



Operations Epic Fury and Roaring Lion: 3/19/26 Update

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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 19 at 11:00 am ET.

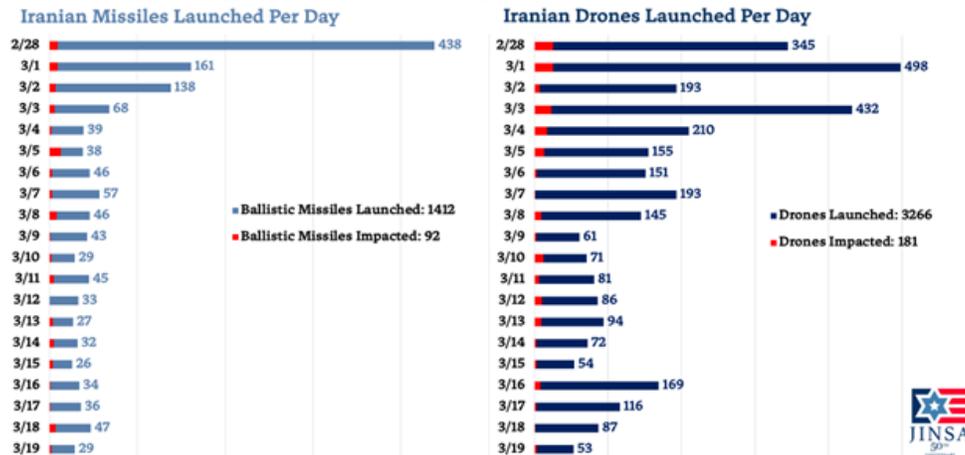
1. Overview

- During a March 19 press briefing, U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth [announced](#) that the United States is “winning decisively and on our terms” against Iran.
 - » Specifically, Secretary Hegseth cited Pentagon data showing that “ballistic missile attacks against our forces are down 90 percent since the start of the conflict. Same with one-way attack UAVs, down 90 percent.” He said America’s military “damaged or sunk over 120 of [Iran’s] navy ships,” and that “their submarines—they once had 11—are gone.”
 - » In the briefing, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine stated, “U.S. CENTCOM [Central Command] remains on plan to achieve our military objectives, and remains unrelenting in our pursuit of Iranian missile capabilities, UAV capabilities, and their navy ... and their industrial base.”
- U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard [testified](#) before the Senate Intelligence Committee on March 18 that the regime has been “largely degraded due to attacks on its leadership and military capabilities,” adding that Iran’s “conventional military power projection capabilities have been largely destroyed.”
 - » Gabbard also stated that “Iran’s strategic position has been significantly degraded,” and that “even if the regime remains intact, the U.S. IC [intelligence community] assesses that internal tensions are likely to increase as Iran’s economy worsens.”
 - » In subsequent testimony before the Senate on March 19, Gabbard [stated](#) that “the objectives that have been laid out by [President Donald Trump] are different from the objectives that have been laid out by the Israeli government.”
 - She added, “We can see through the operations that the Israeli government has been focused on disabling the Iranian leadership. The President has stated that his objectives are to destroy Iran’s ballistic missiles launching capability, their ballistic missile production capability, and their navy.”
- President Trump [said](#) in a March 18 statement that Israeli strikes that day targeting Iran’s South Pars natural gas field were not coordinated with the United States. He also claimed

that “no more attacks will be made by Israel pertaining to this extremely important and valuable South Pars Field unless Iran unwisely decides to attack a very innocent—in this case—Qatar.”

- » Israel’s *Maariv* outlet cited defense officials as [saying](#), contrary to President Trump’s claims, that the strike was indeed coordinated with the U.S. Air Force.
- » President Trump also [warned](#) that the U.S. military would strike Iran’s South Pars Field gas site in its entirety with “strength and power that Iran has never seen” if Iran again targets Qatar’s Ras Laffan gas facilities, as it has in recent days.
- » President Trump’s March 18 statement, which also accused Israel of “violently lash[ing] out” in the strike “out of anger,” came several hours after Barak Ravid of *Axios* [reported](#) that President Trump remains very aligned—even more so than his top aides—with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s war objectives.
- The Pentagon is [seeking](#) White House approval of a request to Congress for additional funding of over \$200 billion to fund the Iran war.
 - » One U.S. official told the *Washington Post* that Congress is unlikely to approve the funding request.
- The Israeli Air Force has [struck](#) over 2,600 crucial components of Iran’s missile program, Israel’s *Walla News* reported on March 19. These include specialized components that cannot be replaced within Iran, and other infrastructure, such as planetary mixers, that are indispensable to producing and launching missiles.
- Global energy prices continue to [rise rapidly](#) following Iran’s March 18 missile attacks on Qatar’s Ras Laffan Industrial City, which contains several energy sites, including the world’s largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facility. According to the CEO of Qatari state-run Qatar Energy, Saad al-Kaabi, Iran’s March 18 attacks have [knocked out](#) an estimated 17 percent of Qatar’s LNG export capability.
 - » Reuters [reported](#), citing Qatar Energy CEO Al-Kaabi, that “two of Qatar’s 14 LNG trains and one of its two gas-to-liquids (GTL) facilities were damaged,” knocking out 12.8 million tons per year of LNG for at least 3-5 years. Qatar has already declared *force majeure* on contracts with Belgium, Italy, China, South Korea.
 - » On Thursday morning, the price of Brent crude per barrel briefly [surpassed](#) \$119 before lowering to \$110.80. West Texas Intermediate crude prices [rose](#) to above \$97 per barrel. Energy futures will likely be impacted by al-Kaabi’s remarks, too.
 - » Iran has also [attacked](#) energy installations in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) since the morning of March 18 local time, causing the Emirati government to temporarily shut down two major energy facilities.
 - » U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent [stated](#) on March 19 that the United States might lift sanctions on Iranian oil stranded in the Gulf.
- Iran continues to launch far fewer missiles than it did during the opening days of the war, but it has escalated its attacks against Saudi Arabia, particularly through drones, and adapted to rely heavily upon cluster munitions against Israel in an effort to pressure the United States, Israel, and the Gulf nations to end the war.
 - » Iranian missile fire increased 31 percent on March 18, with 47 missiles fired, up from 36 on March 17. So far on March 19, Iran has already fired 29 missiles.
 - » Iran has launched roughly 3,277 drones, 1,412 ballistic missiles, and 28 cruise missiles since the war began.
 - » By using cluster munitions, Iran has increased its hit rates against Israel. The six hits against Israel on March 18 surpassed any other day during the war.

- » The improved success of Iranian attacks continues. So far on March 19, the eight total hits Iran achieved has already exceeded the seven total hits on March 18.



2. U.S. and Israeli Operations

- In a Pentagon briefing, U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth [commended](#) U.S.-Israel cooperation, remarking that Israel has been “an incredible and capable partner” since the start of the joint operations. He also praised multiple Gulf countries that have “stepped up incredibly.” Hegseth added that Iran’s attacks on civilian infrastructure drew countries decisively into America’s orbit.
 - » Secretary Hegseth [noted](#) that the United States has hit more than 7,000 targets in Iran, adding that the strikes featured “overwhelming force applied with precision.” He stated that the United States will conduct “the largest strike package yet” today.
 - » Secretary Hegseth [hailed](#) Operation Epic Fury, saying that the United States is “winning decisively and on our terms.” He remarked that the operation is “laser-focused.”
 - » According to Secretary Hegseth, the United States is “[taking countermeasures](#)” to circumvent the regime-imposed internet blackout in Iran, to communicate both with the Iranian people and “certain audiences.”
- Multiple sources [reported](#) that Israel’s strikes on the South Pars gas field in Iran were coordinated with the United States.
 - » Secretary Hegseth also [noted](#) that “Iran has weaponized energy for decades” and that Israeli strikes on the gas field were a “warning” for Iran.
- The Israeli Air Force has [eliminated](#) over 2,600 critical components of Iran’s missile program throughout the war, according to sources who spoke with Israel’s *Walla News*, including various highly technical and complex items that cannot be easily replaced.

Days 19 and 20 of Operations: March 18–19

Iran

- Iranian state media [reported](#) that a U.S.-Israeli strike killed Afshin Naghshbandi, Iran’s General Staff of the Armed Forces representative to the Basij.
- Throughout March 18, Israel’s military [struck](#) over 200 regime sites in Iran, targeting weapons storage and production facilities, air defense systems, and ballistic missile and drone launch sites, as well as the [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ \(IRGC\) Fath garrison](#) in Fardis.
 - » Israel’s air force also [attacked](#) Sanandaj Airport, destroying an IRGC MI-17 helicopter.

- The Israeli military [struck](#) several Iranian Naval targets on the Caspian Sea coast port city of Bandar Anzali, the first confirmed Israeli strikes in this region during Operation Roaring Lion.
 - » According to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Israel [bombed](#) an Iranian Navy corvette, four missile boats, a command center, a shipyard, and auxiliary ships and guard boats.

Lebanon

- Israel's ground forces [killed](#) over 20 Hezbollah fighters in southern Lebanon, including militants attempting to fire anti-tank missiles at Israeli troops.
 - » During the raid, Israeli forces also [discovered](#) stashes of anti-tank missiles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG).
- The Israeli Air Force [struck](#) two bridges over the Litani River that Hezbollah used to transport fighters and weapons between the country's north and south.
- The IDF [confirmed](#) that it had killed Hassan Ali Marwan, the commander of the Imam Hossein Division—an Iranian militia linked to Hezbollah—on March 17 in an airstrike on Beirut.

U.S. and Israeli Rationale and Policy Objectives

United States

- In a statement for a Senate Intelligence Committee Hearing, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard [wrote](#) that Iran has not taken steps to reconstitute its enrichment program since the 12-Day War, but [stated](#) during the hearing, "Iran maintained the intention to rebuild and to continue to grow their nuclear enrichment."
- Secretary Hegseth [confirmed](#) Operation Epic Fury's objectives in a press conference on March 19: "destroy missiles, launchers, and Iran's defense industrial base so they cannot rebuild. Destroy their navy, and [ensure] Iran never gets a nuclear weapon."
- Secretary Hegseth [stated](#) on March 19 that the Iranian regime is "a direct threat to America, to freedom and to civilization" and [highlighted](#) Iran's assistance to proxies that have killed Americans.
 - » Referencing dozens of Iran-backed attacks on U.S. troops in the Iraq War, Secretary Hegseth [noted](#) Iran was "passing technology and wherewithal and personnel into Iraq to kill Americans, specifically. I know the number [killed] is said to be 600. A lot of us think it's higher. ... They have been at war with us, whether we acknowledge it or not, for 47 years."

Israel

- According to Israel's *Channel 12*, the Israeli strike on March 18 on Iran's South Pars gas field was intended to [convey](#) a message from President Trump: if Iran does not open the Strait of Hormuz, including removing any mines, its energy facilities will be destroyed.

3. Iranian Operations

- U.S. Central Command's spokesman, Navy Capt. Tim Hawkins, [announced](#) that a U.S. F-35 made an emergency landing after "flying a combat mission over Iran."
 - » Two unnamed sources familiar with the matter suggested the aircraft was hit by Iranian fire, but Capt. Hawkins claimed that "the incident is under investigation."
- Iran and Hezbollah continue to target Israel with an array of drone, missile, and rocket attacks. Over the past 24 hours:

- » Iran [fired](#) ballistic missiles carrying cluster bombs on their warheads at central Israel, killing a foreign worker in Moshav Adanim and four women in the Palestinian village of Beit Awwa. The attack also injured nine other people.
- » Hezbollah [launched](#) several rockets targeting northern and central Israel. No injuries were reported.
- » An Iranian missile [impacted](#) the Haifa Oil Refinery. No injuries were reported.
- Arab countries continue to come under Iranian fire. Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the U.A.E. have each reported Iranian attacks on their country over the past day:
 - » Iraq:
 - Kirkuk Air Base was [struck](#) by an unspecified projectile, and two Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs bases, belonging to the Kurdistan Regional Government, were [targeted](#) by drones, resulting in three injured Iraqi Kurdish fighters.
 - Infrastructure in Koya belonging to the Iranian Kurdish opposition Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) was reportedly [targeted](#) in nine separate ballistic missile and drone salvos.
 - » Kuwait:
 - Two separate drone attacks [targeted](#) operational units at Kuwait's Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries, sparking fires at both facilities but causing no injuries.
 - » Qatar:
 - Two separate Iranian missile attacks [caused](#) extensive structural damage and a fire, now reported to have been extinguished, at Ras Laffan Industrial City, home to the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facility.
 - » Saudi Arabia:
 - So far today, Saudi Arabia [has intercepted](#) roughly 28 drones and three ballistic missiles; of these, one drone [struck](#) Saudi Aramco's SAMREF refinery in the Red Sea port of Yanbu, causing minimal damage, and one ballistic missile targeting Yanbu was [intercepted](#).
 - A Patriot air defense system in Saudi Arabia operated by members of the Greek military also [shot down](#) Iranian missiles.
 - Oil loadings transferred to Yanbu [have restarted](#) after a short pause on Thursday.
 - Yesterday, Saudi Arabia [intercepted](#) and destroyed four missiles launched toward Riyadh.
 - Shrapnel [fell](#) into residential areas in the country's capital, injuring four.
 - » U.A.E.:
 - The U.A.E. [intercepted](#) seven ballistic missiles and 15 Iranian drones.
 - Missile strikes also [targeted](#) the U.A.E.'s Habshan gas facility and Bab oil field, with debris falling near Habshan following a missile interception.
- Two vessels were [struck](#) by unknown projectiles in the Persian Gulf overnight, with one hit off the coast of Qatar and another off the coast of the U.A.E. All crew aboard both vessels were reported safe.
- Iran-backed Kataib Hezbollah [announced](#) a five-day pause in attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, contingent on:

- » Israel halting strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs;
- » An end to strikes on residential areas in Iraq; and
- » The withdrawal of American intelligence officers from field positions, to remain inside the U.S. embassy in Baghdad.
- Two men appeared in a London court who were [charged](#) with conducting surveillance on behalf of Iranian intelligence services over a five-week period last summer. Their targets reportedly included:
 - » The Israeli Embassy;
 - » The Israeli consulate;
 - » London's Bevis Marks Synagogue;
 - » A Jewish community center; and
 - » A Jewish security organization.

4. Estimated Casualties of Iranian Operations

- Thirteen U.S. service members have died during Operation Epic Fury.
 - » An Iranian drone attack [killed](#) six U.S. servicemembers at Port Shuaiba in Kuwait on March 1: Maj. Jeffrey O'Brien, 45; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Marzan, 54; Capt. Cody Khork, 35; Sgt. 1st Class Nicole Amor, 39; Sgt. 1st Class Noah Tietjens, 42; and Sgt. Declan Coady (posthumously promoted from specialist), 20.
 - » A U.S. servicemember, Sgt. Benjamin Pennington, 26, was [killed](#) during a March 8 Iranian attack targeting U.S. troops at the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.
 - » Six U.S. servicemembers were [killed](#) when a KC-135 aerial refueling aircraft crashed over western Iraq on March 12: Major John A. Klinner, 33; Captain Ariana G. Savino, 31; Technical Sergeant Ashle B. Pruitt, 34; Captain Seth R. Koval, 38; Captain Curtis J. Angst, 30; and Technical Sergeant Tyler H. Simmons, 28.
- At least 200 members of the U.S. military have been [injured](#) thus far in the war, 10 of whom have been "seriously wounded," according to CENTCOM's Capt. Tim Hawkins.
- Since the war's outbreak, numerous other casualties have been reported:
 - » 24 people [have been killed](#) in Israel, while over 3,924 people have been [hospitalized](#).
 - Two Israeli soldiers have been [killed](#) in southern Lebanon.
 - In the past day, a foreign worker in Moshav Adanim and four Palestinian women were [killed](#) by Iranian missile fire.
 - » In the U.A.E., eight people have [been killed](#), and at least 157 have been [injured](#).
 - » Two [Kuwaiti navy sailors](#), two [interior ministry officers](#), and a [Kuwaiti civilian](#) have been killed, over 70 Kuwaiti military personnel have [been injured](#), and two medical staff have been [wounded](#).
 - » Four people have been [killed](#) in Syria, and several have been [injured](#).
 - » Two foreign nationals have been [killed](#) in Saudi Arabia, and 16 others have [been injured](#).
 - » In Qatar, around 20 people have been [wounded](#).
 - » In Oman, at least [three people](#) have been killed, and at least 10 people have been [wounded](#).
 - » In Bahrain, two people have [been killed](#), and 35 people have [been injured](#).

- » At least 27 [people have been killed](#) in Iraq, including an [Iraqi security officer](#) and [several fighters](#) in Iran-backed militias. A woman was [killed](#) after being hit by rocket shrapnel, and an airport employee [was wounded](#) in Iraqi Kurdistan. An Indian national was [killed](#) following a strike on an oil tanker in Iraqi waters. A French soldier was [killed](#) in a drone strike on a military base in Iraqi Kurdistan.
- » In Azerbaijan, four civilians have been [injured](#).
- » In Lebanon, at least 912 people have been [killed](#), and more than 2,432 have been wounded—figures that do not distinguish between Hezbollah operatives and civilians.
- » In Iran, at least 3,100 people, including at least 1,130 military personnel, have been [killed](#). However, *Iran International* suggests at least 5,000 military personnel have been [killed](#), with over 15,000 wounded.

5. Threats, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian Officials

- Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [warned](#) that U.S. and Israeli strikes targeting Iran’s energy facilities “will complicate the situation and may lead to uncontrollable repercussions whose effects extend to engulf the entire world.”
- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [called](#) his counterparts in Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey, urging “vigilance and coordination” following U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iranian energy infrastructure, which Iran characterized as a deliberate escalation.
- The IRGC [warned](#) it would conduct “further attacks” on Gulf states’ oil and gas infrastructure—which it characterized as American interests—if Iran’s own energy facilities are again attacked.

6. International Response

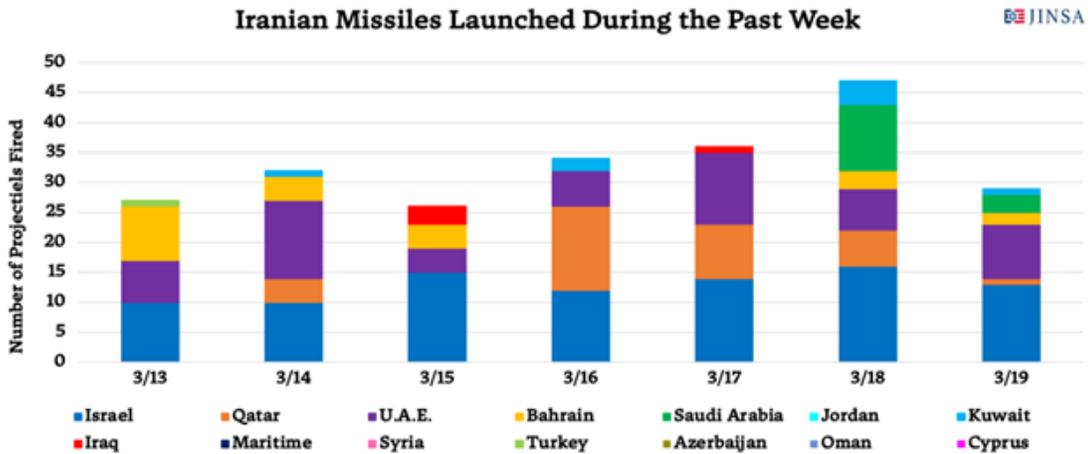
- In a joint statement, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Japan [condemned](#) Iran’s attacks on shipping vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and civilian infrastructure and affirmed their “readiness to contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait.”
 - » In addition to the International Energy Agency deciding member states would release strategic petroleum reserves, the European countries and Japan agreed to “take other steps to stabilize energy markets, including working with certain producing nations to increase output.”
 - » These states also plan to provide assistance to “most affected nations, including through the United Nations and the IFIs (International Financial Institutions).”
- Bahrain, Japan, Panama, Singapore, and the U.A.E. [submitted](#) a proposal, with U.S. support, to the United Nations’ International Maritime Organization (IMO) recommending that a maritime corridor be established to allow stranded vessels to leave the Gulf.
- The Qatari Foreign Ministry [condemned](#) Iran’s attacks targeting Ras Laffan Industrial City, calling them “a flagrant violation” of Qatari sovereignty, “and a direct threat” to Qatar’s national security.
 - » In response to the attack, Qatar [ordered](#) Iran’s military and security attachés to Doha, as well as their staff, to depart the Gulf country, labeling them as *personae non gratae*.
- The U.A.E. [halted](#) operations at its Habshan gas facility after the site and the country’s Bab oil field were both targeted in missile strikes.
- Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan [stated](#) that Saudi Arabia “reserve[s] the right to take military actions if deemed necessary.” He [noted](#) that Saudi Arabia and its partners “have very significant capacities and capabilities that they could bring to bear should they choose to do so.”

» Foreign Minister bin Farhan also [remarked](#) that any trust between Saudi Arabia and Iran is now “completely shattered.”

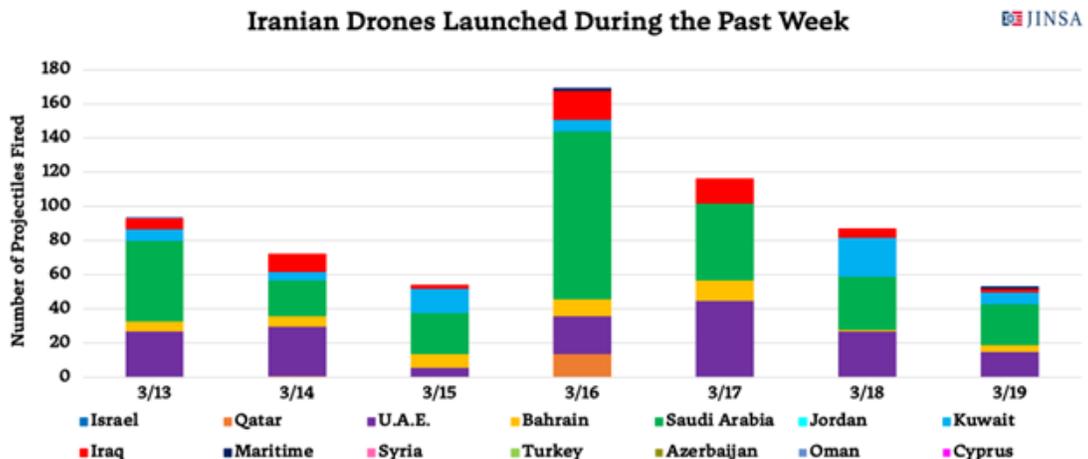
- Kuwait [arrested](#) a Hezbollah-linked cell that planned to attack critical infrastructure.
- Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Lin Jian [condemned](#) the Israeli assassination of Ali Larijani, the former Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, claiming that China has “always opposed the use of force in international relations” and that “the acts of killing Iranian state leaders and attacking civilian targets are even more unacceptable.”

7. Charts and Trends

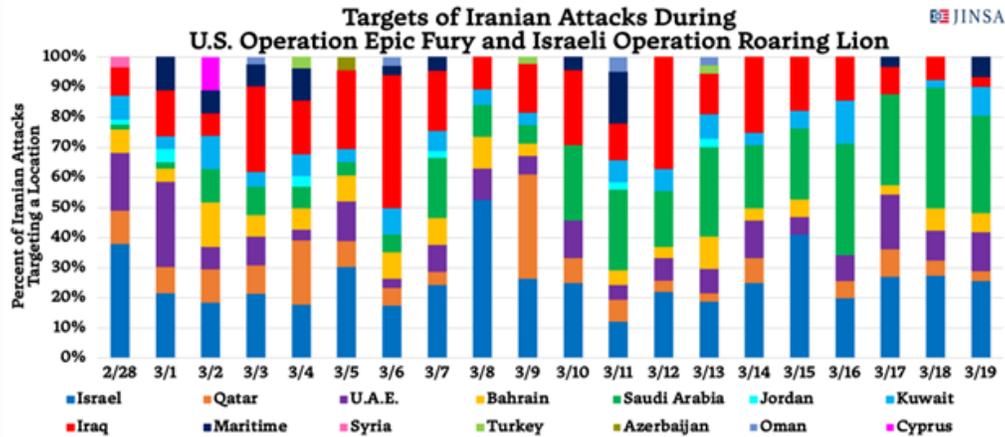
- Iranian missile fire increased on March 18, with 47 missiles fired, a 31 percent increase from 36 fired on March 17. So far on March 19, Iran has already launched 26 missiles. Iran has already launched 13 ballistic missiles at Israel on March 19, including six attack waves overnight during a four-hour period.



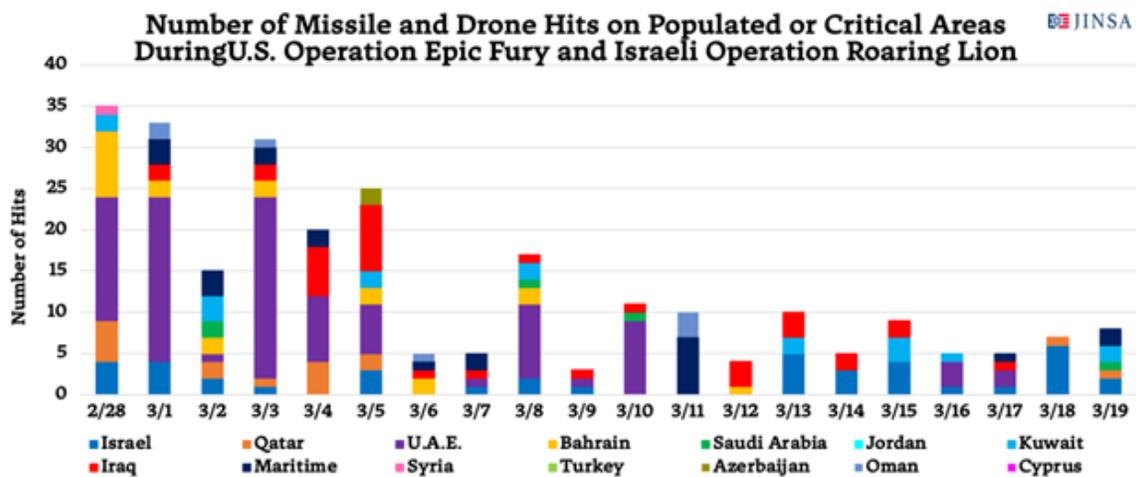
- On March 18, Iran sharply escalated drone attacks against Kuwait, launching 23 drones after launching none on March 17. So far on March 19, Iran has launched 18 drones against Kuwait.
- » Iran continued a trend of reduced drone fire against Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E., launching 31 and 27 drones respectively on March 18, down from 45 each on March 17. So far on March 19, Iran has launched 24 drones against Saudi Arabia and 15 against the U.A.E.



- Iran has continued its focus on targeting Saudi Arabia, with 32 percent of attacks so far on March 19 targeting Saudi Arabia and 40 percent on March 18.



- Through its use of ballistic missiles carrying cluster warheads that disperse submunitions at high altitudes, Iran achieved more hits against Israel on March 18 than on any other day of the war, with six hits in Israel. So far on March 19, Iran has already hit eight targets, exceeding the seven total hits it achieved on March 18, but against more dispersed sites, with hits striking Israel, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and maritime vessels.



8. JINSA Resources

- Giran Ozcan and Jonah Brody, [Iran's Kurdish Coalition and the Future of the Opposition](#), March 18, 2026
- Hussein Mansour, [If Tehran Falls: How Iran's Collapse Reshuffles Arab Gulf Relations](#), March 16
- Infographic: [Operation Epic Fury—What is the Aim Point?](#), March 13, 2026
- VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.), IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, and Jonathan Ruhe, ["Webinar: Washington and Jerusalem's Next Moves,"](#) March 12, 2026
- Meriem Mokhtari, [How the Muslim Brotherhood Funds Iran's Proxies](#), March 11, 2026
- Robert McNally and Michael Makovsky, PhD, ["Webinar: Iran War Energy Disruption: Short-Term or Here To Stay?"](#) March 10, 2026
- Blaise Misztal, [Principles for U.S.-Kurdish Partnership](#), March 6, 2026

- Hussein Mansour, [Gulf Situation Assessment: Iran's Attacks on Arab States Will Backfire](#), March 5, 2026
- Ari Cicurel, [Iran's Missile Fire Has Almost Run Out](#), March 5, 2026
- Blaise Misztal, [Iran is Not Iraq](#), March 4, 2026
- Giran Ozcan and Jonah Brody, [The Kurdish Moment in Iran](#), March 4, 2026
- 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