

Middle East Situation

Intelligence Cut-Off: 1130h (GMT), 23 March 2026

Executive Summary

This morning, President Trump has said that the United States and Iran have held talks on ending the conflict, and he has subsequently declared that he has “postponed” power plant strikes.

Last night, Tehran had continued its aggressive response to President Trump’s threats, showing no signs of backing down, with a fresh threat to lay mines throughout the whole Gulf.

United States

President Trump has made a statement this morning, saying that the US government has been holding negotiations with Iran over the conflict, which he described as “very good and productive”. While there are few details at present regarding the focus of the talks, he has said that he will postpone all strikes against Iranian power plants and energy infrastructure. Markets immediately rallied in the subsequent minutes.

Israel

Several waves of missiles have been reported from Iran towards (primarily) central Israel in the last 12 hours, reported as one of the largest attacks on Israel since the start of the war. Damage from cluster munitions was reported; there have been no reports of casualties. Strikes have also been reported in Haifa and Safad.

A wave of rocket, missile and drone attacks has been launched on northern Israel, including military facilities, by Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Iran

New and significant explosions were reported in central, southern and eastern Tehran overnight, with local media describing them as “unprecedented” in their size. Explosions were reported in densely populated areas with government offices, commercial areas and residential buildings.

Strikes were also reported overnight in Khorramabad, Karaj, Bandar Abbas, Tabriz and Urmia, with several reported killed.

Despite enduring weeks of attacks, the vice president has made a statement that Iran has no concerns about its basic goods, including energy and fuel supplies, and that banking services and distribution networks are operating as normal.

Early this morning, the Iranian government warned again that if power stations in Iran are attacked, it will prioritise strikes on electricity plants across the Middle East and threatened to lay mines through the “entire Persian Gulf”.

Some public rallies have been reported in locations across Iran yesterday evening, with crowds denouncing the United States and Israel, while demonstrating their support for the Iranian regime. These have been reported in Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Urmia and Ardabil, according to Iranian state media.

A US strike has targeted the Qom Turbine Engine Production Plant, a factory that produces engines for attack drones and aircraft used by the military.

International

Asian stock markets have opened significantly lower this morning as a result of the conflict, with the South Korean and Japanese currencies having lost value against the dollar. Predictions have been made that Asian equities could fall further. The price of gold has reached its lowest level since last December. Markets rallied this morning after news of the first negotiations.

After the US one-month easing of sanctions on Iranian oil in a bid to relax the markets, China state refiners have started considering a deal with the National Iranian Oil Company to purchase its oil.

Saudi Arabia

The government has expelled the Iranian ambassador and four other diplomatic staff after three weeks of drone and missile attacks. Following three missiles aimed at Riyadh this morning, the Saudi Foreign Ministry said that it reserves the right to retaliation based on self-defence for the ongoing attacks. Yesterday evening, Saudi air defence successfully intercepted several drones targeting Eastern Province and three long-range missiles targeting Riyadh. One drone was shot down overnight in the northern border area.

Lebanon

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) targeted the Qasmiyeh bridge (the civilian link on the coastal highway) a second time yesterday evening, and it is now reportedly completely destroyed, according to local media. This is the key link for logistic and humanitarian support between the north and the south of the country.

This morning, several locations in Lebanon have been attacked, including Kfar Sir, Kfar Tebnit, Braiqaa and the Qaqaiya bridge (on the Litani river). One person has been killed in the Shahabiya district of Tyre. Fighting between the IDF and Hezbollah has been reported around the town of Khiam. Hezbollah last night reported multiple rocket salvos against IDF deployments across southern Lebanon. Seven IDF personnel have reportedly been injured.

Power outages are being reported in southern areas following Israeli strikes on civilian infrastructure, including electricity networks and supply lines.

Iraq

Three air strikes hit militants from the Tehran-aligned Popular Mobilisation Forces south of Baghdad yesterday evening. No casualties were reported. It is unverified who conducted the attack. A drone attack has been conducted on an alleged "Mossad office" in Erbil, which has been claimed by Tehran-linked Iraqi militant group Ashab al-Kahf.

Bahrain

Air raid sirens have been sounded overnight by Bahraini air defence systems. The IRGC has claimed that it successfully attacked the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain with missiles and drones – this is unverified.

United Arab Emirates

Air defences reportedly responded to Iranian missile and drone threats overnight, with interceptions heard. A civilian was injured by falling debris in Abu Dhabi, according to Emirati media.

Kuwait

Overnight, the Ministry of Defence stated it was responding to missile and drone attacks.

Jordan

Air raid sirens were sounded last night by Jordanian air defence systems.

Travel

Maritime

Iran has said to the International Maritime Organisation that foreign vessels are still permitted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, as long as they organise coordination with the Iranian government for security arrangements.

Aviation

The Israeli national airline El Al has said it is reviewing its operations after the government ordered a reduction in traffic out of Ben Gurion International Airport, Tel Aviv. This may involve it making use of alternative airports in the region.

Ben Gurion International Airport was evacuated this morning after sirens sounded.

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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