



Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 3/4/26 Update

Ari Cicurel
Associate Director of Foreign Policy

Yoni Tobin
Senior Policy Analyst

Jonah Brody
Policy Analyst

Sarah Havdala
Policy Analyst

Jared Stone
Research Associate

With the United States and Israel launching a joint campaign—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 since [JINSA's last update](#) as of March 4 at 11:00 am ET.

1. Overview

- U.S. forces have struck nearly 2,000 Iranian regime targets and deployed over 2,000 munitions since the start of operations on February 28, destroying large portions of Iran's air defenses, launchers, drones, and more than 20 warships. In total, U.S. and Israeli strikes have preemptively eliminated an estimated 2,000-2,500 ballistic missiles.
- U.S. and Israeli forces continue degrading Iran's military capabilities, including:
 - » the U.S. Navy's torpedo sinking of the Iranian frigate *Dena*—the first such U.S. action since World War II; and
 - » an Israeli F-35's shootdown of an Iranian-operated Yak-130 over Tehran, marking the first confirmed air-to-air kill by an F-35 against a manned aircraft.
- The United States is reportedly exploring plans to arm Iranian Kurdish opposition forces to push Iranian regime forces out of Iran's Kurdish regions.
- Since March 3, Iran's missile campaign has continued to decrease and slow down. Its rate of fire has dropped 97 percent since the start of the conflict, from 504 missiles on February 28 to just 13 on March 4. The number of successful attacks has also declined, with hits falling 90 percent from 21 on February 28 to only two on March 4
 - » Iran has launched nearly 1,500 drones and roughly 800 ballistic missiles since the war began, with roughly 50 percent of total projectiles targeting the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.).
 - » Attacks targeting Iraq and Turkey suggest the regime seeks to deter reported U.S. plans to arm Kurdish groups.
- While some officials from Iran's Ministry of Intelligence have reportedly [signaled](#) an interest in starting ceasefire talks, Iranian attacks on regional targets continue.
- Iran's Assembly of Experts [elected](#) the late Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei son, Mojtaba, as the country's next Supreme Leader following intense pressure from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- Internally, Iranian security forces are [shooting](#) at civilians in their homes who are chanting in support of Iran's exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi.

- As the joint operations continue, Israel will [reopen](#) its airspace Wednesday night to safely bring back Israelis stranded worldwide.

2. U.S. and Israeli Operations

Day 5 of Operations: March 4

Iran

- According to media reports, U.S. and Israeli airstrikes have [preemptively destroyed](#) between 2,000 and 2,500 Iranian ballistic missiles.
- U.S. Central Command commander Admiral Brad Cooper [announced](#) that the U.S. military has deployed over 2,000 munitions to strike nearly 2,000 regime targets throughout Iran. He confirmed that U.S. forces had “severely degraded” and “destroyed” Iran’s air defenses, a large portion of the country’s ballistic missile stockpile, launchers, drones, and at least 17 warships, including a submarine.
 - » Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Dan Caine later [revealed](#) that the number of Iranian warships struck has risen to over 20.
 - Among these warships was the *Dena*, an Iranian frigate that had been stationed near Sri Lanka’s coast in the Indian Ocean. The United States confirmed that it [employed a torpedo](#) to sink the ship, the first such instance since World War II of the U.S. military doing so.
 - According to an infographic [released by the Pentagon](#), the United States succeeded, on March 3, to prevent any Iranian warships from operating in the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Strait of Hormuz.
- Amid Iranian efforts to constrict maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, President Donald Trump [announced](#) that “if necessary, the United States Navy will begin escorting tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, as soon as possible. No matter what, the United States will ensure the free flow of energy to the world.”
 - » President Trump is also planning for the U.S. government to provide insurance for commercial ships in the area amid a widespread reluctance by insurance firms to do so.
- U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth [announced](#) on March 4 that the United States is expected to have full control of Iranian airspace within seven days. He also stated that “the enemy can no longer shoot the volume of missiles they once did – not even close” and that “we can sustain this fight easily for as long as we need to.”
- The United States is reportedly [working](#) to arm Kurdish opposition forces as part of a broader effort to spark a popular uprising against the regime, with the Trump administration in discussions with Kurdish leaders in Iraq about providing military support and potentially enabling Kurdish fighters to tie down Iranian security forces along the Iran–Iraq border.
- The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is reportedly [planning to conduct](#) at least 1-2 weeks of additional bombing to target several thousand more Iranian regime targets. In addition, some Israeli defense officials believe that Gulf states will soon join the campaign.
- An Israeli F-35 fighter jet [shot down](#) an Iranian-operated, Russian-made Yak-130 jet over Tehran, marking the first time an F-35 has ever downed another manned aircraft.
- The Israeli Air Force (IAF) [killed](#) Daoud Ali Zada, commander of the IRGC Quds Force’s Lebanon Corps and a key expert on Hezbollah and proxy firepower capabilities, in an airstrike in Tehran.
- Strikes reportedly continued to target several sites throughout Iran, including:
 - » [Ballistic missile production and storage sites](#) in Isfahan;

- » The [IRGC Joint Staff headquarters](#) in Tehran;
 - » The [Qasr-e Firuzeh Basij base](#) in Tehran;
 - » The [Jask Port](#) in Hormozgan;
 - » An [IRGC garrison](#) in Sardasht;
 - » The East Azerbaijan [Provincial Police Command](#) in Tabriz,
 - » [Baneh military barracks](#) in Kurdistan;
 - » An [ammunition depot](#) in Kerman;
 - » [Basij paramilitary force and internal security force command centers](#);
 - » [Missile launchers](#);
 - » [Army logistics infrastructure](#);
 - » And [air defense systems](#) throughout the country.
- Israel's Mossad foreign intelligence agency [publicly announced](#) on social media that it is seeing signs "of the collapse of the regime."
 - Israeli media reported that a March 3 strike [targeting](#) the 88-member clerical body tasked with appointing Iran's next Supreme Leader did not actually strike the clerical body, but rather a small group of individuals merely tabulating the vote.
 - Following a previous strike on Iran's [Natanz nuclear facility](#), Iranian media reported on March 3 that no radioactive material had leaked from the site.
 - The IDF said Israel and the United States have [divided](#) strike responsibilities in the Iran campaign, with Israeli forces targeting ballistic missile launchers and regime sites in western and central Iran, while U.S. forces focus on southern launch sites and the Iranian Navy.
 - » Operations are supported by U.S. aerial refueling and joint coordination cells, with more than [1,000 American servicemembers](#) currently in Israel.

Lebanon

- The IDF [struck](#) over 250 Hezbollah targets throughout Lebanon over the past three days, with approximately 100 targets being struck in the past 24 hours.
- Israel [issued](#) widespread evacuation orders for all Lebanese civilians residing south of the Litani River on March 4.
- In a recent wave of strikes, Israel's air force [targeted](#) several underground Hezbollah weapons caches, command centers, and an intelligence collection site in Beirut.
- After the IDF [intercepted](#) a barrage of Hezbollah rockets barreling towards the Golan Heights, its forces successfully struck the rocket launcher used to carry out the attack minutes later.
- Israeli troops have also reportedly [entered](#) Khiam, a Lebanese town just less than four miles from the international border, according to Lebanese-state media.
- The IDF announced it has slightly [expanded](#) its security zone in southern Lebanon beyond the five positions it has held since the November 2024 ceasefire.

Day 4 of Operations: March 3

Iran

- President Trump [claimed](#) that the joint operations have "knocked out" the Iranian Navy, Air Force, and the regime's air defenses.

- IDF spokesman and former JINSA Visiting Fellow Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin announced that the Israeli Air Force had [destroyed](#) Iran's secret nuclear site, Minzadehei.
 - » According to Brig Gen Defrin, the site, which is located near Tehran, was built partially underground and was used to develop the regime's capabilities to build a nuclear weapon.
- Over the course of Operation Roaring Lion, Israeli forces have also [hit](#) approximately 300 Iranian missile launchers, according to the IDF.
- Israeli strikes reportedly continued to target several sites throughout Iran, including the [Mehrabad Airport](#) and [District 12 municipal building](#) in Tehran; an [IRGC Martyrs of West Azerbaijan Province base](#) in Urmia; and an [ammunition depot](#) in Dezful.

Lebanon

- The Israeli Air Force [carried out](#) another wave of strikes throughout Lebanon, successfully bombing around 60 Hezbollah targets.
- Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, an ally of Hezbollah, [announced](#) that an Israeli strike had destroyed the group's command center in the Lebanese city of Sidon.

U.S. Rationale and Policy Objectives

- U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio [clarified](#) that President Trump had already decided to strike Iran, saying "this had to happen anyway," and that his earlier remarks referred only to the timing of the operations amid concerns an Israeli strike could prompt Iranian retaliation against U.S. assets.
- President Trump [warned](#) that the "worst case" outcome in Iran would be a successor who is "as bad as" former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, cautioning that such a scenario could follow the current conflict.
- A senior Israeli official [said](#) Israel would not have attacked Iran without President Trump's approval, saying that coordination between the two countries was "very deep" and that "if Trump had not given the green light, we would not have attacked."
- For the first time, President Trump publicly [acknowledged](#) Iran's efforts to assassinate him in 2024, saying of the late Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a Sunday night interview with *ABC News*, "I got him before he got me."
- Additionally, Israeli airstrikes on March 4 [killed](#) Rahman Mokadam, the head of the IRGC special operations division and the individual responsible for overseeing Iran's plan to assassinate President Trump.

3. Iranian Operations

- Iranian attacks continue to target the Israeli homeland.
 - » Israel has [intercepted](#) at least 100 inbound Iranian drones since the war began, primarily by using fighter jets and helicopters.
 - » Shrapnel from a recent Iranian missile strike [fell](#) onto buildings and cars in Ramat Gan, setting vehicles ablaze and lightly injuring three people.
 - » The IDF [says](#) that three rockets were launched from Lebanon to Tel Aviv and the Haifa area in Hezbollah's first long-range attack of the current conflict.
- An Iranian ballistic missile was [downed](#) by NATO air defenses over the Mediterranean Sea while en route to Turkey. Iran's missile attack on Turkey marks the first time in the war that a NATO country was targeted by Iran.

- Iran has continued to launch attacks on various Gulf countries, Middle East nations, and commercial vessels in international waters. These include Iranian drone or missile strikes targeting:
 - » Iraq
 - Explosions were [reported](#) near Erbil International Airport in Iraq’s Kurdistan region, where U.S.-led coalition forces are based.
 - » Jordan
 - Iranian or proxy projectiles [have struck](#) multiple locations inside Jordan.
 - » Qatar
 - The Qatari Defense Ministry reported that an Iranian ballistic missile [hit](#) the U.S. military base at Al-Udeid, though it caused no casualties.
 - » Saudi Arabia
 - Saudi Arabia [shot down](#) two cruise missiles and, in a separate attack, nine drones near its capital Riyadh on March 4.
 - The Ras Tanura refinery was [targeted](#) in a drone attack as well.
 - » United Arab Emirates
 - The Emirati Foreign Ministry [stated](#) that the U.A.E. had been exposed to over 1,000 strikes from Iran in response to the U.S.-Israel attacks.
 - » Commercial vessels in international waters
 - A container ship in the Strait of Hormuz was [struck](#) by an unknown vessel, causing limited damage.
- Iran-backed groups carried out missile and drone attacks targeting Jordan and Iranian Kurdish opposition factions.
 - » On March 4, the militia Saraya Awliya al-Dam [said](#) it launched one-way attack drones into Jordan.
 - » On March 4, a drone strike [struck](#) a Kurdistan National Army (SMK) base—the armed wing of the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK)—in Duhok, Iraqi Kurdistan, resulting in one death.
 - » On the morning of March 3, the Iraqi Islamic Resistance militia [claimed](#) it carried out 27 drone and missile attacks against bases in Iraq and the Kurdistan region.
- Internally, Iranian security forces are [shooting](#) at civilians in their homes who are chanting in support of Iran’s exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi.

4. Casualties of Iranian Operations

- An Iranian drone attack killed six U.S. servicemembers at Port Shuaiba in Kuwait on March 1. On March 3, the Pentagon [released](#) the names of four of the six fallen soldiers:
 - » Capt. Cody Khork, 35;
 - » Sgt. 1st Class Nicole Amor, 39;
 - » Sgt. 1st Class Noah Tietjens, 42;
 - » Sgt. Declan Coady (posthumously promoted from specialist), 20.
- Since the [war’s outbreak](#), numerous other casualties have also been reported.
 - » As of current estimates, 13 Israelis have been [killed](#) and over 1,090 injured;

- » At least 18 people [were killed](#) in the U.A.E.;
- » Two [Kuwaiti navy sailors](#) and a [Kuwaiti civilian](#) have been killed, and over 32 Kuwaitis have [been injured](#);
- » Four people have been [killed](#) in Syria;
- » In Qatar, 16 people have been [wounded](#);
- » At least eight individuals were killed in [Lebanon](#);
- » Hundreds of people have been [killed](#) inside Iran, though it is believed that many were Iranian regime officials.
 - There are 742 [confirmed deaths](#) in Iran and over 971 people injured.
 - Over 1,000 IRGC and internal security officials have reportedly been [killed](#) in the war.

5. Threats and Condemnation from Iranian Officials

- Ebrahim Jabbari, an IRGC general, [warned](#) that if U.S.-Israeli attacks continue, Tehran will carry out reprisals against “all economic centers” in the Middle East, including oil infrastructure.
- As commercial ships [continue avoiding](#) the vital maritime chokepoint Strait of Hormuz, the IRGC Navy [declared](#) on March 4 that the strait is under Iran’s “complete control.” In response, President Trump announced that the U.S. Navy was willing to escort oil tankers through the strait.

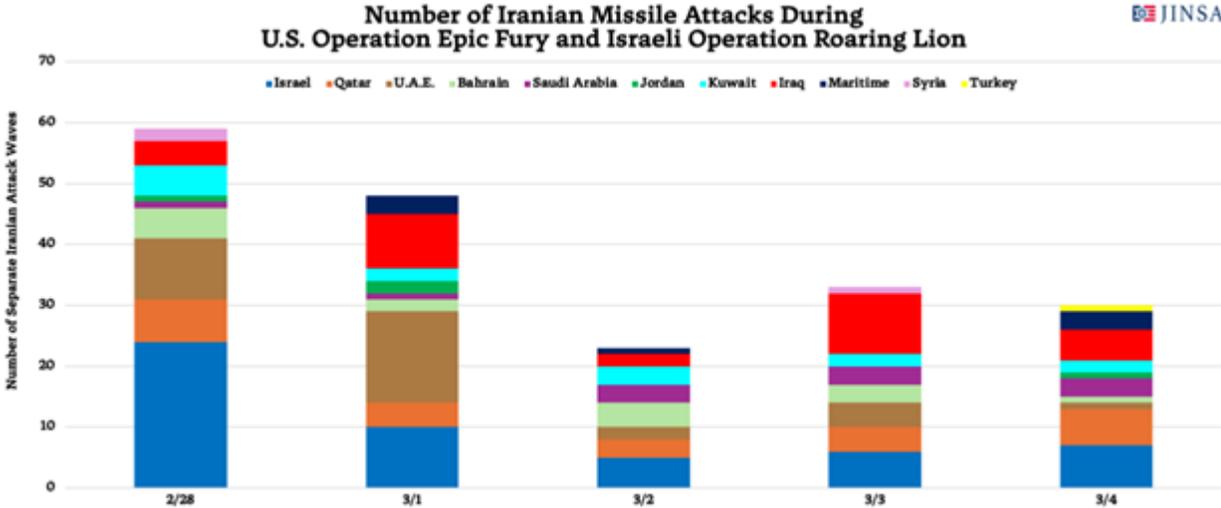
6. International Response

- President Donald Trump [said](#) the United States would cut off all trade with Spain after Madrid refused to allow U.S. forces to use its bases for missions linked to strikes on Iran, stating he had instructed Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to “cut off all dealings” with the European country.
- Following media reports that the Gulf country was considering military strikes against Iran, the U.A.E.’s state media outlet [announced](#) that “it has not taken any decision to alter its defensive posture.”
- German Chancellor Friedrich Merz [questioned](#) whether U.S.-Israeli strikes would trigger political change in Iran, warning after meeting President Trump in Washington that the plan “is not without risk.”
- French President Emmanuel Macron [ordered](#) the aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle*, its air wing, and its accompanying frigate escort to deploy to the Mediterranean.
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer [announced](#) that the United Kingdom is sending helicopters equipped with counter-drone capabilities to Cyprus and deploying the air defense destroyer HMS *Dragon* to the region.
- The Lebanese Armed Forces reportedly [arrested](#) 12 armed Hezbollah members at a checkpoint in the direction of southern Lebanon.
- Exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi [called](#) for national unity among Iran’s ethnic minorities, stating that through “national unity and shared resolve, a bright future awaits you and every Iranian.”
- Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan [said](#) Iran’s strategy of attacking Gulf states in retaliation for U.S.-Israeli strikes is an “incredibly wrong strategy” that increases regional instability.

- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi [told](#) Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar that Beijing opposes U.S.-Israeli military strikes on Iran and demands an immediate ceasefire, stating that “force cannot truly solve problems” and that military power’s real value lies “in preventing war.”
- Syria has [sent](#) thousands of troops to its border with Lebanon to stave off Hezbollah and other Iranian terrorist influences, with Syrian officers saying that the operation began in February but has accelerated in recent days.
- Saudi Arabia has [vowed](#) to take all necessary measures to protect its residents, citizens, and territory, the state news agency reports.
- Mustafa Hijri, the leader of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI), an Iranian Kurdish opposition group, [called](#) on Iranian soldiers and security personnel—particularly in Kurdistan—to abandon their posts in the IRGC and other regime forces, return to their families, and withdraw support for what he described as the regime’s repressive military apparatus.
- X—the social media platform—[announced](#) it will crack down on AI-generated war footage, suspending users from its creator revenue program if they post unlabeled AI videos of armed conflict, according to head of product Nikita Bier.

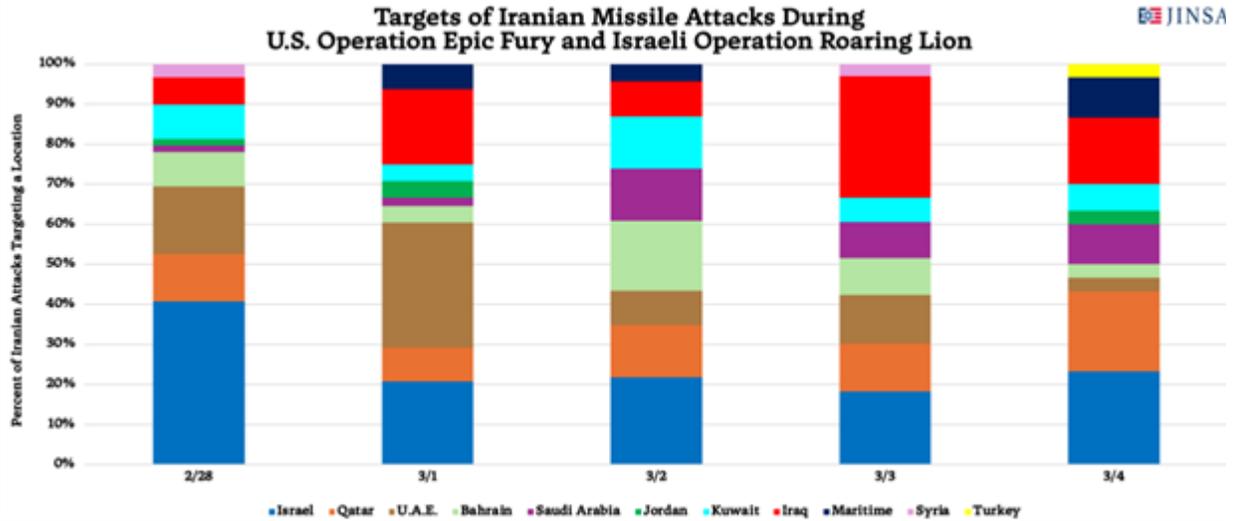
7. Charts and Trends

- Overall, Iranian offensive fire has continued its sharp decline with occasional upticks as Iran tries to hit targets with occasional attacks of roughly one to three missiles. On March 4, Iran fired nine missiles overnight, a 200 percent increase from the three missiles fired during the late evening on March 3. However, fire then fell 67 percent to three missiles in the morning, followed by another 67 percent decrease to one missile in the afternoon, and no missiles that evening.

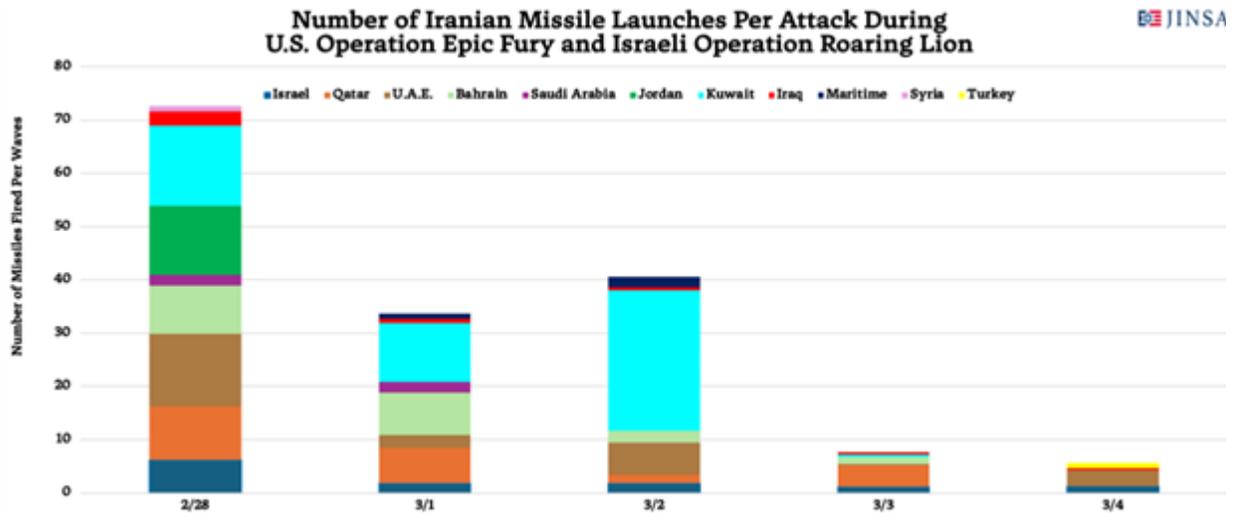


- Since the afternoon of March 3, Iran continued shifting its targeting patterns, with an increased focus on Israel and Kurdish groups in Iraq.
 - » Iranian attacks targeting Israel rose from roughly 18 percent on March 3 to 25 percent on March 4.
 - » The percentage of attacks targeting the U.A.E. continued its decline from a peak of 31 percent on March 1 to 12 percent on March 3 and just four percent on March 4, as Iran increasingly dispersed fire toward Iraq, maritime targets, and other Gulf states.

- » Iran's increased targeting of Iraq on March 3 and March 4, with 10 and five attacks already, respectively, and the Iranian missile that threatened Turkey suggest an effort to strike at U.S. forces and Kurdish groups amid reports that the United States may be preparing to arm them.

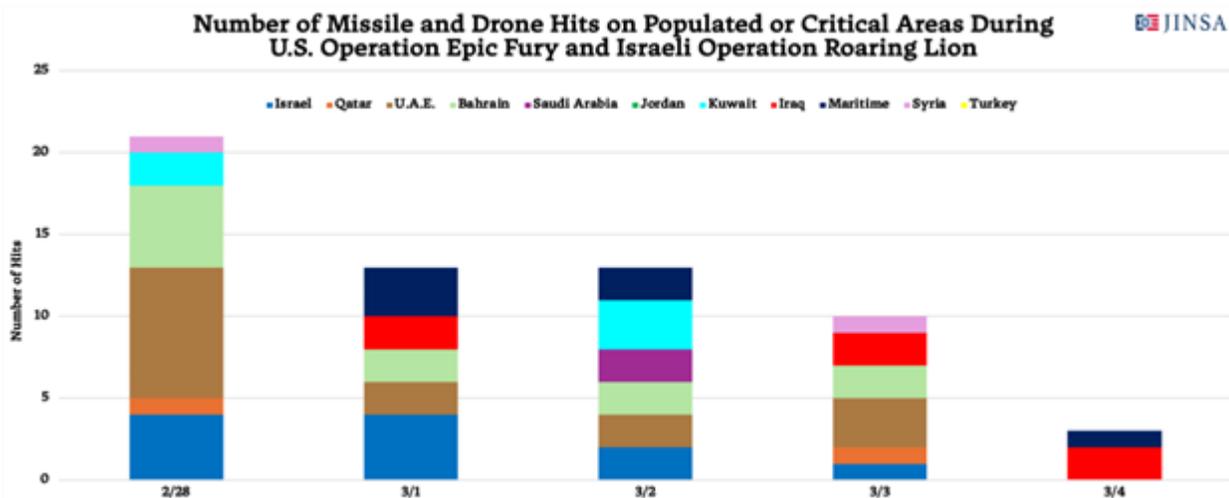


- Iran has also continued firing 50 percent fewer missiles per attack, now averaging less than one missile per attack. This marked a 94 percent decline in missiles per attack that reflects both the degradation of Iran's launcher capacity and a shift toward sporadic fire rather than coordinated barrages.
 - » On March 4, Iran averaged roughly one missile per attack against Israel, a 79 percent decline from the approximately six per attack on February 28. Against the U.A.E., Iran averaged 3 missiles per attack on March 4, a 78 percent decline from roughly 14 it fired per attack on February 28.



- Since the afternoon of March 3, the number of Iranian projectiles successfully hitting targets continued to decline, falling 80 percent from 10 hits on March 3 to just two hits on March 4. The overall successful hit rate fell from 30 percent on March 3 to 15 percent on March 4, reflecting both improved interception by regional air defenses and Iran's shift toward smaller, less coordinated attack waves.

- » Most successful strikes continue to appear to have been from drone attacks, with Gulf nations intercepting the majority of ballistic missiles Iran has fired.



8. JINSA Resources

- Gen. Frank McKenzie, USMC (ret.), IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, IDF MG (ret.) Oded Bassiuk, and John Hannah, [“Webinar: Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion,”](#) March 1, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe and Ari Cicurel, [U.S.-Israel Joint Operations Against Iran’s Regime](#), February 28, 2026
- Blaise Misztal, Giran Ozcan, and Jonah Brody, [The Rise of Iran’s Kurdish Coalition](#), February 27, 2026
- 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
- Jonathan Ruhe and Yoni Tobin, [“Iran Has Teeth. Can America Extract Them?”](#), *JNS*, February 12, 2026
- IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, VADM Robert Harward, USN (ret.), Lt Gen Charles Moore, USAF (ret.), and Blaise Misztal, [“Webinar: How Should the United States Respond to Iranian Protests?”](#), 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