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Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 2/28/26 Update

With the United States and Israel launching joint strikes—Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion, respectively—against Iranian regime targets and Iran launching retaliatory missile and drone attacks against U.S. forces in the region, Israel, and Arab nations, dubbed Operation True Promise IV, JINSA will regularly release updates detailing the conflict. The update below includes information as of February 28 at 11:00 am ET.

1. Overview

- The United States and Israel launched a joint operation, Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion, after the regime brutally killed at least [32,000 protesters](#), three rounds of [failed negotiations](#) in February between the United States and Iran, and a [massive buildup](#) of U.S. air and naval forces in and around the Middle East.
- In a public address, President Donald Trump [announced](#) that “Iran refused (to make a deal)—just as it has for decades and decades. They rejected every opportunity to renounce their nuclear ambitions, and we can’t take it anymore.” He also [stated](#) that “instead, they attempted to rebuild their nuclear program and to continue developing long-range missiles that can now threaten our very good friends and allies in Europe, our troops stationed overseas, and could soon reach the American homeland.”
 - » He [called](#) for members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iranian police to “lay down your weapons and have complete immunity, or in the alternative, face certain death.”
 - » Trump also [addressed](#) the Iranian people, instructing them that when the bombings end, “take over your government” and that “this will be probably your only chance for generations.”
 - » Speaking with the *Washington Post*, Trump [stated](#) that all he wants is “freedom for the people” of Iran.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also [released](#) a video message, claiming that “our joint action will create the conditions for the brave Iranian people to take their destiny into their own hands.”
 - » He [continued](#), saying that “the time has come for all parts of the Iranian people—the Persians, the Kurds, the Azeris, the Baloch, and the Ahwazi—to cast off the yoke of tyranny and bring about a free and peace-seeking Iran.”
 - » Israeli military officials claimed the strikes were a “joint, broad, and powerful operation” with the United States and that the countries “aimed at a thorough strike against the Iranian terror regime and at eliminating existential threats to the State of Israel over time.”

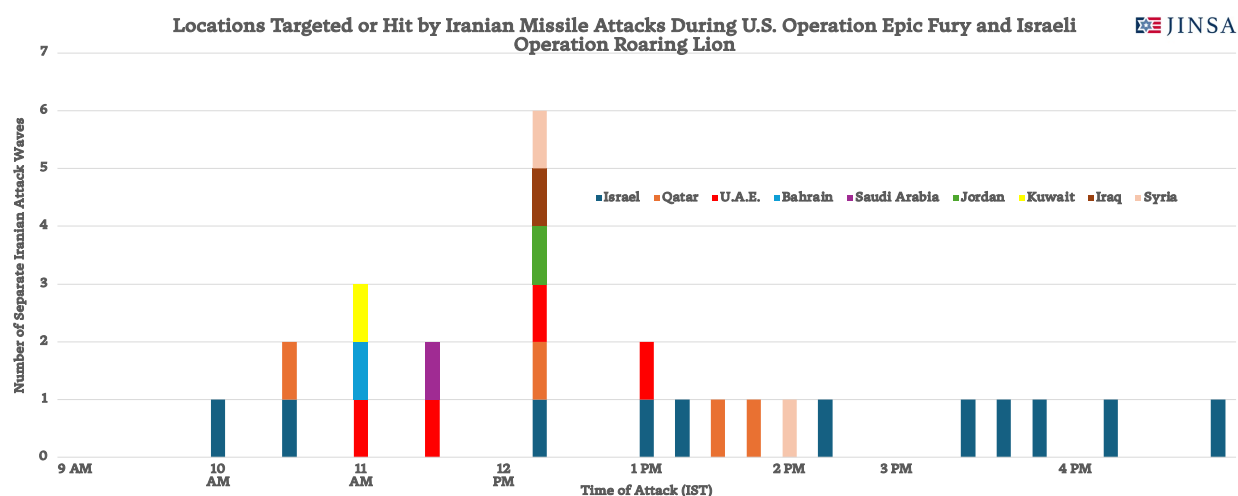
2. U.S. and Israeli Operations

- Israeli military officials claimed the [strikes](#) hit [hundreds of targets](#) and were a “joint, broad, and powerful operation” with the United States, and that the countries “aimed at a thorough strike against the Iranian terror regime and at eliminating existential threats to the State of Israel over time.” The operation was reportedly the [largest](#) in the history of the Israeli Air Force, with 200 fighter aircraft using hundreds of munitions to hit roughly 500 targets.
 - » The Israeli military also assessed that Iran’s government “continued its attempts to fortify, shield, and conceal its nuclear programs, alongside the rehabilitation of its missile production process.” Israel’s assessment also claims that Iran had bolstered its ballistic missile production to a rate of “dozens a month.”
- After [jointly planning](#) the attack for months and waiting for the right moment in which senior Iranian leaders would convene, the Israel Defense Forces [claimed](#) it had achieved “tactical surprise for the second time” in an attack against the Iranian regime, referring to the previous 12-Day War in June 2025.
 - » The United States and Israel [conducted the attack](#) in daylight to add a level of surprise to the operation. An unnamed source [told](#) Israeli media that today’s “all-out” operation is only the “initial phase” and that the attack will last for four days.
- The joint operations targeted several Iranian military targets, including:
 - » The [homes of senior Iranian military officials](#), [a presidential office](#), [Defense and Intelligence Ministry facilities](#), [naval facilities](#), an [industrial area in Arak](#), and [subterranean establishments](#) likely linked to the regime’s nuclear program.
 - » Blasts were also [reported](#) in the Iranian cities of Tehran, Isfahan, Kermanshah, and Karaj.
- The operation targeted several senior Iranian leaders, including:
 - » Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
 - While his death is unconfirmed, Israeli sources assess there are “growing indications” he was [killed](#) in the attack.
 - » Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian
 - While Iranian media claims he is alive, Israeli sources claim their strikes on Iranian leadership, including Pezeshkian, [achieved](#) “high success.”
 - » IRGC Commander Mohammad Pakpour
 - » Iranian Defense Minister Amir Nasirzadeh
 - Israeli officials assess that Pakpour and Nasirzadeh were [killed](#) in airstrikes this morning.
- For the first time, the United States [used](#) one-way attack drones in combat against naval and potential underground nuclear targets, according to reporting from *Fox News’s* Jennifer Griffin.
 - » The operation also [included](#) the use of Tomahawk missiles in the first wave of strikes.
 - » One U.S. official [claimed](#) that “we have effectively suppressed their air defenses.”
- An Israeli statement indicated strikes [targeted](#) Iranian air defenses, including an advanced SA-65 in the Kermanshah region of western Iran.
- The strike campaign also successfully [targeted](#) the Jurf al-Sakher base in southern Iraq, which hosts Iran-backed Kataib Hezbollah.

- » An unnamed Iraqi military source [announced](#) that their “forces detected warplanes from the direction of Israel that crossed the airspace over Baghdad.”
- According to Iran’s semi-official *Fars News Agency*, several Iranian media outlets were [targeted](#) in a major cyber attack amidst the joint U.S.-Israeli strikes.
 - » The Israeli military has also [called](#) up 20,000 reservists in the Israeli Navy, Air Force, Intelligence Directorate, and Home Front Command in addition to the 50,000 reservists currently serving.

3. Iranian Operations

- Iran conducted roughly 26 separate waves of attacks, with Iranian missiles targeting or striking sites in Israel, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar, Iraq, and Syria. In contrast to the 12-Day War, Iran has heavily targeted U.S. bases in Arab countries, as JINSA’s recent analysis of its missile and drone arsenal assessed it would do in any conflict with the United States.
 - » Iran retaliated against U.S. targets in the Gulf, including [Al-Udeid Air Base](#) in Qatar and [Naval Support Activity Bahrain](#), which remain much more vulnerable to an Iranian attack than Israel due to their proximity to Iran and lack of Israel’s advanced multi-tier air defenses.
 - An Iranian drone, appearing to be a Shahed, struck a U.S. base in Bahrain, according to initial reports on Telegram.
 - » An Iranian drone also [struck](#) Kuwait International Airport, causing injuries and inflicting damage to the passenger terminal.
 - » Learning lessons from the 12-Day War, Iran appears to have dispersed its salvos throughout the day, enabling it to keep Gulf states and Israel under more consistent pressure.



- » The Jordanian army claimed to intercept [49 missiles and drones](#) that targeted their territory. Jordanian state media [reported](#) that an Iranian missile fell on a home in the capital, Amman, with footage published by Arabic outlets showing flames and smoke rising from the wreckage.
- » Syrian state media [reported](#) that at least four people were killed and several others wounded after an Iranian missile struck an industrial area in the southern Syrian city of al-Suwayda.

- » Kurdish security forces [said](#) the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq intercepted and downed several missiles and explosive-laden drones over the city of Erbil, with no casualties or material damage reported.
- » Qatar's defense minister told al Jazeera that an Iranian missile hit a long-range [early warning radar](#) in Qatar.
- Iran likely launched roughly 60 missiles at Israel across eleven waves of attacks, according to JINSA's initial assessment of reporting on missile launches. What appears to have been disproportionately larger missile attacks at the beginning of the day and in the late afternoon suggests that Iran may be interspersing larger waves with smaller attacks.
 - » While Israel's air defenses [intercepted](#) many of the projectiles, many others struck open areas. Interceptor fragments also fell, lightly [injuring](#) a 17-year-old boy in central Israel.
 - » Israeli police said they have received reports of fragments falling in several areas across Israel amid Iran's ballistic missile attacks.
 - A man in northern Israel was [injured](#) during Iran's ballistic missile attacks after falling into a hole caused by missile fragments. Medics treated others for minor injuries sustained while running to shelters.
 - » Israel's military also [worked](#) to intercept a drone infiltrating near the Dead Sea after Iranian officials claimed to have "launched dozens of attack drones at Israel."
- Following the initial U.S.-Israeli strikes, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen [announced](#) that their fighters would resume attacks on Israel and shipping in the Red Sea after halting external attacks in October when Israel and Hamas reached a ceasefire agreement.
- The IRGC also [threatened](#) vessels via radio transmissions, warning that "no ship is allowed to pass" through the Strait of Hormuz—a key international waterway.

4. International Response

- Saudi Arabia [condemned](#) Iran's attacks on the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Jordan, and stated that it would "provide all its resources to assist them in any measures they take."
- Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed held their first publicly reported [call](#) since a late-December dispute to discuss Iran's retaliatory strikes on Gulf states and condemn what they described as a "dangerous escalation that threatens the region's security and undermines its stability."
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer [assured](#) that "the United Kingdom played no role in these strikes, but we have long been clear: the regime in Iran is utterly abhorrent."
 - » However, he [claimed](#) that "our forces are active and British planes are in the sky today as part of coordinated regional defensive operations to protect our people, our interests, and our allies."
- Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, who has mediated the last three rounds of U.S.-Iran talks, [wrote](#) on X that he is "dismayed" by the joint operation against Iran's government, telling the United States, "this is not your war."
- European Council President [António Costa](#) and European Commission President [Ursula von der Leyen](#) described the strikes as "greatly concerning" and urged "all parties to exercise maximum restraint, to protect civilians, and to fully respect international law" in separate posts on X.

- French President Emmanuel Macron [called](#) for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council, stating that the escalation “must stop,” warning of “grave consequences for international peace and security,” and saying France stands ready to deploy necessary resources to protect its closest partners.
- Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney [said](#) that Canada “supports the United States acting to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to prevent its regime from further threatening international peace and security,” adding that “Iran is the principal source of instability and terror throughout the Middle East.”
- Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez [condemned](#) the “unilateral military action of the United States and Israel,” which he claims “represents an escalation and contributes to a more uncertain and hostile international order.” He also condemned Iran’s response, saying that “we cannot afford another prolonged and devastating war in the Middle East.”

5. JINSA Resources

- Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel, [Israel: America’s Third Aircraft Carrier in the Middle East](#), February 25, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel, [Iran’s Evolving Missile and Drone Threat](#), February 20, 2026
- Lt Gen Thomas Bergeson, USAF (ret.), LTG Karen Gibson, USA (ret.), and Lt Gen Sam Mundy, USMC (ret.), “[Any Action Against Iran Needs to Account for the Proxies](#),” *Breaking Defense*, February 19, 2026
- IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, U.S. VADM Robert Harward, USN (ret.), Lt Gen Charles Moore, USAF (ret.), and Blaise Misztal, “[Webinar: How Should the United States Respond to Iranian Protest?](#),” January 15, 2026
- Gen Charles Wald, USAF (ret.), VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.), and LTG Robert Ashley, USA (ret.), [Operation Rising Lion: Insights from Israel’s 12-Day War Against Iran](#), November 20, 2025
- Ari Cicurel, [Shielded by Fire: Middle East Air Defense During the June 2025 Israel-Iran War](#), August 21, 2025