

Middle East Situation

Intelligence Cut-Off: 1630h (GMT), 17 March 2026

Executive Summary

NATO countries have been refusing to take part in operations to secure the Strait of Hormuz, prompting anger from President Trump this afternoon. In Washington, the director of the US National Counter-Terrorism Centre has resigned, issuing a public criticism of the US decision to go to war.

The Iranian regime appears to be preparing for large nationwide rallies as part of the annual Festival of Fire, and is trying to dissuade Iranian nationals from taking part.

Iran

Prime Minister Netanyahu has called again on Iranian nationals to overthrow the regime, following the death this morning of Ali Larijani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, who is understood by the Israeli intelligence services to have been running the Iranian government in the apparent absence of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.

The Intelligence Ministry has reportedly seized hundreds of Starlink systems, which are illegal and can connect to the internet via satellite. The owners may be accused of intelligence offences or collaboration.

The Israeli military reported this morning that it had launched an extensive wave of strikes against infrastructure across Tehran. This afternoon it said it has been also targeting Basij militia facilities in the city.

Iranian state television has broadcast footage of pro-government demonstrations in a warning against any potential anti-government protests. There have been concerns that rallies for "Chaharshanbe Souri" (the annual Festival of Fire) will escalate into protests against the regime: a heavy security force has been deployed in squares around Tehran to dissuade any gatherings.

Israel

The IRGC announced this morning a heavy wave of missile and drone attacks on Israeli positions, confirmed by an Israeli alert of incoming missiles detected. Air defences have intercepted missiles across the country, but impacts were reported in central Israel.

The Iranian army has reported that it has been targeting Israeli “cyber technology centres and weapons manufacturing facilities”.

The Israeli military has warned of Hezbollah rocket fire expected in northern Israel and along the border this evening.

United States

Director of the US National Counter-Terrorism Centre Joe Kent has resigned, issuing a public resignation letter that criticises the Israeli government and the media for misleading the US government into conflict.

Poland has become the latest country to say that it will not offer military support to the United States, including in the Strait of Hormuz. France has said this afternoon it will never take part in operations to secure the strait. President Trump has expressed his anger at the lack of support from other members of NATO.

Regional

Lebanon

Israeli strikes have continued on southern Lebanon and Beirut. Two soldiers from the Lebanese army have been killed near Nabatiyeh. Hezbollah has said it fired rockets at IDF soldiers in Khiam in southern Lebanon this morning.

The UN Human Rights Office has accused Israel of committing war crimes in Lebanon by killing healthcare workers and conducting air strikes on refugees.

The Lebanese government has reported that Beirut’s Airport Road in the Burj al-Barajneh area has been hit in an Israeli air strike, killing one and injuring nine. However, this has reportedly had no impact on airport operations, and the main access route is unaffected.

Qatar

A wave of Iranian missiles targeting Qatar was intercepted this morning over Doha, shortly after a threat alert was sent out to residents. 13 of 14 missiles were reportedly intercepted, and the last landed in a safe area.

United Arab Emirates

10 missiles and 45 drones have been reportedly launched at the UAE this afternoon, with alerts having been sounded in Dubai.

Travel

Airports:

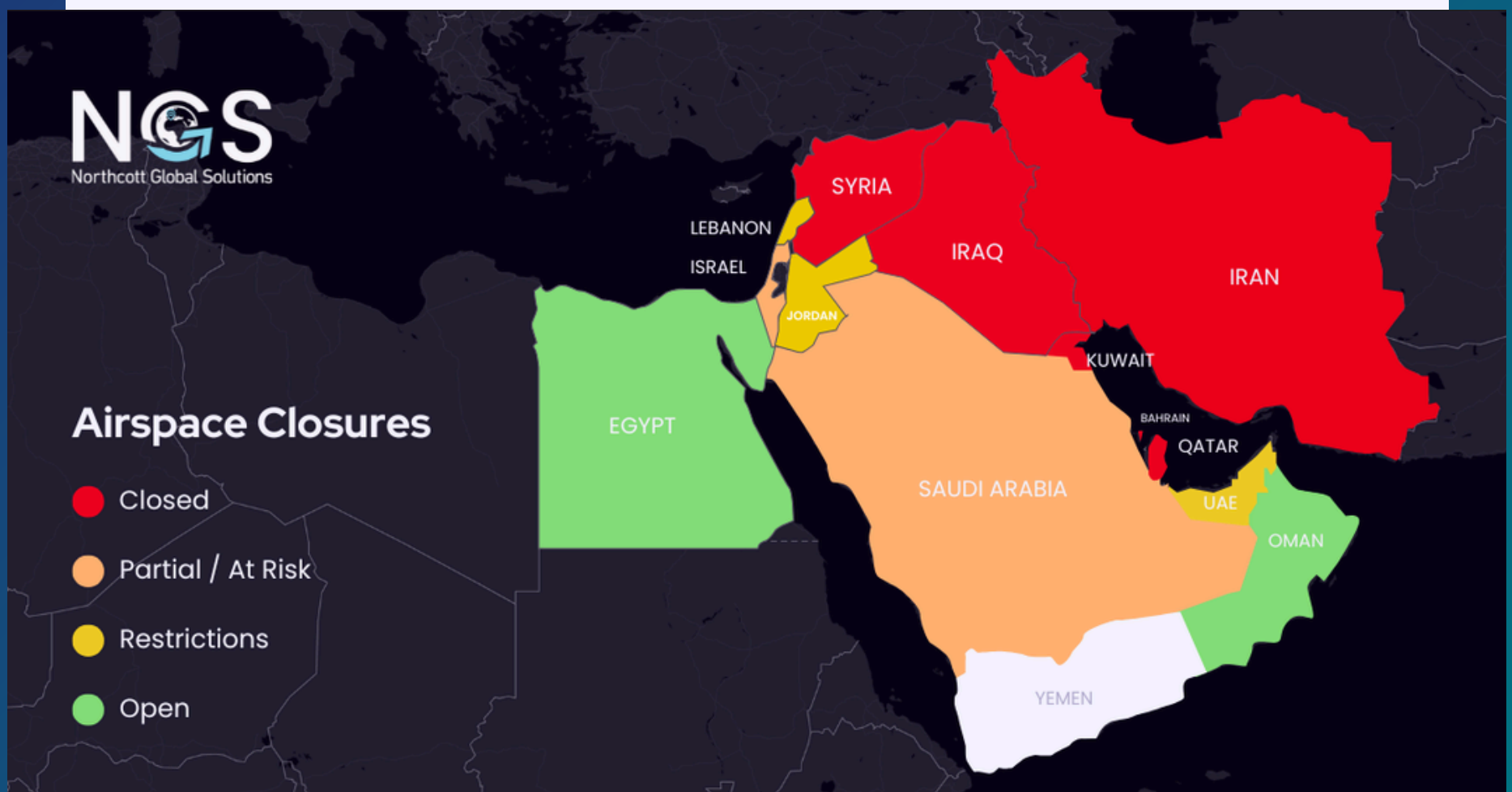
- Kuwait International Airport (KWI) – No commercial flights operating
- Bahrain International Airport (BAH) – No commercial flights operating
- Doha Hamad International Airport (DOH) – No commercial flights operating
- Dubai International Airport (DXB) – Major disruptions, long delays, 25% of flights cancelled, 67% delayed
- Abu Dhabi Zayed International Airport (AUH) – Minor problems, with some delays, and 10% of flights cancelled
- Amman Queen Alia International Airport (AMM) – Minor problems, with some delays and cancellations
- Tel Aviv Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV) – Minor problems, with some delays and cancellations
- Dammam King Fahd International Airport (DMM) – Good traffic flow, some cancellations reported (9% of flights)
- Riyadh King Khalid International Airport (RUH) – Good traffic flow, some limited disruption, including 7% flights cancelled
- Jeddah King Abdulaziz International Airport (JED) – Good traffic flow, but some cancellations reported (4% of flights)
- Sharjah International Airport (SHJ) – Good traffic flow
- Muscat International Airport (MCT) – Good traffic flow, but some cancellations reported (6% of flights)

Airlines

Lufthansa Group has extended its suspension of flights to Tel Aviv to 09 April, and to Riyadh until 05 April (except for ITA Airways flights).

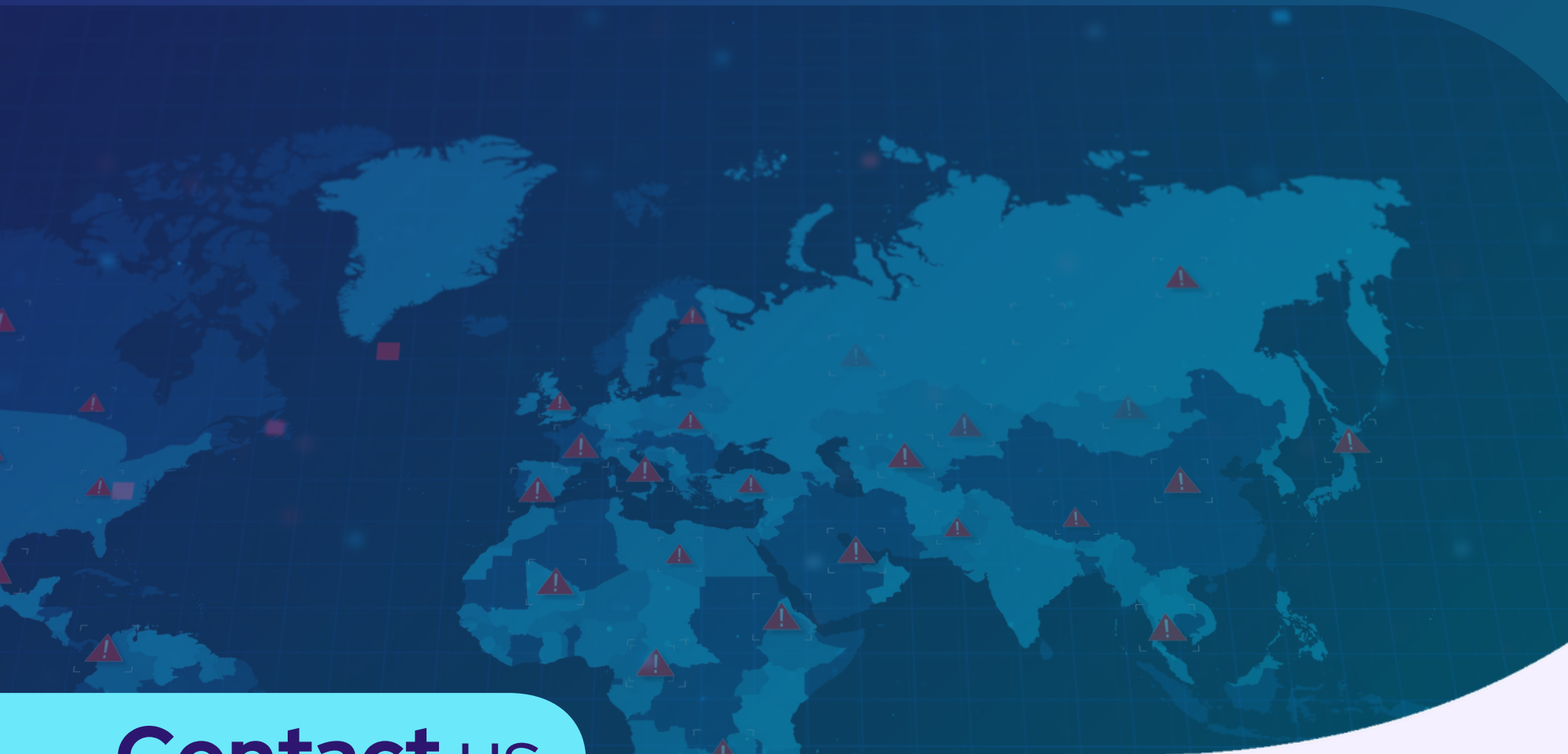
Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) has announced it will need to cancel some flights in the short term due to the increase in fuel prices.

Airspace:



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.



Contact us

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