure.

There have been a series of such incidents since 2018, when US president Donald Trump pulled out of a landmark nuclear deal with Iran and reimposed crippling sanctions on the Islamic republic, sending tensions soaring.

Oil transit was disrupted in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) when both sides attacked each other’s shipping, damaging or destroying more than 500 vessels in the so-called “Tanker War”.

‘Extension of war’

● **French president** says US strike on Iran ‘not legal’ but supports preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear arms

● **UN experts** call on Iran, Israel to avoid harm to prison detainees

● **Qatar suspends** air traffic as precautionary measure

● **Son of ousted Iranian shah** warns West against ‘throwing lifeline’ to Iran leadership

● **NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte** stressed that Tehran should not be allowed to have a nuclear bomb

● **Iran says arrests** ‘European’ accused of spying for Israel

● **Israel’s state power company** reported supply disruptions on Monday after damage near a “strategic infrastructure facility” at an undisclosed location, as Iran launched a fresh wave of missiles

● **Donald Trump** thinks Iranians should overthrow their government if it refuses to negotiate on its nuclear program, but the US president is “still interested” in diplomacy, the White House said

● **Power restored**

in north Tehran after Israeli attack: Iran media

AFP

I ran’s armed forces threatened on Monday to inflict “serious, unpredictable consequences” on the United States in retaliation for its strikes on the Isfahan, Natanz and Fordo nuclear sites.

“This hostile act... will widen the scope of legitimate targets of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and pave the way for the extension of war in the region,” said armed forces spokesman Ebrahim Zolfaghari.

Ali Akbar Velayati, an adviser to Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said bases used by US forces “in the region or elsewhere” could be attacked.

The US embassy in Bahrain -- home to a major US military base -- reduced on-site staffing citing “heightened regional tensions”.