



IT'S A TOUGH WORLD.

MENA Executive SITREP

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**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 18-19. After Israel targeted Iran's South Pars Gas complex on March 18, Israel further escalated and, for the first time, struck the Iranian navy in the Caspian Sea, specifically at the Port of Anzali.

Iranian actions

Following the attack on its South Pars Gas Complex on March 18, Iran issued evacuation orders for multiple energy facilities in Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, it attacked Qatar's LNG facilities in Ras Laffan. Doha confirmed the attack and stated the complex sustained serious damage. Doha condemned Iran for the attack and characterized it as a dangerous escalation, as well as a threat to Qatar's national security and regional stability. In Kuwait, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced that UAVs had attacked the Mina al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdulla refineries. In both incidents, the attacks caused small damage.

Additionally, Iran continued to launch missiles and UAVs toward Saudi Arabia. Iran launched several waves of aerial attacks targeting multiple regions across Saudi Arabia, including the Eastern Province, Riyadh, and al-Kharj. Furthermore, during the morning hours of March 19, the Saudi's ARAMCO facility in Yanbu (see other developments section). In the UAE, the Abu Dhabi Media Office confirmed that operations at the Habshan gas facility and the Bab field were suspended following two incidents in which shrapnel fell from the interception of missiles over the facilities. No casualties have been reported.

Besides its attacks on Gulf states, Iran continued to launch missiles toward Israel. During the overnight hours of March 18-19, multiple cluster-warhead missiles were launched by Iran, impacting several areas across Israel. These included a residential building in northern Tel Aviv, a home in southern Israel, and a residential structure in Neta. One foreign worker was killed in the attacks. Four Palestinian individuals were also killed due to a missile impact in the West Bank's Hebron. This underscores persistent risks emanating from Iran's attacks, despite the overall diminished capability to launch missiles compared to the June 2025 war.



Other notable developments

Iran-Gulf: Following Iran's significant attack against Qatar's gas infrastructure, US President Trump issued a statement stating that Israel would halt its attacks against Iranian energy facilities, but that if Iran continued to target major energy infrastructures, the US would strike Iran's energy facilities much harder. Nevertheless, Iran did continue to launch attacks against major energy facilities in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia's ARAMCO SAMREF refinery in Yanbu, which was hit in a UAV attack. This highlights the current volatility and the escalatory trend impacting the energy sector, particularly. The attack on Yanbu reflects Iran's geographical expansion of its attacks to critical infrastructures on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea shores. It also reflects Iran's continued ability to execute precision strikes against sensitive infrastructure.

The price of Brent Crude oil further increased as of March 19, and the price of gas also rose by around 25 percent in Europe, underscoring the impact of the latest developments on global energy markets.

In light of Iran's attacks, Doha expelled the Iranian diplomatic mission from Qatar. Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan warned Iran that the Gulf's patience is not unlimited. This highlights the deteriorating bilateral relations between Iran and its neighbors. This will further push the latter to consider a military response to the situation, despite their longstanding policy of refraining from direct action.

Iraq: On March 18, the Ministry of Electricity announced that Iranian gas supplies to Iraq had completely stopped, resulting in a loss of 3,100 megawatts of electricity. The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) reportedly announced on March 18 that three of its personnel, including the PMF's Anbar sector commander, were killed by US-Israeli strikes targeting two PMF headquarters in Anbar's al-Qaim district. In addition, he reportedly indicated that strikes also targeted a PMF headquarters in Kirkuk's Daquq district on March 18, wounding three PMF members. On March 19, the Secretary General of Kataib Hezbollah (KH) announced a five-day suspension of attacks on the US Embassy in Baghdad, contingent upon several conditions, which are highly unlikely to be met. In addition, on March 19, UAVs reportedly targeted the Umm Qasr Naval Base in Basra. A heavy water facility at the base reportedly sustained damage. This underscores Iraq as a continued flashpoint of tensions.

Maritime domain: As of March 19, two vessels, off the coast of the UAE's Khawr Fakkan and off the coast of Qatar's Ras Laffan, were targeted by unspecified projectiles. These incidents constitute the first Iranian attacks against vessels in several days, underscoring Iran's desire to continue to destabilize the security environment in the Strait of Hormuz and the threats posed to vessels.

Israel-Lebanon: Israel continued to escalate its actions in Lebanon against Hezbollah's involvement in the conflict. Following an evacuation order on March 18, an Israeli airstrike targeted a building in central



Beirut's Bachoura neighborhood, which collapsed the compound. The IDF also struck gas stations, which it claimed belonged to the Hezbollah-controlled al-Amana Fuel Company in southern Lebanon. In addition, the IDF struck two bridges over the Litani River. Hezbollah claimed 33 operations against Israel, including 16 within Lebanese territory and 17 inside Israel, and the Lebanese Health Ministry announced that Israeli strikes over the past two days killed 45 individuals and wounded 115. The Israeli operation to dislodge Hezbollah militants will continue, together with its increased inclination to target civilian infrastructures, and the impact on Lebanon will continue to be severe.

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.
- Iran's intent to execute attacks will be much higher in the coming days, following Israel's attack on its South Pars Gas Complex. Continue to implement a shelter-in-place procedure broadly.
- 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. Continued UAV penetration into Gulf airspaces and attacks against airports continue to underscore the threat, especially in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Saudi's Eastern Province.
- 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.
- **Israel** is still allowing commercial flights with foreigners departing from the Ben Gurion International Airport. El Al has cancelled flights to multiple destinations, including Boston, London, Budapest, Zurich, Barcelona, Berlin, Frankfurt, Prague, and Vienna. The airline stated that the decision follows further reductions in operations at Ben Gurion Airport (TLV) as well as new Home Front Command restrictions. Meanwhile, an Israeli media outlet stated that the number of passengers departing Israel will be reduced due to an increase in missile launches and impacts near TLV. Three private jets were impacted by debris, one of them catching fire at the airport. This underscores persistent risks to assets on the ground and aviation in general, amid continued Iranian attempts to launch missiles.



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