



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 joint **US-Israeli military campaign against Iran continues at full scale**. Israeli Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir stated during the evening of March 5 that above 60 percent of Iran's ballistic missile launchers have been destroyed. He indicated that the IDF is transitioning to stage two of the campaign, in which it will deepen the assault on Iran's regime foundations and military capabilities. He stated the IDF retains "additional surprising moves to come." The subtext of Zamir's speech projected an optimistic view of the situation and an acknowledgment of the historic cooperation between the Israeli and US militaries, which is "stripping Iran of its capabilities." US political and military leaders, including President Trump, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, and CENTCOM commander Admiral Brad Cooper, projected content and resolve to continue the campaign, as per press conferences they held overnight on March 5-6. Secretary Hegseth stated that "Iran is hoping that we cannot sustain this, which is a really bad miscalculation." Cooper stated that Iran's ballistic missile attacks decreased by 90 percent and UAV attacks decreased by 83 percent since day one. This points to the extent of Iran's capability degradation, which will likely incentivize Washington and Jerusalem to continue the campaign, capitalizing on a substantial momentum.

Iranian Response

Despite the ongoing degradation of its capabilities, Iran continued to try to target critical infrastructures in the Gulf on March 5 by utilizing both UAVs and ballistic missile fire. It has impacted an oil refinery in Bahrain, fired missiles at Abu Dhabi's International Airport, and caused damage and casualties in one of Abu Dhabi's industrial zones. It also continued to launch a limited number of missiles toward Israel.

Escalatory Dynamics

Azerbaijan: Following Iran's UAV attack that impacted Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan Airport close to the border on March 5, Azeri President Ilham Aliyev formally accused Iran, stating that Azerbaijan will not tolerate such acts and that its armed forces were instructed to prepare and implement appropriate retaliatory measures. Azerbaijan has also closed the airspace along the border area for 12 hours and



suspended the movement of goods through the border crossing following the attack. It is still poised to conduct a retribution attack, highlighting the risk of a flare-up along the border.

Iraq-Iran: Iran claimed to have targeted Kurdish-Iranian militant factions in northern Iraq (KRG) on March 5. This comes against the backdrop of US President Trump's reported contact with Kurdish leaders and the alleged plot to facilitate a Kurdish assault into Iranian soil. Meanwhile, Iraqi Shiite militias, such as Saraya Awliya al-Dam, continued to claim UAV and missile attacks against US-linked targets in Erbil. Notably, during the overnight hours of March 5-6, a UAV attack also targeted an oilfield in northern Iraq's Duhok, reportedly operated by a US firm. Another international energy firm reportedly evacuated its personnel from the Basra Province's Rumaila facility after two UAVs impacted the site. This further highlights Iraq as a flashpoint arena for tensions between the US and Iran. Disruptions in Rumaila, which have already caused nationwide power cuts, will likely further lead to energy shortages and power outages across the country, as it is affected by substantial supply-chain disruptions due to the war. Attacks against foreign-run energy facilities, which also frequently occur during times of crisis, are likely to recur.

Maritime domain: After a US submarine sank an Iranian warship in the Indian Ocean, reports indicated that another Iranian warship was seeking to dock at Sri Lanka on March 5. Meanwhile, CENTCOM's commander, Admiral Brad Cooper, stated during the overnight hours of March 5-6 that US forces have intensified the attack on Iran's Navy and have now destroyed over 30 Iranian ships, including Iran's UAV carrier [IRIS Shahid Bagheri]. This will continue to increase Iran's desire to execute maritime attacks against US forces and soft targets at sea. This was highlighted in a UK Maritime Operations (UKMTO) center report on March 5 that a vessel was attacked off the coast of Kuwait, following which a small craft was seen leaving the vicinity, indicating that it was an Iranian sabotage attempt. **Iran will seek to intensify attacks against offshore military and civilian targets**, within the Gulf and beyond, but its capacity to do so is diminishing. utilize explosive-laden unmanned surface vessels (USVs, often disguised as fishing boats), unmanned underwater vessels (UUVs), and naval mines.

Israel-Lebanon: Escalation between Israel and Hezbollah is increasing and is having a significant operational impact on both Israel and Lebanon. In a first, Israel called for the complete evacuation of the four neighborhoods of Beirut's Dahiyeh [Hezbollah's stronghold] during the afternoon hours of March 5 and has been striking Hezbollah infrastructures there during the overnight hours. Hezbollah has reportedly deployed fighters from its Radwan Force to southern Lebanon the same day to engage with IDF forces and potentially attempt border penetration attacks, which would further escalate the situation. It also continued to launch UAVs and rockets into Israel. Most of Hezbollah's fire affects northern Israel, particularly the areas right next to the border, although it has also fired at Haifa and other areas deeper than the immediate border area. Hezbollah's fire toward central Israel is limited, likely reflecting a desire to preserve capabilities.

Yemen: The leader of the Houthi movement, Abdel Malik al-Houthi, stated that he is closely watching the escalation, and that the movement’s “fingers are on the trigger, ready to respond at any moment should developments warrant it.” The swift degradation of Iran’s capabilities and the cascading escalation between Israel and Hezbollah will likely increase the sense of urgency, bringing the Houthis closer to a decision to join the war. An expected Houthi participation would mirror Iran’s efforts, namely blocking strategic waterways (the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea), targeting Israel, with an emphasis on airports, and attacking military targets and economic assets in the Gulf.

Travel & Security Aspects

- Regional travel conditions remain highly volatile, with most states in the region exposed to **extreme risk**. Travel to these areas should be avoided, and a shelter-in-place procedure should continue to be implemented.
- In this vein, airspace restrictions and sudden closures continue to disrupt travel across the region.
- Extraction routes are still most viable through **Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt**.
- **Egypt and Turkey** remain largely outside direct hostilities and are assessed as **medium-risk environments** compared with other regional states.
- **Oman** remains comparatively less affected and continues to function as a key transit point for evacuations and regional travel adjustments. As Iranian frustration grows, timely risk assessments should be conducted to estimate Iran’s inclination to target alleged US-linked targets closer to Muscat. On-ground travel from the UAE to Oman should avoid the Fujairah Oil Industry Zone and Fujairah Naval base on the east coast, as these facilities have been attacked by UAVs in the past.
- **Israel** is increasingly being less affected by Iranian missile fire and has already commenced flights to bring in stranded Israelis abroad. Authorities are planning to allow people to fly out of the country on Sunday, March 8. Uncertainties will persist amid the escalation with Hezbollah and the expected commencement of Houthi fire against Israel, which may influence these considerations.

Over the last few days, MAX’s teams have been heavily involved in evacuation support across the region. So far, MAX has carried out evacuations from 10 countries, assisting over 3,000 people from more than 60 companies.

