

Middle East Situation

Intelligence Cut-Off: 1730h (GMT), 19 March 2026

Executive Summary

Iran has attacked energy infrastructure in Israel, Kuwait, UAE and Saudi Arabia in addition to the attack on Ras Laffan in Qatar last night. QatarEnergy has issued a warning that its LNG export capacity has been reduced by 17%.

The Israeli Air Force conducted air strikes on Iranian naval assets on the Caspian Sea this afternoon, for the first time.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has, since the start of the conflict, reportedly arrested 178 people for "spying" for either the US or Israel.

Iran

The Iranian parliament has debated raising tolls on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz as a method to guarantee safe passage.

A drone attack was reported in Malekan, which has reportedly killed a civilian and a soldier.

The IRGC has arrested 178 people for Israeli / US espionage since the start of the conflict, Iranian state media reported this afternoon.

This afternoon, the Israeli military claims to have conducted air strikes on Iranian naval targets in the Caspian Sea for the first time. Targets reportedly included naval headquarters buildings, maintenance infrastructure, ships carrying air defence systems, anti-submarine weapons and patrol boats.

A US F-35 has been damaged by air defence flying over Iran; the pilot landed the plane safely.

Israel

Bazan Group oil refinery in Haifa has been hit by a missile this afternoon, although it appears there has been no major damage.

New Iranian waves of missile attacks this morning have damaged buildings in Tel Aviv. Parts of northern Israel are still without power after damage to the regional grid. Rockets from Hezbollah have been fired towards a military base and a village in northern Israel. Two people have been injured in an attack on Kiryat Shmona. Air defences continue to intercept projectiles across the country.

United States

President Trump has criticised Israel on social media for having “violently” attacked the South Pars gas field in Iran, reportedly without US knowledge, and has said that no more attacks would be made by Israel on the field. This has been interpreted by some politicians as a sign that the US government is now pushing for an end to strikes on Iran. Israeli officials have denied the statement, saying that it was coordinated with the US, but that it will likely not be repeated.

Speaking to the press, President Trump has said that he does not intend to deploy soldiers to Iran.

The US Congress has approved USD23bn of arms sales to the UAE, Kuwait and Jordan, the majority in air defence systems.

The Pentagon has requested an additional USD200bn funds from the White House for the Iran war; it is unclear whether the White House will consider forwarding this to Congress for approval.

International

France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan and the UK have expressed their willingness to help ensure safe passage of tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, and to cooperate with energy producing nations to stabilise the market. Methods of doing this remain largely unclear.

The UN World Trade Organisation has warned that the conflict poses a threat to global food security given higher energy costs and higher fertiliser costs in addition to the shipping disruptions.

Regional

Qatar

The CEO of QatarEnergy has told the media that the damage to two of its LNG trains and one of its gas-to-liquid facilities at the Ras Laffan industrial complex last night has reduced Qatar's LNG export capacity by 17%, and that it will take three years to repair the facilities. QatarEnergy may have to call force majeure on long-term contracts for up to five years on contracts with Italy, Belgium, South Korea and China, such was the damage. ExxonMobil is a partner in the Ras Laffan LNG facilities; Shell PLC is also expected to be affected by damage at Ras Laffan.

Kuwait

The Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries, both key Kuwaiti energy sites, were attacked this morning, causing fires.

Lebanon

An Israeli air strike has hit a hospital in Toul, southern Lebanon, injuring patients and staff and damaging wards and equipment. Air strikes elsewhere in the south have killed several people this morning.

An Italian humanitarian delivery has landed in Beirut for the local UN refugee agency.

United Arab Emirates

Seven ballistic missiles and 15 drones were intercepted this morning. Falling debris from intercepted projectiles has been reported at the Habshan gas facility and the Bab oilfield.

Saudi Arabia

The government has reported that a drone hit the Saudi Aramco Samref refinery at Yanbu this morning.

Travel

Aviation

The Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority has said it will keep Iraqi airspace closed to all aircraft until midday Sunday (22 March, 0900h GMT).

KLM has extended its suspension of flights to Dubai, Riyadh and Dammam until 17 May.

Aegean Airlines has announced cancellations to and from Tel Aviv, Beirut and Ammam until 22 April; Iraq until 24 May; Riyadh until 18 April; and Dubai until 19 April.

Cathay Pacific flights to and from Dubai and Riyadh have been cancelled until 30 April.

Land border crossings

Over the last 24 hours, there have been reports from several crossing points along the UAE-Oman land border that Omani officials have not been permitting vehicles through, despite all paperwork being in order. Reasons remain unclear, but with large numbers of vehicles crossing it is not uncommon to encounter such delays, and border procedures can be adjusted by officials on the ground without notice.

Advice

- Do not travel to the Middle East.
- Avoid all travel within the region unless safe travel can be guaranteed.
- Shelter in place in a secure location.
- Follow instructions from local authorities and any national embassy guidelines.
- Monitor official updates and ensure phones are set up to receive alerts.
- Avoid any demonstrations or gatherings in the region.
- Globally, reconsider travel to any locations with links to Israel or Judaism.
- If you need further support, or wish to discuss options for evacuation, call NGS.



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