



IT'S A TOUGH WORLD.

MENA Executive SITREP

March 22, 2026



**MAX
INTELLIGENCE**



Executive Brief: US – Israeli Operations Against Iran and Regional Implications

Explainer: This daily report provides an executive summary of major developments related to the ongoing war in the Middle East. It complements MAX Security's more in-depth Situation Update reports. If you haven't yet received our situation updates and other reporting amid the current escalation, or would like to receive more details, join our [WhatsApp community](#). For operational support, please contact our Protection Division at operations@max-security.com.

Operational Overview

The Israeli-US aerial campaign against Iran continued on March 19-20, with multiple rounds of strikes in several areas of the country, including Tehran. **US forces targeted Iran's Natanz nuclear facility** on March 21. **Iran continued to attack regional states and Israel, and sustained the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.**

US President Donald Trump issued a 48-hour ultimatum to Iran to open the Strait (March 22, 03:14 Tehran time). He stated that "if Iran doesn't fully open, without threat, the Strait of Hormuz, within 48 hours from this exact point in time, the **US will hit and obliterate their various power plants**, starting with the biggest one first." **In response, Iran's** Khatam al-Anbiya (Armed Forces Unified Combat Command) warned that "if Iran's fuel and energy infrastructure is violated by the enemy, **all energy, information technology, and desalination infrastructure belonging to the US and the regime in the region will be targeted.**" Iranian media further circulated an infographic depicting major power plants in Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait that would be targeted in such a scenario.

This is the first time President Trump has committed himself to a hard deadline and threatened critical civilian infrastructures in Iran. **While the threat may represent a tactic by Trump to gain concessions from either Iran or allies before he retracts it, it will translate into extremely high stakes over the coming 48 hours**, especially as Iran issues reciprocal threats to target critical infrastructures in the region.

Despite the dwindling Iranian capabilities, the **Iranian threat carries credence in light of its recent attack against Qatar's LNG complex in Ras Laffan, underscoring its continued capacity** to execute precision strikes against the most vital targets in the Gulf. Gulf governments are thus likely to strongly lobby against such US measures vis-a-vis the Trump administration in the coming hours.



Iranian actions

Iran continued to attack regional states over the course of March 21-22, with multiple states, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain, confirming that they had responded to incoming missiles and UAVs. This included missile launches toward Riyadh.

On March 21, Iran targeted southern Israel's Dimona (located near Israel's nuclear research center) and Arad. Several missiles impacted the cities, leading to dozens of casualties, in what Iran termed a response to the attack against its Natanz nuclear site. **This reiterated Iran's resilient command and control system and its ability to concentrate some resources to ensure on-ground impact with its missile attacks (although there is no indication that Israel's nuclear research center near Dimona was impacted).** On March 22, several casualties were recorded in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area as a result of Iranian cluster warhead missile fire against the city.

Iranian authorities denied earlier evacuation orders issued by the Iran Broadcasting Agency (IRIB) for central Doha, where the Qatari al-Jazeera media agency offices are located, stating that they were not corroborated by officials.

Other notable developments

Gulf: On March 21, Saudi Arabia expelled Iranian diplomats and attaches from the country. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan reportedly indicated that Gulf countries issued a "last warning" and that they may be forced to take "countermeasures" against Iran if its attacks continue. This highlights the worsening bilateral relations between the parties and the **Gulf states' continued dilemma on whether to engage in coercive measures against Iran, despite Iran's deterrent.**

Iraq: Iran-backed militias continued to **conduct multiple rocket and UAV attacks, mainly against the US's Victory Base** at Baghdad International Airport. Several projectiles also fell in neighborhoods around the airport. Iranian gas flows to Iraq, which have been halted following Israel's attack against Iran's South Pars Gas Complex, resumed at a rate of five million cubic meters per day.

Israel-Lebanon: On March 21-22, **IDF and Hezbollah forces continued to exchange fire**, with Hezbollah claiming multiple attacks against IDF forces in Lebanon and against northern Israeli territory. IDF forces clashed with Hezbollah operatives in several areas within Lebanon, and the Israeli government approved the further demolition of bridges along southern Lebanon's Litani River. **The IDF announced that the 162nd Division has completed its preparedness to join the fighting.** During the morning hours of March 22, Hezbollah conducted a successful anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) attack, killing an Israeli civilian in a town along the border, highlighting the presence of Hezbollah operatives in areas relatively close to the borderline.



Travel & Security Aspects

- Regional travel conditions remain highly volatile, with most states in the region exposed to extreme risk due to repeated and unpredictable missile and UAV attacks.
- Airspace restrictions and sudden closures continue to disrupt travel across the region. Risks to travelers also remain high despite **Gulf** authorities' eagerness to facilitate commercial flight operations.
- Current Iranian threats against the **UAE's Ras al-Khaimah**, are liable to prompt specific disruptions to ground and air travel within the emirate, including the Ras al-Khaimah International Airport (RAK).
- Evacuations outside of the country and safe havens within countries should be considered as part of contingency planning.
- Extraction routes are still most viable through **Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt**. Despite not releasing formal statistics, Saudi Arabia appears to be increasingly impacted by Iranian attacks.
- Risks in **Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province**, especially around its oil and gas infrastructures in **Jubail** and **Dhahran**, will be heightened, posing risks to those evacuating from Bahrain into eastern Saudi Arabia.
- **Egypt** and **Turkey broadly** remain outside direct hostilities and are assessed as medium-risk environments compared with other regional states. Turkey is exposed to risks in its southeastern border areas near Iran and around its NATO bases, as tensions increase.
- **Oman** remains comparatively less affected and continues to function as a key transit point for evacuations and regional travel adjustments. Parts of northern Oman are currently experiencing flooding, which may affect travel west of Muscat.
- Israel continues to facilitate departing flights under certain restrictions. Several Israeli airlines will reportedly increase departures ahead of the Passover holiday. Several foreign carriers extended their flight suspensions to Israel.

Disclaimer: Please note that any views and/or opinions and/or assessments and/or recommendations presented in this text are solely those of Max Security. If you are not the named addressee, you should not disseminate, distribute, or copy this text. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing, or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited. Max Security Solutions accepts no liability for (i) the contents of this text/report being correct, complete, or up to date; (ii) consequences of any actions taken or not taken as a result and/or based on such contents. Copyright – 2026 Max Security.