

PRIMER: IMPACTS OF US-ISRAELI WAR ON IRAN & THE FILIPINO PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE



On February 28, 2026, the US and Israel launched an illegal and unprovoked attack on Iran.

The initial bombing salvo killed Iranian Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, and triggered hundreds of retaliatory missiles and thousands of drones fired from Iran at Israel and US bases and states hosting US facilities across the Gulf region. The war has left more than 2,000 dead in Iran, Lebanon, and Israel, while over a million people are displaced in Lebanon. Subsequently, the war expanded across West Asia and the attacks triggered the closing of the Strait of Hormuz, resulting in inflation and fuel shortages across Asia.

This primer from the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines explains the war, its massive impacts on Filipinos, and the need for people's resistance and how we can support them.

Why did the US and Israel launch a war against Iran?

The US war on Iran is part of its geopolitical ambitions to control petroleum energy, as Iran is among the top ten producers of oil in the world. Despite stating contradictory reasons for the war, President Trump himself has said he wants to “take the oil in Iran.” This war in Iran is part of a pattern of US war against oil rich countries, as seen recently in the military intervention against

Venezuela and historically in previous US wars in West Asia.

Time and again, the US has toppled democratically elected governments and propped up repressive monarchies, while often supporting fundamentalist extremist groups, to ensure control over the world's oil supplies.

Throughout these years, Israel has served as the tip of the spear of US imperialism in the region. Israel fears a strong Iranian state and is hell-bent to eliminate Iran, which remains a counterbalance to the US-Zionist state's colonial expansion and occupation project. Israel has conducted warfare against Iran continuously since the 1990s, leading up to its illegal war today.



How does trade via the Strait of Hormuz impact the Philippines?

The US aggression against Iran led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which over 25 percent of the world's seaborne oil supply passes, as well as 19% of the world's liquid natural gas and other key resources such as naphtha, liquified petroleum gas and critical components of fertilizer. The closure of the Strait has triggered the surging cost of oil and other goods across the Southeast Asia and the world.

Since the Philippines is utterly import dependent, the Filipino people have suffered greatly due to the closure. The Philippines imports **98 percent of its oil from the West Asia**, the vast majority of which transits through the Strait of Hormuz. About 91% of the Philippines' liquified petroleum gas (LPG), which is essential for cooking and energy generation, is sourced from Asian refineries that are supplied through the Strait. 20% of its fertilizer derives from West Asia.

On April 2, Iran assured the Philippines that Philippine-flagged vessels, energy sources, and all Filipino seafarers would be allowed

safe passage through the Strait. Despite this, global oil prices continue to skyrocket, and it is yet to be seen if and when prices will stabilize, even if the Strait is opened. Due to the Oil Deregulation Law in the Philippines, which surrenders oil pricing to foreign companies, oil prices and fuel costs are set to remain high for Filipinos. All the while the Philippines holds oil reserves in the West Philippine Sea, yet the government has neglected to tap them for the people's benefit.

How does this war impact the daily lives of people in the Philippines?

The US-led war, which triggered the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, has dramatically increased the cost of living for poor and working class Filipinos.

Since the inception of the war, fuel prices have skyrocketed in the Philippines, collapsing the transportation system. Diesel fuel increased by 250% from P49.90/litre in February to P121.00 on March 25th. Over the same period, regular fuel increased 48.0% from P60.20/l to P89.17/l.¹ Buses and jeepneys have stopped running across key transport

corridors and transportation workers have launched multiple strikes. The high cost of fuel means operators are losing money.

Higher fuel costs are resulting in blackouts and brownouts in rural areas where in many islands are still powered by diesel. We've witnessed increasing expenses for irrigation, transport, fertilizer, pesticide use, and fishing, affecting the entire agricultural production chain. Fertilizer prices have already climbed more than 30 percent from around ₱1,500 per bag to roughly ₱2,000 to ₱2,150². Farmers are having difficulty affording production costs and people are having difficulty affording food. Peasant women and the rural poor have even reported skipping meals due to rising costs.

Why is the surge in oil prices so severe in the Philippines?

The Philippines remains one of the most vulnerable countries to oil shock due to the Oil Deregulation Law of 1998. The Oil Deregulation Law (ODL) allows oil companies to frequently adjust the cost of pump prices in response to movements of international oil prices and exchange rates. →

¹<https://gaswatchph.com/>

²<https://www.saudimoments.com/how-the-usisraeliran-war-is-hitting-filipino-farmers-and-fishers-834929.html>

Why is the surge in oil prices so severe in the Philippines? (continued)

Under the ODL, the Philippine government surrenders regulation on oil prices to oil companies, which results in rapid and volatile fuel costs for consumers.

This stands in contrast to other ASEAN member countries.

While the surge in oil prices have been felt across Asia and the world, the oil price hike in the Philippines remains significantly higher than neighboring countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, which benefit from a some government regulation practices and subsidies³.

The situation is further exacerbated by the totally inept response of the Marcos regime.

The government aid of 5,000 pesos (~\$80) to only some workers pesos has proved entirely inadequate. The Marcos regime has totally ignored calls of the people to remove additional taxes (VAT and Excise) on fuel that are paid by consumers, and has not reviewed or repealed the oil deregulation law. The response of the Marcos regime proves again to aid rich, foreign oil companies and not the Filipino people.

How are Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) being affected by this crisis?

Due to low wages and lack of jobs, Filipinos are forced to migrate abroad. The largest concentration of OFW's reside in West Asia with over 2.4 million OFWs, spanning across the UAE, Saudi Arabia,

Qatar, Kuwait, Israel and Iran⁴. Over 205,000 OFWs in the West Asia are estimated to be undocumented, with limited access to government assistance, repatriation programs, and legal protection⁵.



JOB DISRUPTION AND STRANDED WORKERS

Flights and airspace closures, business shutdowns, and heightened insecurity have left thousands of OFWs stranded or unable to reach/leave their work sites. There are some reported deaths and injuries in affected zones, as in the case of Mary Ann Velasquez De Vera, a Filipina caregiver killed in Tel Aviv.

EVACUATIONS:

The Philippine government has thus far arranged 4 charter flights, and 2,000 OFWs have already returned home⁶. Repatriation is difficult with large parts of West Asia airspace remaining closed, including in Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria. Israel, Bahrain, UAE, and Qatar airspace remain heavily restricted, with short-notice full closures possible⁷.

REMITTANCE RISK AND HOUSEHOLD STRAIN

OFW remittances from West Asia totaled \$6.48 billion in 2025 alone or roughly 380 billion pesos. Disruptions in labor limit remittances that flow into Filipino households, buying food, paying school tuition, servicing mortgages, and funding small businesses.

³ <https://www.bulatlat.com/2026/03/18/sana-oil-as-filipinos-suffer-mega-oil-price-hikes-prices-barely-moved-in-our-asean-neighbors/>

⁴ <https://www.pinoybuilt.com/2026/03/filipinos-ofws-iran-war-2026-crossfire-dubai-haifa.html>

⁵ <https://www.pinoybuilt.com/2026/03/filipinos-ofws-iran-war-2026-crossfire-dubai-haifa.html>

⁶ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1271766>

⁷ <https://ops.group/blog/middle-east-airspace-current-operational-picture/>

What implications does this war have on the US military in the Philippines?

The precedent set by the US aggression against Iran, characterized by the insatiable drive of the US to control resources and trade routes, shows the vulnerability of the Philippines to becoming subsumed in a US war against China.

In recent years, the US military has increased its number of bases in the Philippines to at least nine (9). US-led military exercises in the Philippines continue to expand each year, and the US plans to build a large ammunition production center in Subic Bay. US allies, including Japan, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, have joined the US in provocative military exercises in the West Philippine Sea, ever closer to Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

As the deranged Trump regime continues to launch wars of aggression, the US will also ramp up its support for Marcos Jr's war of suppression against the Filipino people and those resisting, whose assertion of people's rights remains the main deterrent to US total domination of the country.

How are the Filipino people responding to the crisis?

The Filipino people are resisting the US-led war, as they have since the onset of the Philippine-American war in 1899. Progressive and human rights organizations in the Philippines are arousing, organizing, and mobilizing their fellow compatriots to demand the government provide an adequate response to the oil price hike, conducting education, creating the No to Oil Price Coalition, holding protests, and launching nationwide strikes.

From March 19-20 and March 26-27, transportation workers, commuters and people's organizations organized nationwide strikes. Women and anti-imperialist organizations have held protest actions in front of the US embassy in the Philippines. During Holy week, Migrante International is mobilized across the world to call for support for Filipino migrants especially in West Asia.

What can the international community do right now?

The most urgent way to support Filipino migrants,

workers, farmers, and fisherfolk is to join the campaign to put an immediate end to the US war in Iran, as well as the increasing US military presence in the Philippines.

As international hatred of US war grows, we must strengthen international solidarity. It is essential to support mass campaigns for Filipinos impacted by this war, donate to mutual aid efforts of affected sectors and communities, and participate in mobilizations and activities aimed at ending the increasing foreign military presence in the Philippines. We invite interested individuals and organizations to support Migrante International's campaign to support migrant Filipinos affected and join the upcoming mobilizations of Philippine organizations and solidarity groups in your country.

ICHRP is building a movement around the world to oppose the US-led drive to war in the Philippines. If you want to get involved or learn more, we encourage you to get in touch with an ICHRП organization near you or to reach out to ICHRП Global for more info.

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