

# Middle East Situation

**Intelligence Cut-Off:** 0730h, 21 March, 2026

## Executive Summary

Overnight, Iran launched missiles towards the UK military base at Diego Garcia, located 4,000km from Iran in the Indian Ocean. This follows the UK's decision to authorise US offensive operations from British bases against Iranian sites threatening the Strait of Hormuz. Overnight, Iran also launched multiple waves of drone and missile attacks towards Gulf countries; no injuries or damage have been confirmed.

Several vessels successfully transited the Strait of Hormuz this morning. This follows yesterday's Iranian announcement that the waterway is open to vessels with prior authorisation and that transit via the Iranian coastline is permitted.

## Iran

Indirect fire was reported this morning in Dastak (Kiashahr), northern Iran, killing at least two people. While journalists have described the incident as "shelling", the perpetrator has not been identified. Airstrikes also targeted Tehran this morning, striking a residential building; the extent of casualties remains unconfirmed.

Yesterday evening, President Trump declined to clarify whether the US has a plan to seize Kharg Island, an action that would necessitate ground operations.

## Israel

Iranian cluster munitions damaged three buildings in Rishon Lezion this morning, including a nursery. Iran has launched at least three waves of missiles today, triggering sirens across southern and central Israel. No injuries have been confirmed. Additionally, Hezbollah rocket fire triggered sirens in the Galilee region, though no damage or casualties were reported.

## United States

The White House has paused sanctions on Iranian oil until 19 April. These measures apply specifically to tankers already at sea.

President Trump stated overnight that he is considering “winding down” the conflict, citing the success of the US military campaign. This marks a shift from his comments several hours prior, in which he rejected a ceasefire in favour of Iranian capitulation.

## United Kingdom

Yesterday evening, the UK authorised the US to use British bases for military operations against Iranian sites targeting the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranian Foreign Minister accused the UK of participating in “aggression”, a claim the UK denied. The Minister warned that Iran would exercise its right to self-defence, stating the decision puts British lives at risk.

Shortly thereafter, Iran fired two ballistic missiles at the Diego Garcia base. One missile was intercepted, while the second malfunctioned and fell short of the target.

## Regional

### **UAE**

Iran threatened to attack Ras Al Khaimah with “decisive force” if further strikes occur on the Abu Musa and Greater Tunb islands (claimed by the UAE but controlled by Iran). Successful interceptions were reported over Dubai last night; while loud explosions were heard, no injuries or damage were reported.

### **Saudi Arabia**

Dozens of drones were intercepted over the Eastern Province overnight. No injuries or damage have been confirmed.

### **Bahrain**

Sirens were activated at least twice yesterday evening. No casualties or damage were reported.

## **Kuwait**

Iran has launched at least three waves of drone and missile attacks towards Kuwait since yesterday evening. No damage has been confirmed.

## **Lebanon**

Israeli airstrikes struck southern Beirut this morning. No casualties have been confirmed. Israel had previously issued evacuation orders for Haret Hreik, Ghobeiry, Laylaki, Haddad, Borj el-Brajneh, Tawhidat al-Ghadir, and Shiyah. The Health Ministry reported 20 people killed and 57 injured yesterday; total injuries since the start of the conflict have exceeded 2,641.

## **Iraq**

Iraq has declared force majeure on all oil fields owned by foreign companies, citing the ongoing disruption in the Strait of Hormuz.

## **Aviation**

The CEO of United Airlines stated the company is preparing for oil prices to reach USD 175 per barrel. He noted that current price levels will result in an additional USD 11bn in annual operating costs for the airline.

## **Maritime**

President Trump warned last night that the US does not rely on the Strait of Hormuz and stated that other nations will be responsible for policing the waterway once US military operations conclude. Subsequently, Bahrain announced it will join several countries including the UK, France, Germany, Japan, and South Korea in a coalition to support safe maritime transit. Specific operational measures have not yet been clarified.

This morning, the Iranian Foreign Minister stated that Iran is willing to facilitate the transit of Japanese vessels. However, Japanese officials warned that this would not resolve the broader energy crisis. These developments follow overnight reports of several vessels transiting the Strait with their Automatic Identification System (AIS) active.

## 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

**Operational assistance:** +44 207 183 8910 / [ops@northcottglobalsolutions.com](mailto:ops@northcottglobalsolutions.com)

**Bespoke reporting or security-related advice:** [risk@northcottglobalsolutions.com](mailto:risk@northcottglobalsolutions.com)

**24/7 assistance:** +44 2071 8389 36 / [tracking@northcottglobalsolutions.com](mailto:tracking@northcottglobalsolutions.com)