

WAR IN MIDDLE EAST

TRUMP EXTENDS CEASEFIRE WITH IRAN



MAJID ASGARIPOUR, WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY

Iranian clerics speak Tuesday in Tehran Bazaar in Tehran, Iran.

US president backs down from earlier threats of violence

**STEVE HOLLAND, PARISA HAFEZI
AND MUBASHER BUKHARI**
Reuters

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday he will indefinitely extend the ceasefire with Iran, hours before it was set to expire, to allow the two countries to continue peace talks to end a war that has killed thousands of people and shaken the global economy.

Backing down from threats of new violence earlier in the day, Trump said in a statement he agreed to a request by Pakistan, which has mediated peace talks in the seven-week-old war, “to hold our Attack on the Country of Iran until such time as their leaders and representatives can come up with a unified proposal.”

Trump’s announcement appeared to be unilateral, and it was not immediately clear whether Iran, or the U.S. ally Israel, would agree to extend the ceasefire, which began two weeks ago. Trump also said he would continue the U.S. Navy’s blockade of Iran’s ports and shore, which Iran’s leaders have called an act of war.

There was no immediate comment from Iran’s most senior leaders, but Tasnim News Agency, affiliated with Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps, said Iran had not

asked for a ceasefire extension and repeated threats to break the U.S. blockade by force.

An adviser to Iran’s lead negotiator, the speaker of parliament, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, said Trump’s announcement carried little weight.

“Trump’s ceasefire extension is certainly a ploy to buy time for a surprise strike,” Mahdi Mohammadi, the parliament speaker’s adviser, said in a statement on social media, calling the U.S. blockade an ongoing military aggression. “The time for Iran to take the initiative has come.”

Trump said he would extend the ceasefire until Iran’s “proposal is submitted, and discussions are concluded, one way or the other.”

It was the latest instance of Trump backing down at the 11th hour from his repeated threats to bomb every power plant in Iran. United Nations Secretary General António Guterres and others condemned the threats, noting international humanitarian law forbids attacks targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Trump, who with Israel launched the war on Iran on Feb. 28, said he decided to extend the ceasefire because “the Government of Iran is seriously fractured, not unexpectedly so,” a reference to U.S.-Israeli

assassinations of some of the country’s leaders, including the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has been succeeded by his son.

The U.S. blockade became a sticking point as the two countries wavered this week on whether to send negotiators to a second round of peace talks in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital.

The ceasefire extension came only a few hours after Trump said he was not inclined to continue the temporary truce and the U.S. military was “raring to go.” He told CNBC in an interview that the U.S. was in a strong negotiating position and would end up with what he called “a great deal.”

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked Trump in a statement on social media for “graciously accepting our request to extend the ceasefire to allow ongoing diplomatic efforts to take their course.”

“I sincerely hope that both sides will continue to observe the ceasefire and be able to conclude a comprehensive ‘Peace Deal’ during the second round of talks scheduled at Islamabad for a permanent end to the conflict,” Sharif wrote.

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Wis. tornado season off to most active start in recent memory

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MADISON — Last week’s severe storms produced at least 24 tornadoes across Wisconsin, National Weather Service records showed Monday.

That’s the average number of tornadoes Wisconsin sees in a year.

And it’s the most tornadoes to hit the state before the end of April in at least 76 years, according to agency data going back to 1950.

Three of the tornadoes were rated EF3 on the 0-5 Enhanced Fujita Scale, meaning they had peak winds of at least 136 mph, after they destroyed homes and outbuildings and snapped numerous trees.

The first EF3 tornado hit Union Center in Juneau County on April 14.

Two more hit Cream in Buffalo County

and Ringle, east of Wausau, in Marathon County on Friday.

Wisconsin last had three tornadoes rated EF3 or higher — F3 or higher on the earlier Fujita Scale — in the same year in 1994. In 1984, the state saw six such twisters, the most in any year since 1950.

The repeated storms last week also prompted a record number of severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings for April, according to data from the Iowa Environmental Mesonet.

By the end of the week, the National Weather Service had issued 284 severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings across Wisconsin in 2026, the most issued for the year to date since at least 1986.

In about 10 instances since then, Wisconsin has received fewer warnings than that for the entire year.



JOHN GITTINGS, DAILY CITIZEN

An EF3 tornado destroyed this Juneau County home on April 14. Wisconsin last had three tornadoes rated EF3 or higher in the same year in 1994.