



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

March 2, 2026

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

*In observance of Purim tomorrow, we will not be publishing an Israel Update.
We will resume on Wednesday, March 4.*

- Day 3 of the US/ Israel War with Iran
- A subdued Purim begins across the country with synagogues shuttered and megillah readings taking place in thousands of small street gatherings near shelters.
- Hezbollah enters the fray, opening up a second front against Israel.
- Iran fires dozens more missiles at the Jewish state. Twelve Israelis have been killed and many more injured.
- Four US servicemen have also been killed in action.

Briefing: Israel & the United States at War with Iran
Wednesday, March 4 at 3pm ET

Join Jewish Federations of North America for a special briefing on the rapidly unfolding conflict between Israel, the United States, and Iran. We will be joined by Col. (Ret.) Miri Eisin, who will provide a timely update on the latest developments.

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Hezbollah

- Overnight, **Hezbollah entered the war**, launching rockets and drones from Lebanon into northern Israel for the first time since the November 2024 ceasefire. Air-raid sirens sounded across the north, with the IDF reporting that most projectiles were intercepted or fell in open areas; no immediate casualties or significant damage were reported.
- The attack came hours after Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem said that the terror organization would **take on Israel and the US** despite the Lebanese government's plea for it to remain on the sidelines, as it had done during the previous 12-day war between Israel and Iran in June 2025.
- Israel responded within hours, initiating a **broad wave of airstrikes against Hezbollah targets** across southern and eastern Lebanon, as well as in the Beirut area, including Hezbollah strongholds in the capital's southern suburbs.
- The IDF said the **strikes targeted command infrastructure and senior operatives** (including Hussein Makled, who served as the head of Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters), warning that the terror group would bear full responsibility for opening a new front and that operations could intensify in the coming days. Israel noted that it did not rule out a ground offensive into Lebanon.
- Israeli officials described Hezbollah's actions as a **deliberate escalation directed by Iran**, stressing that Israel "will not allow a threat to develop on its northern border" while it is engaged on multiple fronts. The military issued evacuation warnings to over 50 towns and villages in Lebanon that are near Hezbollah positions and reiterated that further attacks from the north would be met with forceful responses. There has been no evacuation of residents in Israel's north at this point.

Fighting Iran

- The US military has struck more than **1,000 Iranian targets** since launching its campaign on Saturday, according to US Central Command. CENTCOM said the targets include command-and-control facilities, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps headquarters, and sites belonging to the IRGC's Aerospace Forces. Earlier, the IDF said Israeli aircraft also struck dozens of IRGC command centers as part of the coordinated campaign.
- The US also said that it used **B2 bombers** for the first time in the current round of fighting, apparently hitting a ballistic missile facility.
- The IDF says it has **conducted over 30 separate [strike operations against Iran's ballistic missile](#)** and air defense arrays since the start of the ongoing conflict, in order to "reduce as much as possible the fire directed at the State of Israel." Hundreds of other targets have also been hit.
- While the IDF has not released numbers, very large numbers of reservists have been called up since fighting began on Saturday morning to bolster capabilities.
- Former Iranian President Mahmoud **Ahmadinejad, a notorious Holocaust denier, was confirmed to have been eliminated** in Israel's opening strike.
- IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir said Israel has already achieved "very significant" results in Iran but warned that the campaign is still in its early stages and that **days of fighting remain**. Zamir added that the opening strikes delivered a powerful surprise that has already shaped the war's trajectory and will influence its end state. He emphasized that coordination with the US military is closer than ever.

- US President Donald Trump said the **military campaign could last up to four weeks**, describing it as a “complex operation against a large country,” but conceded it could also conclude sooner. He said that Operation Epic Fury was proceeding as planned and that dozens of senior Iranian leaders have been killed.

Hundreds of demonstrators led by **Iranian expats** have [cheered for the US and Israel](#) in Times Square and other locations across the globe. Those in the New York gathering waved pre-Islamic Revolution Iranian flags, bearing the lion-and-sun emblem, while some demonstrators carried Israeli and US flags. Chants included, “Alternative for Iran, King Reza Pahlavi” and “Khamenei is gone.”

Israel's Home Front

- Iran continues to **target Israel's cities and towns** with powerful, long-range ballistic missiles as well as UAVs (drones).
- While most attacks are intercepted by Israel's aerial defense array, a number of projectiles are **hitting targets**.
- Earlier today, **ten Israelis were injured** when a missile hit a building in Beer Sheva. Last night a missile [hit Jerusalem](#). That strike injured three people, including one who is in moderate condition, and left a large crater in a highway on Jerusalem's outskirts.
- As reported yesterday, there was also a tragic [direct missile hit on four apartment buildings in a residential neighborhood in Bet Shemesh](#) that **killed nine people** and injured 15 others. Following the sounding of sirens, the victims had taken refuge in a public bomb shelter that then suffered a direct hit. Among those killed were three young children from one family, a mother and daughter, and a 16-year-old boy. Sirens sounded during some of the victims' funerals, and those gathered were forced to lie on the ground and cover their heads during the missile attack.
- A 102-year-old Israeli man **died from injuries** sustained while seeking shelter during a missile attack.
- Shrapnel from intercepted missiles also fell in many parts of Israel, as well as in areas controlled by the **Palestinian Authority in the West Bank**.
- Israel's Health Ministry reported yesterday that since the beginning of the conflict with Iran, **677 people have been evacuated to hospitals**, of whom 166 are currently hospitalized. Of these, six are in serious condition. Twenty-nine are in moderate condition and 127 are in good condition. One is being treated for anxiety and three are under medical evaluation.
- Israel's Prime Minister's Office and Finance Ministry announced an immediate **emergency grant for civilians whose homes were damaged** and deemed uninhabitable. The grant totals approximately \$550 per evacuated person, with about \$140 paid directly to the individual for immediate personal needs and about \$410 allocated to the local authority to cover evacuation-related costs such as temporary housing, transportation, and municipal services. Officials emphasized that this is an initial, short-term measure and does not replace full compensation available under existing war-damage and property-claims mechanisms.
- Israeli authorities report that at least **1,000 residents have been displaced** after their homes were damaged by missile impacts and deemed uninhabitable. The largest numbers are in Tel Aviv-Jaffa (approximately 730 residents) and Beit Shemesh (around 150), with additional displacement reported in Ramat Gan, Bnei Brak, Tirat Carmel and Rosh HaAyin.

Displaced residents are **being provided with temporary housing** in hotels, which is being coordinated by local authorities under authorization from Israel's government compensation fund. To date, evacuees have been accommodated in eight hotels in central Israel and Haifa, with the costs fully covered.

Leaders

- Top US officials, including **Secretary of State Marco Rubio**, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, and military chief General Dan Caine, “will brief the full membership of both chambers of Congress on Tuesday,” according to the White House. The leaders will make the case to Congress for the attack on Iran, even as many Democrats and some Republicans question its rationale.
- US President Donald Trump has reiterated his call for **Iran's security forces to lay down their arms** in exchange for full immunity, “or face certain death.” Trump called on “Iranian patriots who yearn for freedom to seize this moment, to be brave, be bold, be heroic, and take back your country. America is with you. I made a promise to you, and I fulfilled that promise. The rest will be up to you, but we'll be there to help.”

Fighting Spreads

- According to the UK's defense ministry, British forces responded to a suspected **drone strike at its military base in Cyprus**, with no casualties reported. The strike hit the RAF Akrotiri base at midnight.
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has agreed to **let the US use UK** bases to launch “defensive” strikes aimed at destroying Iranian missiles and their launchers. Nonetheless, Starmer clarified in a video address that the UK was “not involved in the initial strikes on Iran,” and “will not join offensive action now.”
- Iran carried out coordinated strikes yesterday **against US military facilities and allied targets** across the Middle East. Iranian missiles and drones targeted sites in several Gulf states that host American forces, drawing much of the region directly into the conflict. The attacks resulted in the deaths of three US service members, the first American combat fatalities of the war. US Central Command confirmed the deaths but did not disclose the precise locations.
- Iran also targeted a **French naval facility in the UAE** and Saudi oil infrastructure. In contrast to previous attacks on Saudi energy facilities — carried out via the Iran-backed Houthis and followed by Saudi efforts to de-escalate — Riyadh has now signaled a more confrontational stance, expressing willingness to support the US-led strike.
- The United Arab Emirates announced it is closing its **embassy in Tehran** and recalling its ambassador and diplomatic staff, citing what it described as “blatant Iranian missile attacks” on Emirati territory. Emirati authorities said that three people have been killed and 58 injured since Iran began its retaliatory strikes in the Gulf following US and Israeli attacks.
- The **American Embassy in Kuwait** was also reportedly hit by an Iranian munition, and three American F-15E fighter jets crashed in Kuwait, apparently due to friendly fire. The pilots are said to have ejected.

Air travel across much of the Arab world has been **severely disrupted**, with widespread airspace closures and airport shutdowns following Iran's strikes. Major regional airports — including Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the UAE, as well as Doha and airports in Bahrain and Kuwait — have suspended or sharply

curtailed operations, forcing airlines to cancel or reroute thousands of flights. In the UAE, the closure of Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports, which are both major global hubs, has left a very large number of passengers stranded, with Emirates, Etihad and other carriers suspending services and advising travelers to rebook or seek refunds amid continuing uncertainty over when flights will resume.

Flights

- Ben Gurion Airport, along with all Israeli airspace, remain **closed to commercial flights**.
- More than **100,000 Israelis were scheduled to return** to Israel but are currently unable to do so, according to Israeli government estimates. About 50,000 were expected to return by today.
- The shutdown of major regional hubs, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, has significantly affected Israelis stranded abroad, **especially those traveling to and from Asia**, given the Gulf's role as a key global aviation hub.
- As of March 1, only a **few thousand Israelis have returned**, primarily via land crossings; in parallel, over 5,000 foreign tourists have exited Israel, mostly through land routes.
- If airspace closures persist through mid-week, the number of Israelis stranded abroad is expected to rise to approximately 110,000.
- Israeli authorities report notable **concentrations of stranded Israelis** in the UAE, Greece, Cyprus, the US and major European hubs, while limited rescue flights and land-route alternatives are being explored.
- EL AL has announced the beginning of **preparations for an operation** which will commence the moment Ben-Gurion Airport reopens. In the first phase, the airline is preparing to operate recovery flights from its primary gateways: the United States: (New York, Miami, Los Angeles); the Far East (Bangkok, Phuket); and Europe (Larnaca, Athens, Rome, Milan, Paris, Budapest, Tbilisi, Sofia, Warsaw, Bucharest, Madrid, London, Barcelona, Geneva, Amsterdam, Munich and Zurich).
- Recovery flights for EL AL and Sundor customers whose flights were canceled will be offered at **no additional cost**, and flights will open for sale to the general public only after all EL AL and Sundor customers have been brought home.
- EL AL is examining the possibility of **operating flights on KlasJet aircraft to Taba or Aqaba**, subject to receiving the required approvals. These flights would operate from nearby European gateways and would be offered at no additional cost for interested EL AL and Sundor customers.

For details, see [here](#).

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.

Some Jewish Federations partner updates:

- The **Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC)**
 - ITC is operating under emergency protocols and is supporting more than 200 evacuees from Ramat Gan, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Beit Shemesh, currently housed in

- five hotels (four in Tel Aviv and one in Haifa), with a focus on families with young children. Support includes practical assistance, emotional first aid, and coping tools.
- ITC resilience centers have conducted multiple online support sessions in Hebrew and Arabic for families and mental-health professionals, with several hundred participants. Additional webinars for therapists, social workers, parents, and children are scheduled.
 - The ITC Bedouin Resilience Center is providing online art-therapy sessions for children and guidance for parents; a recent session included over 450 participants.
- **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC):**
As outlined yesterday, JDC is involved in numerous efforts. They can all be seen in this [Digital Resource Arsenal](#).
 - **Tamar**
 - Tamar is operating a 24-hour Arabic language mental health emergency response, including a hotline and online crisis services, providing immediate psychological first aid and referrals.
 - Services are focused on Arab communities, including Bedouin towns and unrecognized villages, where access to shelters and reinforced rooms is limited and mental health response functions as critical infrastructure.
 - Tamar's clinical staff shifted to emergency protocols over Shabbat and during Ramadan, maintaining continuous operations despite ongoing alerts.
 - The organization has disseminated Arabic language mental health resources through social media and community networks and is preparing additional interventions for the coming days.

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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](#).