



## Israel & the United States at War with Iran Special Update from Israel

February 28, 2026

The Tampa Jewish Federation joins the Jewish Federations of North America in praying for the success of the joint United States and Israeli actions in Iran and the safety of the brave fighters of the United States Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces carrying them out. We are closely monitoring events on the ground and communicating with our colleagues and partners in Israel.

Jewish Federations of North America President and CEO Eric D. Fingerhut said:

"All security protocols in North America should be fully observed. May this moment bring a renewed understanding of our shared responsibility for the future of the Jewish people and the free world."

Early this morning, we were in touch with local law enforcement officials and requested additional drive bys of all Jewish organizations in Hillsborough County and we have also gone on high alert and increased security at our facilities.

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

**Briefing: Israel & the United States at War with Iran**

## Sunday, March 1 at 12 pm ET

Join Jewish Federations of North America for a special briefing on the rapidly unfolding conflict between Israel, the United States, and Iran. We'll be joined by Haviv Rettig Gur, who will provide timely analysis of the latest developments.

### See Jewish Federations' [Joint Security Guidance for Jewish Institutions Following Strikes on Iran.](#)

- **Israel and the United States launch major strikes on Iran in the first joint Israeli war since 1956.**
- **Israeli media is reporting that Iranian Supreme Leader Khomeini has been killed in the strikes.**
- **The US has named the operation "Epic Fury," while Israel dubs it "Roaring Lion" in an apparent follow-up to the "Rising Lion" military campaign last June.**
- **Over 170 missiles have been fired at Israel as millions spend many hours in shelters today. Limited significant injuries have been reported.**
- **Israeli airspace is closed, with all flights suspended. The Home Front Command has banned all public gatherings. Schools, workplaces and other venues are all closed (other than those providing emergency and essential services).**

**Iran has struck numerous Middle Eastern countries, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, the UAE and Saudi Arabia.**

## Operation Launches

- Just after 8 am Israel Time today (1 am ET), Israelis were shaken by nationwide sirens warning that a **war with Iran had begun.**
- The war was launched as hundreds of thousands of Israelis were in synagogues listening to "**Parshat Zachor,**" which commands the Jewish People to forever remember the fate of those who try to kill us. The operation also coincided with "Tel Hai Day" in Israel, which falls on 11 Adar; it commemorates the fall of Jewish fighter Josef Trumpeldor while defending Tel Hai in 1920. The Roaring Lion monument in Tel Hai, created by Avraham Melnikov between 1932 and 1934, honors eight Jewish defenders, including Trumpeldor, who were killed during the 1920 battle for the settlement. Situated in the Kfar Giladi Cemetery, the monument has become a national emblem of Jewish heroism.

- Israel and the United States announced that they had launched a **preemptive strike against Iran**, aimed at removing what Israel described as “an imminent and existential threat.”
- This is the **first time that Israel has joined other nations** in a war since it fought alongside France and the United Kingdom in the Sinai War (Suez Crisis) with Egypt in 1956.
- Israeli media are reporting that **Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini was killed** in one of the initial attacks. According to numerous sources, the commander of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Gen. Mohammad Pakpour, and Iranian Defense Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh were also killed in Israeli strikes.
- The IDF has described the operation as “widespread,” “multi-wave” and “ongoing.” The **IDF has confirmed hits** on Iranian military, missile and command-and-control targets, including sites in and around Tehran. It also said that more than 200 fighter jets are taking part in the attacks, more than in any IDF attack in the past. Watch an Israeli strike [here](#).
- International media is reporting **dozens of targets hit** across multiple Iranian locations, including in Tehran, Isfahan, Qom and Karaj.
- US officials similarly state that the US conducted “**major combat operations**” involving air- and sea-launched weapons, including cruise missiles. Watch US strikes [here](#).
- Iran says that at least **200 people have been killed** in Israeli and US strikes so far.
- Israel’s Channel 12 reported that the US and Israel are “**close to achieving air superiority over Iran,**” which would enable complete freedom of movement and operational capabilities in the skies above the Islamic Republic.
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that **British forces and planes** were also “participating in coordinated defensive efforts to protect the country’s interests and allies.”

## Iran

- In a message in Persian, the IDF said **Israel’s war is not with the Iranian people**, but only with the regime. “The Islamic Republic dragged the region into this campaign, but this is not our war with the Iranian people. The regime is responsible for squandering the people’s resources on terror organizations, missiles, and a murderous nuclear program against Israel and the region,” said spokesman Lt. Col. Kamal Penhasi [in a video](#). “The regime will continue to threaten and tell you lies through its various channels, but we urge you to listen only to our official Persian-language channels. Israel is acting in

coordination with the United States solely against the regime as part of our right to defend ourselves. We are not enemies of the Iranian people, but enemies of the dictatorship that oppresses them.”

- Israel and the United States have **urged the people of Iran to seize control** of the country and end the Islamic regime.
- Israel television is **broadcasting scenes of Iranians cheering** and celebrating the death of Khomeini.

## Israel's Home Front

- At least **180 missiles and a large number of UAVs have been fired by Iran at Israel**, causing [some damage](#) and limited injuries. Many missiles and UAVs were **shot down by Israel's multi-layered aerial defense systems**. Watch footage of the IDF intercepting an Iranian UAV [here](#).
- Dozens of sirens throughout the day have **sent millions of Israelis running to shelters** multiple times since early morning, and the majority of the population spent the majority of the day sheltering in place. Two Israelis have been seriously injured, and close to 100 people have been treated for moderate and minor injuries, some caused from falling while running to the shelters.
- Israel declared a **nationwide state of emergency**, with the Home Front Command instructing civilians to remain close to protected spaces in anticipation of retaliation.
- All **public gatherings have been banned**, at least until 8 pm on Monday. All schools, businesses and places of work are closed, other than essential services.
- **Medical centers around Israel have switched to emergency mode** according to Health Ministry directives and have moved critical patients and operations to underground complexes or are operating in protected spaces.
- **Israel's airspace has been closed** and no flights are entering or leaving the country. Most planes have been redirected to Cyprus. One flight of 180 Israelis heading to Tel Aviv from Dubai was forced to land in Saudi Arabia, with whom Israel has no diplomatic relations.
- **El Al said it is preparing for a rescue operation** to help bring Israelis stranded abroad back home. “When air traffic resumes and approval is received to operate rescue flights to Israel, customers holding an El Al ticket will be the first to be assigned to the rescue flights.” Flight ticket sales have been halted until March 21 or until all El Al customers holding a flight ticket have been assigned, the airline said.

- Iran's proxies and allies, including **Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis** **have so far refrained** from joining the fighting in support of the Islamic regime.

## Leaders

- Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu issued a video message** saying the operation aims "to remove the existential threat" posed by the Islamic Republic, and "create the conditions" for Iranians to change their destiny.
- US President Donald **Trump announced that the US had begun** "major combat operations in Iran," calling the campaign "a massive and ongoing operation to prevent this very wicked, radical dictatorship from threatening America and our core national security interests. We are going to destroy their missiles and raze their missile industry to the ground. It will be totally... obliterated."
- Opposition leader **Yair Lapid** said that Israelis are united behind Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's troops in the war against Iran. In a video statement, Lapid said that he told multiple foreign media outlets that "there were no political implications" of Israel's war against Iran and that "we are all united on the operation. We are united behind the pilots, fighters, and security forces in the most justified operation there is."
- Former Prime Minister **Naftali Bennett** said to Netanyahu, "The entire nation of Israel stands behind you until the destruction of the Iranian threat." He said that the Iranian people have a "historic opportunity to free themselves from a violent, disconnected, corrupt and failed terrorist regime." Bennett also thanked US President Donald Trump, "who time and again demonstrates rare courage and determination."
- Netanyahu also released a photo of himself speaking to President Trump earlier today. The book *Allies at War: How the Struggles Between the Allied Powers Shaped the War and the World*, a World War II political history by Tim Bouverie, can be seen on the prime minister's desk, along with a large regional map.
- Israel's **National Security Council has called on Israelis abroad to exercise heightened awareness** and to take precautionary measures. "The escalation with Iran increases the likelihood that the Iranian regime will intensify efforts to carry out terrorist attacks abroad against Israeli/Jewish targets, starting immediately. In addition, and based on past experience, the motivation to harm Israelis abroad may also increase among other terrorist elements, alongside local initiatives (including lone attackers)."

## Fighting Spreads

- Iran has fired at **multiple US allies in the region**.
- In [this footage](#), an Iranian strike on a multi-story building in **Bahrain** can be seen.
- The **United Arab Emirates** has also been targeted, with authorities confirming strikes in both Abu Dhabi and [Dubai](#) (including [one hit](#) on a building in the famed Palm Jumeirah area). At least one person was killed in the attack on Abu Dhabi.
- **Saudi Arabia** also confirmed it was targeted in an [Iranian missile strike](#). The Saudi foreign ministry said the kingdom was able to repel attacks on its capital, Riyadh, and on the country's east: "In light of this unjustified aggression, the Kingdom affirms that it will take all necessary measures to defend its security and protect its territory, citizens and residents, including with the option of responding to the aggression."
- Iranian strikes have also been reported in [Jordan](#), **Qatar** and **Kuwait**.
- The airspace and airports in many countries in the region have also closed.

## Jewish Federations and Partners

- **Jewish Federations of North America's Israel office has activated our emergency protocols and is in close contact with the government of Israel and our partners.**
- While this is still the early hours of the war, we can report as follows:
  - The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)'s National Mental Health Initiative, which has placed mental health professionals in 200 municipalities and delivered accredited mental-wellness interventions nationwide, reports that, as in previous escalations, these services are seeing especially heavy use right now.
  - **JDC Tevet has noted that the Ministry of Economy has opened its critical-worker command center.**
  - The **Jewish Agency for Israel** is monitoring any potential need for using the Fund for Victims of Terror, should circumstances require it.
  - The **Or Movement**, using the infrastructure of its emergency command centers, is in touch with local authorities.
  - **Yedidim**, who assist private citizens, has been actively using the safe-room door kits funded by Jewish Federations during Operation Rising Lions.
  - **Dror Israel** is preparing to deploy educators and trained teen leaders to work with children in shelters as needs become clearer.

- See Jewish Federations' [Joint Security Guidance for Jewish Institutions Following Strikes on Iran](#).

Jewish Federations of North America is working closely to support all groups on the ground, including Federation missions and other organized educational trips through the Israel Educational Travel Alliance (IETA). [Yehuda Gershonovitz](#) is in close communication with Federation groups and continues to coordinate updates and support. If your Federation has not yet been in touch with him, we encourage you to connect with Yehuda as soon as possible at (646) 630-0774.

While we believe we are aware of all trips currently on the ground, you can submit inquiries for any trip through the IETA hub:

1. [Group information form](#)
2. [Participant information form](#) - email this to [ieta@jewishfederations.org](mailto:ieta@jewishfederations.org).

**Note these are new forms. If you completed a prior form, you still must complete these forms to receive JFNA/IETA assistance.**

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

## Further Reading

**Times of Israel:** [As US and Israel again battle Islamic Republic, the goal is regime change and the stakes could not be higher](#)

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