

ISRAEL WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY

Week #128 March 15 - March 21, 2026

This is a product of the IDSF Habithonistim Research Department, distributed by the David Institute for Security Policy in coordination with IDSF USA



Account of the main events in the Israel-Hamas war and hostilities by the Iranian Axis



Iranian missile hitting the Old City of Jerusalem

Source: IDF Spokesperson

During the barrages, a kindergarten was hit alongside many other impact sites. There was also a direct hit in the Jewish Quarter inside Jerusalem's Old City, just a few hundred meters from the Western Wall and the Temple Mount. The symbolic and psychological impact of such strikes is extremely high even when the physical damage is limited.



SECURITY BRIEFING WEEK 128



+189

Iranian naval
assets sunk by
the allies

+77

Iranian energy
infrastructure
targeted

+16K

Targets hit
across Iran
since Feb 28



2,500 Marines

The United States has concentrated 2,500 Marines in the Middle East, reportedly preparing for a potential seizure of Kharg Island to paralyze Iran's oil-dependent economy.



\$100 Billion

The destruction of 2 out of 14 LNG liquefaction trains in Qatar is projected to cause a massive financial blow, with total state losses estimated between \$60 billion and \$100 billion over time.



1,000 ships

Freedom of navigation has been severely compromised, resulting in a backlog of approximately 1,000 ships and tankers on both sides of the Strait of Hormuz.



100,000 Reservists

The northern front has seen a massive commitment of Israeli forces, with 100,000 reservists mobilized to manage operations across 15 different regions in Lebanon.

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- The Islamic Republic is described as becoming increasingly isolated. The Qataris reportedly began arresting IRGC personnel and Iranian cells that could potentially attack in Gulf states, while also expelling Iranian consuls from their territory. In parallel, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud reportedly warned that Saudi Arabia might strike Iran if it continued its attacks. Taken together, these developments suggest that Tehran's regional posture is pushing even previously cautious Gulf actors toward a more openly anti Iranian line.
- Trump also declared that there is no effective leadership in Iran, saying that Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei is probably dead or badly wounded, though he still did not rule out the possibility of diplomacy. This reflects the dual-track American line: escalating pressure while keeping the door open to negotiations if Tehran's position weakens further.
- According to a CBS report citing senior American officials, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is effectively running the country in the absence of clear leadership, and there is substantial confusion inside the system regarding who is actually directing the Islamic Republic.
- Jordan announced that since the start of the operation, Iran launched 240 UAVs toward its territory. Of these, 218 were intercepted and 22 fell inside Jordan, demonstrating how the conflict is spilling far beyond the immediate Israel-Iran axis and imposing a direct security burden on neighboring states.

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- Since the start of the operation, the Iranian regime has arrested 200 civilians accused of spying for Israel and has already executed some of them. This appears to be one of the reasons why there are no signs of mass public protests against the regime, despite the many targeted killings of Basij forces command and control centers and leadership.
- The largest importers of Qatari gas are said to be China, South Korea, Belgium, and Italy, while the European Union relies heavily on Qatari gas in light of Russia's war in Ukraine. Iran reportedly struck the Qatari gas field twice, hit two energy facilities in Kuwait, launched missiles and UAVs toward fields in the UAE—where debris still caused damage despite interceptions—and also hit an energy facility near Riyadh. Several UAVs even reached Yanbu on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast, an important outlet for Saudi oil exports via the East-West pipeline during emergencies.
- There is an approximate 1,000 ships and tankers backlog on both sides of the Strait of Hormuz, as maritime traffic has fallen by 60%, even though Iran has not attacked tankers since March 12, 2026. Iran is allowing Indian, Chinese, Pakistani, Turkish, and other approved vessels to pass, apparently in order to disrupt Trump's efforts to build an international coalition. Ironically, the report argues that Iran is exporting more oil during the war, because only Iranian ships and those it authorizes, can navigate through the strait.
- The stated objective now is to reduce the threat to freedom of navigation, restore oil flows, bring the barrel price down to below \$90, and thereby preserve international legitimacy for continued operations while removing the regime's hope of forcing a ceasefire through energy blackmail. According to the text, the U.S. Navy is bearing almost the entire burden here with no meaningful European or Asian assistance, even though most Gulf oil exports go to East Asia and Europe.

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- In Kuwait, a 14-member Hezbollah cell was captured, consisting of 2 Lebanese and 12 Kuwaiti Shiites. They were allegedly planning attacks inside Kuwait because of the country's stance against Iran. This appears to be evidence of strengthening anti-Iranian sentiment in the Gulf, while reinforcing the sense that Iranian influence networks remain active even away from the main battlefield.
- Since the start of "Roaring Lion," the Israeli Air Force has carried out 8,500 strikes and dropped 12,000 munitions, including 3,500 munitions in Tehran alone. The scale is described as several times greater than June's Operation "Rising Lion," and the campaign is portrayed as still far from over. This suggests a prolonged and high-intensity air war aimed not just at symbolic strikes but at deep strategic degradation.
- At a press conference on Thursday, March 19, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Iran no longer has the ability to produce ballistic missiles or enrich uranium. He expressed that it is now up to the Iranian people to go into the streets, as Israel is creating the conditions to facilitate an a domestic uprising though he does not know whether or when that will happen. Netanyahu further stated that Israel struck Iran's energy facilities without Trump's prior knowledge, but that at the American president's request Israel is now stopping those particular attacks. This was both a military update and a political message about Israeli freedom of action alongside coordination with Washington.

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- The Israeli Air Force attacked Bandar Anzali on the Caspian Sea, targeting dozens of vessels and maritime infrastructures beyond the port itself. The strikes reportedly hit missile boats, coast guard ships, auxiliary ships, headquarters, ammunition depots containing anti-submarine missiles, a maintenance and repair facility, and sank an advanced Iranian frigate equipped with a helicopter deck and electronic warfare capabilities. According to Netanyahu's statement, Iran's entire Caspian Sea fleet was destroyed.
- Indirectly, this also strengthens Azerbaijan's naval position in the Caspian. The text notes that the Azeri navy cooperates with Israel and, although small, will emerge relatively stronger after the destruction inflicted on Iran's fleet. The implication is that even if the regime survives, Azerbaijan and Israel will enjoy a more favorable balance of power in that theater.
- Iran continues launching missiles at Israel as part of what is described as a "munitions economy." Much like the Houthis in 2025, the goal appears to be to exhaust the Israeli society through persistent fire, especially at night.
- In an unprecedented incident, the Haifa refinery was hit by interceptor debris from an Iranian ballistic missile. Energy Minister Eli Cohen said the damage was negligible, and after a short disruption to electricity supply for some residents of Haifa and the north, power was restored, though repairs are expected to continue for several more days.
- The IDF Spokesperson's Unit officially confirmed the elimination of nine Hamas police officers on Sunday, March 15, and published the names of four of those killed, including two Nukhba operatives who infiltrated Israel during the October 7 massacre.

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- U.S. Central Command continues destroying Iranian capabilities, and amid these strikes Trump explained that the US is not interested in a ceasefire while they are winning and accomplishing their goals. He wrote that they are nearing fulfillment of the war aims: destroying Iran's ballistic capabilities, defense industries, air force and navy, and its ability to break out to nuclear weapons. This reflects an American approach of continued military escalation to achieve war aims.
- 2,500 U.S. Marines are reportedly concentrated in the Middle East in preparation for a possible seizure of Kharg Island as part of an effort to paralyze Iran's economy and pressure it into ending the disruption of maritime traffic. Kharg, located about 20 kilometers off the Iranian coast, is connected to the mainland by six underwater pipelines carrying oil produced on land, in addition to pipelines from offshore platforms. It has storage capacity for 31 million barrels of oil and export capacity of 7 million barrels per day. Since 90% of Iran's oil exports pass through it, seizing the island would amount to striking the central artery of Iran's economy. Trump reportedly said they do not want to damage the oil pipelines themselves because repairs would take many years.
- According to a Reuters report, the United States is trying to persuade Syrian President Abu Mohammad al-Julani to order his army to attack Hezbollah in order to force its disarmament. If such a maneuver were to take place, it would likely come from the direction of the Lebanese Beqaa Valley, a flatter region beyond the main area of current Israeli ground operations. The logic behind this scenario is rooted not only in geography but also in the long-standing hostility between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Syria's Sunnis on one side and Lebanon's Shiites on the other, dating back to the years of the Syrian civil war.

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- According to the figures presented, 570 militants have been killed in Lebanon, including 220 Radwan Force operatives, 150 fire-array personnel—mainly launcher crews—and 36 commanders ranging from battalion commander level up to the rank of General. Meanwhile, the Lebanese government is already acknowledging 1,020 dead and more than 2,500 wounded, which according to this account means that roughly 60% of those killed were militants. The implication is that Israel is trying to frame the casualty picture as heavily weighted toward combatants rather than civilians.
- Militias in Iraq launched a swarm of drones at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, with one managing to penetrate the air defense system. They also attacked the U.S. consulate and the airport in Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan using UAVs. This shows that pro-Iranian actors in Iraq are continuing to widen the conflict by targeting American assets, including in Kurdish areas.
- Following a meeting in Riyadh, the Arab-Islamic foreign ministers issued a joint statement condemning Iran's deliberate attacks on the Gulf states, Jordan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey, and stressed that such attacks cannot be justified under any pretext. The ministers also emphasized that these countries have the right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, and called on Iran to immediately halt its attacks and provocative actions.
- At the Riyadh meeting, Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan said that Iran is not fighting for the interests of the Islamic world. He argued that Iran is attacking the Islamic world, not merely one country, and added that it has never contributed to Islamic causes in the past.