



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

March 5, 2026

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

We will send the next update on Sunday unless major developments occur before then.

- Day 6 of the US/Israel War with Iran
- Israel's Home Front Command lifts some restrictions on the population
- Ben Gurion Airport partially opens as repatriation flights begin
- Fighting with Hezbollah intensifies

**Briefing: Israel & the United States at War with Iran
Monday, March 9 at 1pm ET**

Join Jewish Federations of North America for a special briefing on the conflict between Israel, the United States, and Iran. We

will be joined by Ambassador Yechiel Leiter, who will provide a timely update on the latest developments. Click [here](#) to register.

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

Fighting Iran

- Israeli **airstrikes overnight in Tehran** targeted Iranian missile storage facilities and launch sites, including at least one underground site used to store ballistic missiles. The military added that several air defense missile storage sites and ballistic missile launchers were also hit. During the operation, an Israeli Air Force fighter jet identified [Iranian soldiers operating an air defense system](#). Both the launcher and the soldiers were hit, thwarting an attempted launch toward Israeli aircraft.
- According to the monitoring group Netblock, Iran's **internet connectivity** remains at "around 1% of ordinary levels," more than 120 hours into a communications blackout triggered by the war. The group said that connectivity has been "flatlining" as the conflict enters its fifth day. It warned of an increasingly "Orwellian environment," citing reports that telecom companies are threatening legal action against users who attempt to access the global internet.
- The IDF released [footage](#) showing the **Israeli Air Force's downing** of an Iranian Yak-130 jet over Tehran the previous day, marking what it said was the first-ever downing of a manned aircraft by an F-35 fighter jet. According to IDF spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin, the Iranian aircraft had taken off from Tehran's Mehrabad Airport and posed a threat to Israeli planes. Audio from the cockpit captures the pilot saying, "Completed, the target is down, continuing to strike," as the operation concluded.
- The IDF also released [footage](#) showing **aerial refueling operations** conducted by the Israeli Air Force's 120th Squadron. According to the IDF, more than 550 aerial refuelings have been carried out across the Middle East, enabling hundreds of Israeli fighter jets to operate over Iran at distances exceeding 1,000 miles from Israel. The IDF said that approximately five million pounds of fuel were transferred during

the current conflict. The Air Force has also relied extensively on US military refueling capabilities, with dozens of U.S. tanker aircraft stationed in Israel amid the fighting, reflecting the significantly larger size of the American refueling fleet.

- Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps claimed it attacked an American oil tanker in the northern Persian Gulf. They said the tanker was on fire, while claiming that wartime passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be under Iran's control.
- The Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi said that the **US struck the Iranian frigate Dena** in international waters without warning. He described the vessel as a guest of India's navy that was carrying almost 130 sailors and warned on X that "the US will bitterly regret the precedent it has set." The report said a US submarine strike hit the vessel off Sri Lanka's southern coast, killing dozens.
- The Pentagon **released the names of the remaining two of six US service members killed** in the Kuwait attack: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Marzan, 54, of Sacramento, and Major Jeffrey O'Brien, 45, of Indianola, Iowa. The Pentagon said Marzan is believed to have died at the scene when a drone hit the command center in Port Shuaiba, Kuwait; four others had been identified earlier, and Trump was quoted as saying, "Sadly, there will likely be more before it ends."
- Reports indicate that, following a U.S. request, **Kurdish groups are preparing potential operations** along Iran's northwestern border with Iraq. In recent days, Israel and the United States have struck multiple military targets, border posts, and security installations in northern Iran, actions widely seen as shaping the operational environment. Analysts suggest the moves may be intended to divert Iranian security forces from internal unrest. However, they also carry the risk of heightening sensitivities within Iran by raising concerns about territorial fragmentation. President Donald Trump held calls this week with Kurdish leaders, urging them to support both the American and Israeli efforts.

Fighting Hezbollah

- As fighting intensifies in Israel's north, a **cell of Hezbollah operatives was killed overnight** in a [drone strike in southern Lebanon](#). IDF troops identified the operatives entering a building used by Hezbollah as a command center, after which the Israeli Air Force struck the structure, killing those inside. The IDF said the

incident occurred as Israeli forces pushed deeper into southern Lebanon and assumed “forward defensive positions” to create an additional defensive layer to protect northern Israeli communities.

- Ahead of planned airstrikes, the Israeli military issued an **evacuation warning** for large sections of Beirut’s southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold known as the Dahiyyeh. The warning, the first of its kind covering multiple neighborhoods of the Lebanese capital, instructed residents to evacuate north or east, while explicitly warning against movement southward. The military said residents would be notified when it is safe to return.
- Since Hezbollah joined the conflict on Monday, the IDF says it **has struck** more than 320 [targets in Lebanon](#), including 80 in the past day, as Israel continues both airstrikes and ground maneuvering tied to what it describes as a forward defensive posture.

Flights

- Since the start of the war, **Israel’s airspace has been closed to civilian aviation**, with all incoming and outgoing flights canceled except for exceptional cases. As a result, an estimated 125,000 to 150,000 Israelis have been unable to return to Israel. From the start of the operation through the morning of March 4, approximately 9,200 Israelis entered the country, the vast majority via land crossings, with a small number arriving by sea or air, while approximately 6,115 Israelis exited Israel during the same period (also mainly overland).
- Roughly 125,000 **Israelis were expected to arrive** by March 4, but were unable to do so due to the closure of Ben Gurion Airport. Broader estimates indicate that approximately 150,000 Israelis in total were seeking to return to Israel in the coming weeks.
- To facilitate returns, the Ministry of Transport launched **Operation Lion’s Wings**, allocating approximately \$1.3 million for an initial 30-day period, with the option to extend to 60 days if needed. Participating airlines include El Al, Arkia, Israir, and Air Haifa, with Wizz Air expected to join on March 6. Airlines are committed to prioritizing passengers whose flights were canceled or who departed Israel on Israeli carriers. In contrast, Israelis who traveled abroad on foreign airlines were instructed to register directly with Israeli airlines to join waiting lists.

- Regionally, **airspace remains closed** over Iraq, Syria, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait, while airspace over Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates is partially open.
- Israel's Ministry of Transport has **activated the Safe Return** program to coordinate the phased return of those Israeli citizens stranded abroad. Implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Defense, Home Front Command and the National Emergency Authority, the program relies on the government-approved flights and maritime routes. At the same time, civilian air travel to Israel remains restricted. Returns are being carried out through special flights operated with Israeli airlines and passenger ships operating via Cyprus, including escorted maritime arrivals to Israeli ports.
- Israel's airspace, including **Ben Gurion Airport, was partially reopened today**. The first repatriation flights for Israelis landed at Ben Gurion this morning— an El Al flight from Athens and an Israir flight from Rome — with Arkia and Air Haifa flights expected later today.
- One El Al repatriation flight arriving early this morning from Tbilisi was briefly delayed while approaching Ben Gurion Airport after rocket and **missile alert sirens** were activated. The aircraft aborted its initial landing and remained airborne for approximately 20 minutes before landing safely.
- Under the approved framework, **Ben Gurion Airport will now operate around the clock**, with a cap of approximately 9,000 incoming passengers per day. Ten percent of seats on each flight will be reserved for humanitarian and exceptional cases, to be prioritized by a government steering committee.
- Among those returning overland were some **850 high school students who were stranded in Poland** on heritage trips due to the war. They were returned to Israel through secret rescue operations via Taba in Egypt.
- Israeli media are reporting that **flights for those departing from Israel are expected to begin as early as Sunday**. Under the emerging arrangement, only 50 passengers will be allowed on each flight departing from Israel, and checked luggage will not be permitted in the aircraft hold. Passengers will need to complete early check-in for the flight and arrive at Ben-Gurion Airport only 1.5 hours before departure. Nobody will be allowed to accompany those departing from the airport.

Israel's Home Front

- The IDF's **Home Front Command has eased restrictions** in all areas for Israeli citizens. As of 12 noon today, gatherings of up to 50 people are permitted in areas with adequate shelters. Businesses and offices may reopen, as long as employees can reach a regulation-approved protected area in time. Schools remain closed at least through Sunday.
- The IDF said the **rate of Iran's ballistic missile fire continues to slow** and that all missiles fired overnight were intercepted, with Iran launching three times toward central Israel and lobbing only a handful of missiles. Missiles killed eleven Israeli civilians in the first days of the war, but no additional deaths have occurred since then.
- Since the start of the war, there have been **13 Iranian missile impact sites in residential areas**, including large warheads in Beit Shemesh, Tel Aviv and Beersheba. At the same time, other damage and injuries were caused by fragments or submunitions from cluster-munition warheads. The IDF also noted that it has shot down more than 100 drones launched from Iran since the start of the war. It warned that Hezbollah attacks may increase, noting dozens of Hezbollah rockets and drones so far and two impact sites in the north.
- In total, **1,573 buildings have been damaged** in Israel since fighting began just under a week ago. The homes of at least 2,800 residents were damaged to the extent that they were deemed uninhabitable. Of those displaced, close to 2,000 residents were housed in hotels. Other displaced residents opted for community-based housing solutions, such as staying with family members or alternative arrangements supported by monthly compensation from the Property Tax Compensation Fund.
- Where possible, displaced residents were housed in **hotels within their home municipalities**. Approximately 27 percent of evacuees are children and adolescents aged 0–18, while about 62 percent are adults aged 19–65.
- Israel's Health Ministry said that **199 injured people were taken to hospitals** in the past 24 hours due to the conflict, including 14 in moderate condition and 170 in good condition; 13 were treated for anxiety; and two underwent medical evaluation. Since the fighting began on Saturday, 1,473 people have been evacuated to hospitals, with 145 still hospitalized or in the ER; four of those still hospitalized are in serious condition, with another 28 in moderate condition.

Diplomatic Developments

- **Russia accused the United States** and Israel of trying to drag Arab countries into a wider regional conflict by “provoking” Iran into retaliatory strikes on targets across the Middle East. Moscow said the resulting attacks caused “human and material losses,” which it “deeply regrets,” and argued that the only way to prevent further destabilization is to stop US-Israeli “aggression,” claiming there are no signs the “aggressors” will halt their strikes.
- Israel’s Defense Minister **Israel Katz spoke with US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth** overnight, expressing condolences for six US service members killed in Iranian attacks and saying Israel will continue assisting efforts to protect US troops in the region. Katz praised President Trump’s support and said the Trump-Netanyahu cooperation against Iran is “changing regional and global history.” In response, Hegseth “praised the unprecedented cooperation” and told Katz: “Continue to the end, we are with you.”
- Qatar rejected claims by US media personality **Tucker Carlson that Israeli intelligence agents were arrested in the Gulf** country over an alleged bombing plot, saying it has “no information” about Mossad cells operating in the country. Qatari officials said the assertion, which circulated widely online, was unfounded, while separately confirming that authorities had arrested two cells linked to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, detaining 10 suspects accused of espionage and sabotage activity amid heightened regional security concerns following Iranian missile and drone attacks.

Fighting Spreads

- **Azerbaijan accused Iran** of firing [two drones into its territory](#), injuring two civilians, and said it has summoned Iran’s ambassador to lodge a formal protest. According to Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry, one drone fell on an airport in the Nakhchivan exclave near the Iranian border, while the other landed near a school. Baku condemned the attacks, demanded an explanation, and said it reserves the right to take “appropriate response measures.” There was no immediate response from Iran.

- The **United Arab Emirates reported that Iran fired seven ballistic missiles and 131 drones at the country today**, with one missile impacting inside the UAE. According to Emirati authorities, most projectiles were intercepted, with only six drones striking the country. Cumulatively, the UAE said it has intercepted 1,001 of 1,072 drones launched by Iran, as well as 181 of 196 ballistic missiles, with two missiles hitting Emirati territory and others falling into the sea. Authorities reported three fatalities and 94 injuries as a result of the attacks.
- Britain's Defense Minister John **Healey is currently traveling to Cyprus** amid the escalating Middle East war. Healey is expected to arrive later today following a drone attack earlier this week on the runway of the Royal Air Force base at Akrotiri. The visit comes as Britain and its allies reassess security arrangements on the island after the strike.
- **Italy, Spain, France and the Netherlands said they will send naval assets** to protect fellow EU-member Cyprus "in the coming days."
- Earlier today, Qatar's Defense Ministry said the country was **subjected to a missile attack** and that air defense systems were intercepting incoming fire, as loud blasts were heard across Doha. Smoke was seen over parts of the city.
- After Turkey's defense ministry said a ballistic missile launched from Iran toward Turkish airspace was destroyed by NATO air and missile defenses over the eastern Mediterranean, Iran denied firing any **missile toward Turkey**, saying it respects Turkish sovereignty.

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:

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC):

JDC's Elka is the organization's public and municipal capacity-building platform, working with the Israeli government

and local authorities to strengthen planning, coordination and service delivery — especially during crises.

- Following the outbreak of the current campaign, JDC-Elka shifted back into emergency-response mode to support municipalities affected by missile strikes across multiple locations, including Beit Shemesh, Be'er Sheva, Bnei Brak, Tirat Carmel and additional communities, as local authorities manage evacuation, immediate response and early-recovery needs.
- In northern Israel, JDC-Elka project managers embedded with municipalities under the Northern Initiative resumed crisis operations. They are working directly with municipal leadership and professional teams to coordinate emergency responses, identifying emerging needs and managing the ongoing emergency.
- JDC-Elka is also supporting the Prime Minister's Office in leading an emergency coordination roundtable that brings together government ministries and civil-society actors; this framework was strengthened based on lessons from the past two years. Jewish Federations of North America represents all Federations at this roundtable.
- While national response systems appear to be operating more efficiently than in previous escalations, JDC-Elka reports that disparities remain between local authorities, with more vulnerable municipalities continuing to require additional support.

The Jewish Agency for Israel:

As outlined in previous updates, the Agency continues its extensive activities on the ground as a result of the war. In particular, the just-announced Roaring Lion Fund for Victims of Terror has cycled into action and is providing rapid assistance to bereaved families, the injured, and those whose homes have been seriously damaged.

The Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC):

- ITC has identified signs of team burnout among frontline professionals as a critical and growing operational risk across its network and partner organizations.
- ITC provides guidance to caregivers including practical measures for team management during emergencies, such as structured check-ins,

workload redistribution, protected recovery time and clearer boundaries around staff availability.

- They are also supporting organizations in implementing operational adjustments to reduce strain, including flexible work start times after overnight alerts and structured supervision and debriefing processes.
- Where burnout has already occurred, ITC is assisting teams with immediate workload reduction, short-term recovery planning, and follow-up to stabilize staff functioning and maintain service continuity.

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

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](#).