



Israel & the United States at War with Iran

Special Update from Israel

March 24, 2026

Prepared by and sent from Jewish Federation of North America's Israel Office

- **Day 25 of the US/ Israel War with Iran**
- **Trump suggests an agreement may be at hand. Israel skeptical**
- **Most flights to and from Israel are halted**

Jewish Federations of North America have completed an **additional round of emergency allocations**, of more than \$1.4 million, for urgent needs arising from the current war. For the full report, see [here](#).

Briefing: Israel & the United States at War with Iran
Thursday, March 26 at 1pm ET

Join us for a special briefing on the rapidly unfolding conflict involving Israel, the United States, and Iran. We'll be joined by Dr. Einat Wilf for timely insight and analysis on the latest developments and what they may mean for the region and the Jewish community worldwide.

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The War with Iran

- US President Donald Trump said that **"very good and productive" indirect contacts** with Iran via mediators had been held, and would center on reopening and guaranteeing free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, halting Iranian attacks on regional shipping, and moving toward a broader cessation of hostilities, while the US would pause strikes on Iranian energy infrastructure. He said the talks could lead to a "complete and total resolution," and indicated that any agreement would also address Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities, including the possible removal of enriched uranium from Iran. He said that Israel would be "very happy" with the results. Trump stressed that the pause on targeting Iran's power plants was conditional, and that military pressure would resume if

Iran failed to follow through, framing the potential deal as coercive diplomacy backed by continued US and Israeli military operations.

- Trump said he was **postponing the planned US strikes** on Iran's power plants and energy infrastructure after he issued — and then suspended — a 48-hour ultimatum demanding Iran reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Trump said the decision followed the indirect talks, and he ordered a five-day pause on attacks tied to the ultimatum, while stressing the delay was conditional and could be reversed if talks failed. The original threat had warned that the US would "obliterate" Iran's power plants if Tehran continued to restrict shipping through the strait, a move that had sharply disrupted global energy markets.
- According to numerous reports, **Vice President JD Vance will be joining** U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff in Pakistan to pursue further indirect talks with Iranian officials, specifically Iran's Foreign Minister Araghchi, with Islamabad serving as both mediator and summit venue.
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he spoke with President Trump and that any **emerging agreement with Iran would need to protect Israel's vital security interests**, while stressing that Israel would continue military operations as talks proceeded. Netanyahu said Trump believed recent US-Israeli military gains could be leveraged into an agreement that achieved the war's objectives, but emphasized that Israel was still striking Iran's missile, nuclear, and military infrastructure and would not pause pressure on Tehran based on diplomatic timelines alone.
- The Washington Post reported that Iran's new Supreme Leader, **Mojtaba Khamenei, was injured, isolated and largely unresponsive**, according to intelligence assessments shared by Israeli and US officials. Despite his apparent incapacitation, officials said Iran's remaining clerical leadership and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had moved quickly to consolidate control and maintain regime stability. Both Israel and the United States assessed that Mojtaba Khamenei was still alive, but intelligence indicated that repeated attempts by senior Iranian officials to meet him in person had failed, reportedly due to security concerns and his condition.
- Israel's air force carried out **waves of strikes in Iran** that hit ballistic missile storage facilities and multiple regime headquarters. The military said it struck two Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps intelligence headquarters and a headquarters of Iran's Intelligence Ministry in Teheran, along with weapon storage sites and air defense systems. Overnight, the IDF said it struck more than 50 targets in northern and central Iran, including sites used to store and launch ballistic missiles.
- Despite talk of negotiations, **US military deployments in the region continued unchanged**, including the arrival of Marine forces and amphibious strike groups amid planning for a possible ground operation to seize Iran's Kharg oil island, and Israeli officials said coordination and operational plans with the US remained intact, with strikes continuing as planned and no shift in American war posture.
- **Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates** were described as "moving closer" toward actively joining the fight against Iran, after Riyadh allowed US forces to use an air base within its borders. A US source told media that it was "only a matter of time" before Saudi Arabia entered the war. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said last week that its patience for Iranian attacks "is not unlimited."
- The IDF said it has struck **more than 3,000 targets across Iran** since the start of Operation Roaring Lion. According to the Associated Press, Israel used Iran's own domestic surveillance infrastructure to locate and kill Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei at the opening of the war, exploiting an extensive network of street cameras originally deployed for internal repression. Intelligence officials briefed on the operation said Israeli cyber units had penetrated much of Tehran's traffic-camera system years earlier, streaming live footage to servers in Israel and using algorithms to map the routines, routes and security patterns of senior Iranian officials. That long-term intelligence picture allowed planners to prepare the strike well in advance and execute it quickly once it was confirmed that

Khamenei and other top leaders were present at the leadership compound, turning a tool of regime control into a decisive operational vulnerability.

Missile and Rocket Fire

- Over the past 24 hours, **2,943 rocket and drone alerts** were recorded nationwide. The highest concentration of alerts continued to be along the northern border, including 143 alerts in Misgav Am, alongside elevated alert activity in the Tel Aviv–Ramat Gan area.
- An Iranian **ballistic missile hit Tel Aviv overnight**, injuring four people lightly and causing significant damage. Medics described arriving within minutes to [heavy destruction](#), fire and smoke. [Security officials](#) said the missile that impacted the central Tel Aviv location carried about 2,200 pounds of explosives, damaging buildings and vehicles. The warhead [significantly damaged three buildings](#) but caused no serious injuries because most residents took cover in a nearby bomb shelter.
- Missile parts also **fell in Rosh Ha'ayin**, east of Tel Aviv, causing damage without reported injuries.
- Lawmakers in the **Knesset were forced to leave the wartime plenum chamber to take shelter** after an early warning of an Iranian ballistic missile attack targeting Jerusalem and central Israel. The debate in the chamber was halted during the alert period, as legislators ran to shelters.
- On Sunday, Iran attempted to **strike the joint U.K.–U.S. base at Diego Garcia** with two ballistic missiles, but both failed to reach their target. One missile malfunctioned during flight, while the second was intercepted by a U.S. naval vessel, causing no damage. The attempted attack nonetheless marked a significant escalation, as the missiles traveled roughly 2,500 miles, far exceeding Iran's previously declared self-imposed range limit of 1,200 miles, a distance that would place large parts of Western Europe within potential strike range.
- Yesterday, Hezbollah fired a **barrage of about 30 rockets** toward the Haifa Bay area, with the military saying most were intercepted and there were no immediate reports of impacts in residential areas. Sirens sounded in Acre and the Krayot suburbs of Haifa, and eyewitnesses reported seeing multiple interceptions over the area. Magen David Adom said it did not receive reports of injuries from that barrage. Sirens also sounded in several towns near the Lebanon border amid a suspected drone attack. Separately, sirens sounded in parts of the Western Galilee amid rocket fire from Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The War with Hezbollah

- Israel struck **seven areas of Beirut's southern suburbs** overnight. [The strikes](#) followed an evacuation warning that had been reiterated for Beirut's southern suburbs ahead of strikes on Hezbollah sites.
- Israel also carried out a series of airstrikes in recent days, **targeting bridges over Lebanon's Litani River**. The first attack took place on March 13, when the Israeli Air Force struck the Zrariyeh (Zarieh) Bridge, which the IDF said Hezbollah had been using to move fighters, rockets and equipment from northern to southern Lebanon.
- The campaign has since expanded significantly, with Israeli strikes [hitting multiple crossings](#), including the Qasmiyeh Bridge, a major artery linking southern Lebanon to the rest of the country, after Defense Minister Israel Katz publicly ordered the military to destroy all Litani River bridges used for Hezbollah activity. Israeli officials said the bridges were targeted to prevent Hezbollah from transporting weapons and operatives south of the Litani, an area Israel has long sought to keep free of the group's military presence, and to disrupt supply routes ahead of an expanded ground campaign.
- Lebanese leaders condemned the strikes as a major escalation, warning that destroying the bridges would sever southern Lebanon from the rest of the country and could signal

preparations for a deeper Israeli ground operation, while Israel framed the attacks as part of a broader effort to push Hezbollah forces northward and protect Israeli communities along the border.

- Public **criticism of Hezbollah is reportedly increasing within Lebanon**, including among members of the Shi'ite community, as more citizens openly question the group's actions and the risks of operating within civilian areas amid ongoing fighting with Israel, according to a [Lebanese affairs analyst](#) who described the shift as "cracks in the fear mechanism." While opposition remains limited and no large-scale protests have emerged, a growing number of voices—particularly on social media and in interviews—are expressing criticism that would have been rare in the past, with some of it now reaching local and international platforms.

Israel's Home Front

- Pre-Passover **day-camps** were authorized to reopen in some cities, including Jerusalem and Haifa, after municipalities received special approval, with programs operating only in facilities with shelters or relocated to protected sites. Large parts of central Israel and higher-risk regions remained under tighter restrictions, with full educational activity still suspended and public life operating on a reduced footing.
- Strict **limits on all public and private gatherings** — generally up to 50 people where shelters are available — remain in place.
- **Air travel in and out of Israel tightened further** in recent days as Ben Gurion Airport operated under sharply reduced capacity amid continued missile threats. Beginning yesterday, authorities limited airport activity to one landing and one takeoff per hour, with outbound flights capped at approx 50 passengers per plane, down from earlier limits, while inbound repatriation flights continued without passenger caps. Only Israeli carriers — El Al, Arkia, Israir and Air Haifa — maintained limited operations, largely focused on repatriation and essential routes, as most foreign airlines extended suspensions, with major US and European carriers postponing returns until April, May, or later. Several airlines canceled large blocks of Passover-period flights, and Israeli carriers warned that the restrictions effectively prevented normal commercial aviation, prompting some to shift operations to alternative hubs in Cyprus, Jordan, and Egypt.
- Since the start of Operation Roaring Lion, **4,834 people were injured**, including 161 in moderate or severe condition and 243 treated for anxiety or psychological trauma. Close to 5,000 residents from around 40 municipalities were displaced from their homes and housed in hotels or community-based accommodations.
- Home Front Command has re-tightened civilian activity restrictions beginning March 22, returning several regions to a reduced-activity status. **Advance warning alerts were further limited**, particularly at night, in an effort to reduce alert fatigue among civilians.
- The Education Ministry announced **exam accommodations**, including a 20% reduction in required material and 15% additional time for matriculation exams.
- As of March 22, **nearly 5,000 displaced residents remained in hotels** or community housing, while more than 800 people had returned home following completion of repairs. Property damage and displacement since mid-March affected communities, including Dimona, Arad, Kiryat Shmona, Kfar Vradim, Nahariya and the Modi'in region.
- Population Authority data showed that since the start of the operation, approximately **143,000 Israelis entered Israel and about 102,500 left**, with a shift over the past week in which departures exceeded arrivals.

War Costs

- According to the Taub Center for Social Policy, the **cumulative cost** of Israel's fighting with Iran — covering the April 2024 missile attack, Operation Rising Lion in June 2025,

and the current war — was driven by three main components: direct military spending, lost economic output, and property damage.

- **Direct military costs**, including interceptor missiles, munitions, flight hours and reserve duty, totaled an estimated \$1.1 – \$1.35 billion during the 2024 missile attack and about \$5.4 billion during Operation Rising Lion, roughly 1% of annual GDP.
- In the current conflict, the IDF carried out **more than 4,200 sorties** and deployed over 10,000 munitions within two weeks, compared with 1,500 sorties and 3,700 munitions during Rising Lion, with overall direct war costs now expected to reach approximately \$8.1 billion. The government approved an emergency \$700 million allocation, an additional \$8.6 billion for the 2026 defense budget, and a special reserve of \$3.5 billion, funding that required a 3% across-the-board cut to civilian ministries — including \$50 million from education, \$38 million from health, \$24 million from welfare, and \$160 million from transportation — while raising the deficit ceiling from 3.9% to 5.1% of GDP, adding roughly \$270 million a year in interest payments.
- Lost economic output formed the second major cost. During earlier crises, **nearly 1 million workers were absent** from the labor force, contributing to a 5% GDP contraction instead of expected growth. The 12 days of Operation Rising Lion led to the absence of about 500,000 workers and a 2% quarterly GDP loss. The Finance Ministry estimated that the first week of Operation Roaring Lion alone cost about \$2.4 billion, including roughly \$270 million from the shutdown of the education system. With the emergency continuing and the education system operating only partially, similar losses were expected to recur on a weekly basis.
- The economic impact was expected to intensify further as **reserve mobilization** expanded from 260,000 troops toward a potential record 450,000, representing nearly the full reserve force.
- The third major cost component was **property damage**. After Operation Rising Lion, nearly 50,000 compensation claims were filed, with total damage estimated at \$1.35–\$2.7 billion. In the current war, damage appeared lower so far, with about 13,000 claims submitted to the Property Tax Authority, indicating reduced — though still significant — destruction to civilian property and infrastructure.

Global and Diplomatic Developments

- President Trump suggested that a diplomatic resolution could involve political change in Tehran, indicating that the United States was open to the **emergence of a new Iranian leadership** as part of ending the war. Speaking after announcing the pause on strikes against Iran's power plants, Trump said that if talks succeeded, the outcome could include a "very serious form of regime change." Several reports noted that Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, was the Iranian official in touch with the United States, and being considered as a possible new ruler. The Speaker explicitly denied that any negotiations were taking place and accused Washington of using "fake news" to manipulate oil and financial markets.
- Israeli officials said the **chances of a US-Iran agreement remained very small**, despite President Trump's public comments about progress, citing wide gaps over both US and Iranian demands. According to officials and sources involved in mediation, Washington continued to insist on limits to Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and guarantees of freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, while Iran demanded American compensation and binding assurances that the US would take no further military action.
- **European Commission President** Ursula von der Leyen called for an immediate end to hostilities in the Middle East, and said a negotiated solution was of "utmost importance." Speaking in Canberra alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, she said the situation was critical for global energy supply chains and that societies were already feeling knock-on effects in gas and oil prices.

The Region

- A US strike in **western Iraq** hit a base in Anbar province tied to the Iranian proxy, Popular Mobilization Forces, killing seven fighters and wounding 13.
- Iran expanded its campaign against Gulf states with missile and drone attacks across the **United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait**, striking airports, energy infrastructure and residential areas aligned with US interests.
- In the UAE, Iranian drones and missiles caused damage at **Dubai International Airport** and ignited fires near hotels and industrial zones, while Abu Dhabi temporarily shut its Ruwais refinery following drone impacts.
- **Bahrain reported missiles and drones** hitting Manama, including a residential building, which killed one woman and wounded several others, while Saudi Arabia and Kuwait said their air defenses intercepted multiple incoming missiles and drones aimed at oil facilities and military sites.
- Iran also targeted **regional shipping and energy routes**, with multiple commercial vessels struck or damaged in the Persian Gulf and near the Strait of Hormuz. At least three merchant ships from Thailand, Japan and the Marshall Islands were hit by projectiles or drones north of Oman and off the UAE coast, prompting warnings from maritime security authorities and raising insurance and shipping risks. Iranian officials publicly threatened to halt oil exports from the Gulf entirely, saying vessels linked to the US, Israel, or their partners would be treated as legitimate targets.
- Iran launched missiles at **US-linked military bases and civilian sites** in Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain and Iraq, while also firing toward Saudi Arabia's eastern region and the Al-Kharj area near Riyadh. Kuwaiti authorities confirmed strikes near the Ali Al-Salem Air Base, while Bahrain reported damage to hotels and residential buildings in Manama. In Iraq, Iran also struck Kurdish opposition targets, warning Baghdad's Kurdish regional government against hosting hostile forces near the Iranian border.

Jewish Federations and Partners

Some Jewish Federations partner updates:

The Jewish Agency for Israel

- Through the Jewish Agency's Roaring Lion Fund, emergency grant-making continued to expand, with approximately \$900,000 allocated. A total of 749 grants were approved, and an additional 505 grant applications remained in process.
- The Agency's subsidiary, Amigour, continued to address immediate food insecurity by distributing 11,204 food baskets to affected individuals and households. Shelter infrastructure support was also advanced, through ongoing renovation of protected spaces, with 80 public shelters completed and an additional 85 shelter renovations in process through Amigour.
- Jewish Agency-supported volunteers maintained large-scale community volunteering efforts, with 420 participants from young adult and teen programs active nationwide. Volunteers included university students, Shinshinim, and mechinot participants assisting in absorption centers with children's educational continuity, supporting Holocaust survivors with shopping and online engagement, conducting cleanup at missile impact sites, and providing agricultural support.
- Watch [this new Jewish Agency video](#) showing Jews across the world standing with Israel right now.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

- To address heightened vulnerability, JDC expanded **community-based casework services**, deploying staff to locate and support seniors and people with disabilities affected by displacement and isolation, and to connect them with social services. The scale of need exceeded the initially planned five cities, requiring program expansion to additional municipalities.
- JDC **increased frontline welfare capacity in northern communities**, deploying nine community caseworkers to Zarzir, Ma'ale Yosef, Mateh Asher and Hatzor HaGlilit, with four additional caseworkers approved for rapid deployment. The program provided individualized support to older adults, people with disabilities, and at-risk residents navigating displacement, service access and continuity of care.
- JDC launched **housing stabilization support for displaced families** through its "All the Way Home" program in Beit Shemesh, assisting 60 highly vulnerable families over a seven-month period in partnership with the municipal welfare department. This expanded ongoing emergency housing support for an additional 60 families in Be'er Sheva affected by the war.
- Following a direct missile strike in the Arab-Israeli town of Zarzir, JDC implemented a **comprehensive emergency response in the highly vulnerable community**, supporting residents displaced from damaged homes with essential supplies, rescue equipment, caseworkers and first-responder training.
- Through its Mashiv HaRuach (Frontline Cities) initiative, JDC delivered targeted **community support across northern municipalities**, including emergency assistance to families whose homes were hit in Nahariya, shelter-based respite and childcare programming in Nahariya and Karmiel, and tailored activities for children, families, and homebound older adults in Ma'alot-Tarshiha.
- Ahead of Passover, JDC **distributed emergency shelter activity kits** across northern Israel, with 200 kits planned and 70 already delivered, supporting children, older adults, and people with special needs during prolonged shelter stays.

Early Starters International

- Early Starters International is a Jewish Federation-supported, early-childhood organization focused on children ages 0–6 and their caregivers, specializing in trauma-informed, mobile interventions in crisis settings. It operates rapid-deployment models like "Early on Wheels" to bring developmental, emotional, and caregiver support directly into evacuation sites and affected communities during emergencies.
- During Operation Roaring Lion, Early Starters International built on prior philanthropic investment to rapidly deploy mobile early-childhood response programs, providing support to displaced children and their families. Using established field teams, partnerships, and the "Early on Wheels" model, the organization created safe, structured environments in evacuation settings and affected communities. Earlier funding enabled immediate scale-up—trained staff, mobile equipment, and coordinated service delivery with local authorities—so young children received consistent emotional stabilization and developmental support during acute disruption, while caregivers gained practical tools to manage stress and maintain routines.

Jewish Federations **continue to monitor the situation** on the ground very closely and will report as needed.

For more information, please contact: Jewish Federations of North America's Dani Wassner dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org. Subscribe to this weekly update [here](#).