

# INSIGHT REPORT

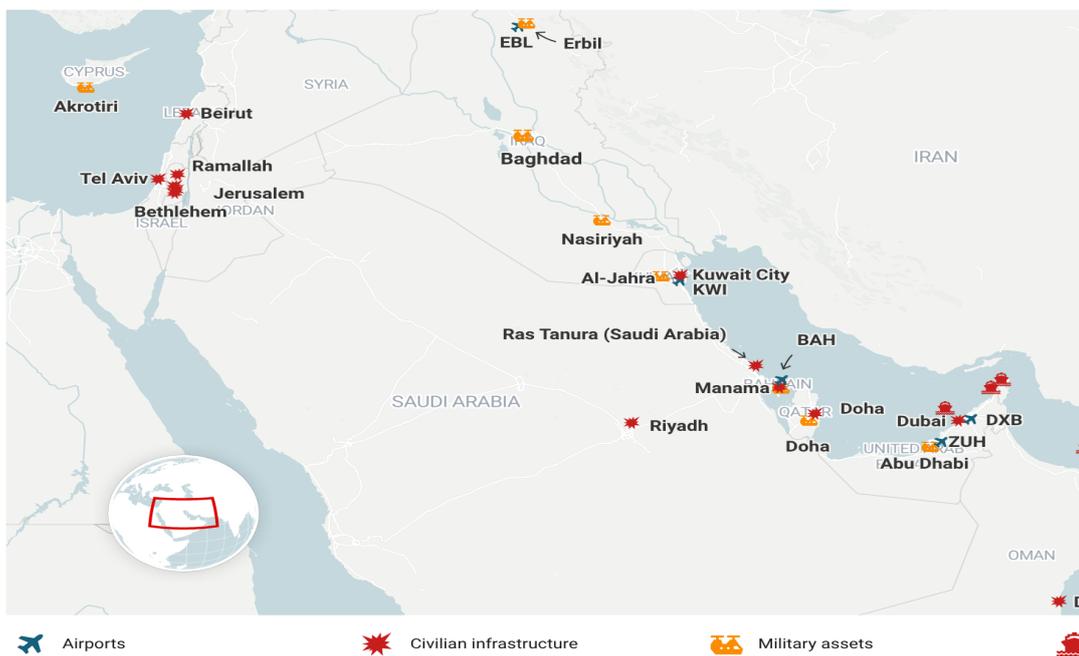
## US-Israel military operations against Iran, regional spillover forecast

MARCH 2026

### Overview

The situation around the US-Israeli operation against Iran continues to evolve and expand rapidly. This report provides our assessment of the likely trajectory of the conflict, and the impact on the Gulf Arab states and other countries across the wider region in the short-to-medium term.

**Areas impacted by Iranian and proxy aerial strikes across the region since**



Source: International SOS • Created with Datawrapper

## Forecast: Early-to-mid-March (seven-to-ten days from publication)

### Israel-US military operations against Iran

Both Israel and the US are likely to continue a sustained military campaign against Iran. International diplomatic attempts to mediate a ceasefire could occur during this period but are unlikely to be successful. The current rhetoric and operational tempo indicate no planned pause or slowdown until the countries achieve a meaningful degradation of Iranian military and nuclear capabilities, and a weakening of its security and government apparatus.

### Iran

A decrease in Iran's military capabilities is likely, reflected by a reduction in the intensity and frequency of its retaliatory attacks across the region. To compensate for that, Iran will likely shift toward fewer, but more concentrated and co-ordinated barrages designed to deliver symbolic and strategic impact rather than continued high volume across high- and low-value targets throughout multiple countries.

A decrease in intensity of Iran's retaliation will not necessarily entail a decrease in the scope of its attacks. Facing an existential threat, Iran will likely seek to maintain a wide range of targets. During this period, military, diplomatic and civilian infrastructure across the region will be at risk of further targeted attacks.

### Strait of Hormuz

Iran will continue to leverage its strategic advantage in the Strait of Hormuz to put pressure on the US, Israel and the broader region for at least as long as military operations against its interests persist. Due to its geographical proximity, it will be able to disrupt maritime traffic at relatively low military effort and cost. This will likely be countered by US-led efforts to resume and protect traffic through the strait.

### Israel-Hizbullah conflict

Israeli aerial strikes against Hizbullah will continue across urban centres in Lebanon. These will be both a response to attacks against Israel by Hizbullah and to further degrade the group's capabilities. Israeli operations will likely be broader in scale than previous targeted strikes conducted since the implementation of the ceasefire and thus will carry an increased risk of damage and casualties. Israel will also likely continue to deploy additional troops into southern Lebanon. Hizbullah's likely response will be further attempted attacks, focusing on northern Israel.

### Regional spillover of hostilities

As conflict protracts into the second week, countries that have already been systematically targeted by Iran will remain exposed to a risk of further attacks. A majority of the attacks will likely be intercepted. These countries include Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Other countries could become entangled in the conflict. For some, this may be because their interests and nationals in the region have become exposed to a risk of attacks. For others, because their interests have been targeted, either intentionally or as a result of a miscalculation. This could

include regional actors, such as Azerbaijan, Cyprus or Turkey, or other European countries. France and the UK have already deployed some of their military assets to the region and have confirmed some involvement in the interception of Iranian projectiles.

Among Iranian allies, Houthis may also join the hostilities and target Israel, as well as vessels in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. Such operations will prompt retaliation, likely opening another front of hostilities in the region.

## Forecast for mid-March to mid-April (three-to-four weeks from publication)

A range of factors could contribute to extending the duration of hostilities. By the end of the second week, Iran's military capabilities will likely be significantly degraded, though the country may still retain limited capacity to conduct drone and/or missile attacks. In parallel, Iran may also increasingly rely on asymmetric methods of retaliation, such as assassinations, cyber operations, sabotage or attempts to disrupt maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, to offset its reduced capacity for largescale strikes.

### Further spillover of hostilities

The situation will become more complex if actors beyond the US or Israel initiate offensive operations against Iran (even if they are intended to be limited), potentially prolonging the conflict. This could include regional or European powers, such as Turkey or the UK, should their personnel or assets be targeted either through intentional attacks or miscalculation. The likelihood of this would increase if casualties were to occur. Gulf Arab states are unlikely to mount offensive operations independently. However, if a broader coalition emerges, including countries such as the UK, France, Italy or others, they may decide to participate or contribute in some form.

Should disruption of the Strait of Hormuz continue, the US may lead the formation of an international coalition aimed at countering Iranian threats to maritime navigation. The situation would escalate further if disturbances were to occur simultaneously in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, amplifying global maritime security concerns.

At this stage, it remains unlikely that other states would overtly align militarily with Iran or engage in direct operations against the US or Israel.

### US-Israel operations against Iran

Unlike the Israel-Iran June 2025 conflict, the current round of hostilities is unlikely to conclude abruptly with a ceasefire. Both the US and Israel are likely to continue military operations until they achieve key strategic objectives inside Iran.

Given the unprecedented scale of the joint US-Israeli campaign, operations could extend beyond 14 March. Some objectives, such as significantly degrading Iran's conventional military capabilities, are likely to be accomplished before then. However, the US and Israel may continue lower-intensity strikes to maintain pressure on Iran.

Such pressure would likely be aimed at compelling the Iranian government to publicly give up on nuclear and missile programmes, and support for its regional allies. Targeted operations against senior leadership figures may also persist until a new leadership configuration emerges that is more amenable to these demands.

This phase will likely involve a combination of overt and covert diplomatic mediation efforts and sustained military pressure, to force Iran to accept these maximalist demands.

Operations against Iran may extend even beyond the three-to-fourweek horizon assessed in this report. Particularly if Iran were to continue to reject these demands or if the US and Israel determine that achieving a complete change in government is necessary to meet their strategic objectives.

## Domestic situation in Iran

The situation in Iran will remain volatile and will be a key point to monitor to assess the potential duration of the US-Israeli operation. Sustained external pressure will further aggravate domestic instability, weakening government and security apparatus. Groups with long-standing grievances against the government will likely view this conflict as an opportunity to mount increased resistance and achieve their goals.

This volatile environment will provide fertile ground for the resumption of anti-government protests, an increase in insurgent activity and targeted attacks by various actors. These may include Kurdish and Baluchi separatist organisations, and domestic and international extremist groups known to operate in the country, including the Islamic State. Some may attempt to leverage external political and/or material, financial and logistics support, further complicating Iran's internal security landscape and contributing to a broader cycle of instability.

While there is potential for more drastic domestic shifts, such as a complete change in government and governance structure (for example, moving away from theocracy), the likelihood of that occurring within three-to-four weeks is low. External pressure on its own is insufficient to trigger such a comprehensive structural transformation. The domestic destabilising factors outlined above have not yet materialised at the scale required to credibly threaten the government and the status quo.

This assessment is further reinforced by the degree to which the government and security apparatus remain entrenched and resilient across key institutions. Moreover, there is currently no credible domestic or external actor with both the legitimacy and public support necessary to present a viable alternative to the existing leadership. As a result, although volatility is expected to increase, the likelihood of a fundamental political shift in the next three-to-four weeks remains low.

## Recommendations to managers

- Monitor regional developments via verified sources, including International SOS alerts and forecasts, diplomatic missions and local contacts.
- If you have workforce in a location from which evacuation may be necessary, make the necessary preparations. Check that all potential evacuees have up-to-date passports and visas and that manifests are up to date and are readily available.
- Ensure your workforce is abreast of conflict-related developments and understands whom to contact and how in the event of a security or medical emergency.
- Workforce in the region should follow all official directives and guidance, including any local emergency and evacuation procedures, movement restrictions, curfews and road closures.
- Minimise time spent in the vicinity of US military and diplomatic facilities, as well as Israeli diplomatic missions, due to the risk of further Iranian strikes.
- Account for airspace closures, flight cancellations and related disruption across the region.

- Israeli and US nationals in countries across the Middle East and North Africa should exercise caution and maintain a low profile amid heightened tensions.
- Do not post or share unverified or sensitive information on social media.
- Reconfirm any medical care that is scheduled in the coming days. Check your supply of any chronic medications and plan for prescription refills, taking into consideration the potential for travel-related delays.

## Escalatory triggers

### Region

- Countries in the region close land borders.
- Iran further expands the scope of its attacks across the region, targeting critical civilian infrastructure involved in the provision of essential services, such as electricity, water, desalinisation plants etc.
- The geographical scope of Iranian attacks expands, with security incidents attributed to Iran and its network reported outside the Middle East.
- Iran conducts asymmetrical attacks in parts of the region, such as targeted assassinations, cyber or sabotage operations.
- States other than the US and Israel join offensive operations against Iran.
- There are credible reports of support, such as transfers of weapons, other materiel, intelligence sharing etc. from countries aligned with Iran.

### Iran

- The resumption of large anti-government protests.
- A resurgence of insurgent activity in parts of the country by groups with long-standing grievances against the Iranian government.
- Reports emerge suggesting that these groups receive foreign support.
- High-impact terrorist attacks occur across the country.
- An attempted coup or the government collapses.

### Israel

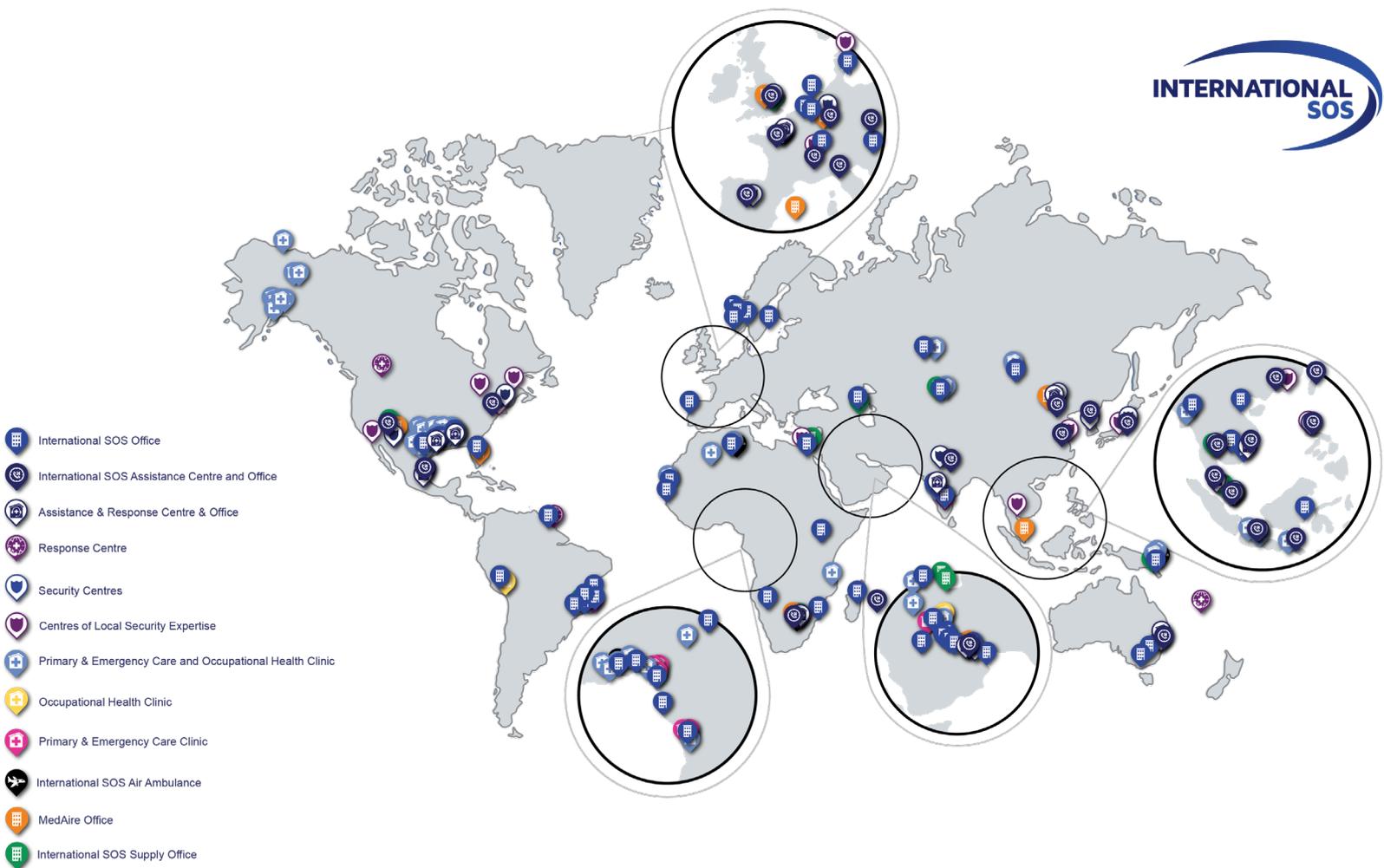
- Sustained high casualties and damage in Israel; the degradation of Israeli military capabilities despite the US-Israeli operation.
- Ground incursions occur along the border with Israel from Lebanon or the West Bank (Palestinian Territories).
- Several high-impact, simultaneous or co-ordinated militant attacks occur in Israeli population centres.

### Maritime Disruption

- Iran mines the Strait of Hormuz.
- Houthis join the hostilities, escalating attacks passing through Red Sea or the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

## ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS AND UNPARALLELED SERVICES

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For follow-up questions about the assessments or recommendations in this Report, please call your nearest Assistance Centre.

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