



This week's big news



If you feel worried



It's understandable that you might feel upset about what's happening in the Middle East. If you do, talk with a trusted adult, share your feelings, and ask questions about anything you're concerned about. Limit your exposure to news intended for adults, and continue to do things you enjoy.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Middle East includes 18 countries that are located in parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Donald Trump speaking to reporters on June 21

US enters conflict in the Middle East

The US entered a war between Israel and Iran on June 21. The two Middle Eastern countries have been fighting since June 13, when Israel, a US ally, launched a series of attacks on Iran to try to stop it from building nuclear weapons. On June 24, Israel and Iran said they had agreed to a ceasefire (pause in fighting).

What happened?

On the evening of June 21, the US dropped at least six large bombs on Fordo, a heavily guarded site built deep inside a mountain in Iran where it is believed that nuclear weapons are being made. These are very powerful weapons that would pose a threat to Israel and other nations. US submarines also fired at least 30 missiles at two other sites related to Iran's nuclear program, one of which had already been damaged by Israel. President Donald Trump, who ordered the US assault, later held a press conference urging Iran to accept a peace agreement or face further attacks.

Why did this happen?

There is a long history of conflict between Israel and Iran, as well as years of efforts by the US to stop Iran from making nuclear weapons. In 2015, Iran signed an agreement with the US and other countries saying it would not build nuclear

weapons. The Trump administration pulled the US out of the treaty in 2018, during his first term. In 2023, officials with the United Nations (UN, a group of 193 nations) determined that Iran had taken steps to resume its nuclear program. A week after launching its recent attack on Iran, Israel asked the US for additional help. Trump said the objective of the US strike was the "destruction" of locations where Iran was developing nuclear weapons.

What was the result?

Trump said the strikes destroyed all three Iranian nuclear sites. But top US government officials said it was too early to know whether the attacks would prevent Iran from making nuclear weapons. In particular, it is unclear whether the US destroyed Iran's supply of uranium, a natural metal that is necessary for making the weapons. The location of Iran's uranium is unknown. There have been no reports of injuries to anyone due to the US attacks. About 600 people have died in Iran and 28 people in Israel since June 13.

How did people react?

Iranian officials strongly criticized the attacks by the US, which hasn't used force against Iran since 1979. On June 23, Iran tried to attack a US

military base in Qatar, a nearby Middle Eastern country. The missiles were intercepted by Qatar's military, and no injuries to American troops were reported. US allies—including Australia, France, Mexico, Spain, and the UK—agreed that Iran must not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons but expressed concern over the US attacks and called for all three countries to negotiate an end to the fighting. António Guterres, secretary general of the UN, said he was "gravely alarmed" by the US strikes. Many US lawmakers were angry that Trump did not seek approval from Congress (branch of government that makes laws) before launching the attacks. The Constitution (highest US law) states that Congress has the authority to declare war, although the President can authorize the use of military force in certain circumstances.

What will happen next?

When *The Week Junior* went to press on June 24, the situation continued to change quickly. Hours after announcing the ceasefire deal, which was negotiated with the help of the US and Qatar, Trump said Israel and Iran had both violated it and called on them to honor it. The countries agreed to do so, but political experts said the ceasefire was fragile. The terms of the agreement were not made public, and it was not clear whether there would be further discussions about a more permanent end to the fighting in the coming days.



A map of the region