ZEROFOX® INTELLIGENCE

| Flash |

U.S. Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP #6: March 4, 2026

F-2026-03-04a

Classification: TLP:CLEAR
Criticality: High
Intelligence Requirements: Geopolitics

March 4, 2026

ZEROFOX

Scope Note

ZeroFox Intelligence is derived from a variety of sources, including—but not limited to—curated open-source accesses, vetted social media, proprietary data sources, and direct access to threat actors and groups through covert communication channels. Information relied upon to complete any report cannot always be independently verified. As such, ZeroFox applies rigorous analytic standards and tradecraft in accordance with best practices and includes caveat language and source citations to clearly identify the veracity of our Intelligence reporting and substantiate our assessments and recommendations. All sources used in this particular Intelligence product were identified prior to 4:00 AM (EST) on March 4, 2026; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.

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| Key Findings

- Following an Israeli strike on Iran's Assembly of Experts, Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of deceased Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, has reportedly been chosen as the next Supreme Leader of Iran.

- The United States and Israel continued air strikes across Iran, with a heavy emphasis in and around Tehran. Israel also continued strikes against Lebanese Hezbollah, with at least 60 targets struck.

- An Israeli military spokesman claimed that 200 Iranian missile launchers have been destroyed. If true, this represents roughly half of all assessed Iranian launchers, which would almost certainly account for the rapid decrease in missile strikes.

- Shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz remains relatively low, with most vessels sitting in the northern Persian Gulf in an attempt to avoid hostilities. However, Iran is reportedly allowing Chinese and Russian vessels to transit the Strait.

- Iran and its proxies very likely pose a threat of external attacks on the United States and countries it perceives as supporting the ongoing conflict.

| Latest Details

New Supreme Leader Chosen

Following an Israeli strike on Iran's Assembly of Experts, Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of deceased Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, has reportedly been chosen as the next Supreme Leader of Iran.[1] The choice of the previous Supreme Leader's son will likely be controversial, as it makes the Islamic Republic look like a monarchy, but Mojtaba Khamenei was almost certainly the choice of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which serves as a sort of praetorian guard within Iran.

- As of writing, no official announcement has been made by Iranian media, almost certainly because the Iranian government is waiting until after the burial of Ali Khamenei before presenting his successor to the public. No date has been announced for Ali Khamenei's burial, though it will likely occur in his hometown of Mashhad.

- Mojtaba Khamenei was likely pushed by the IRGC to maintain continuity within the military decision-making infrastructure. His selection would almost certainly allow the IRGC to maintain control over the executive, while providing a sense of legitimacy to the government in the midst of continued U.S. and Israeli air strikes.

If confirmed, the appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei suggests the IRGC is likely seeking to consolidate power within the government. The IRGC will almost certainly be the power behind the throne in the new administration. Consequently, U.S. and Israeli air strikes will likely seek to weaken the command and control infrastructure of the IRGC.

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[1] hXXps://www.iranintl[.]com/en/202603048311

Continued Operations

The United States and Israel continued air strikes across Iran, with a heavy emphasis in and around Tehran. Additional areas of focus were Kermanshah and Isfahan provinces, with Iranian army garrisons targeted in both.[2]

- Iran's nuclear facilities have also reportedly been struck by U.S. operations; this includes the Natanz facility that was reportedly destroyed by U.S. strikes in June 2025.[3]
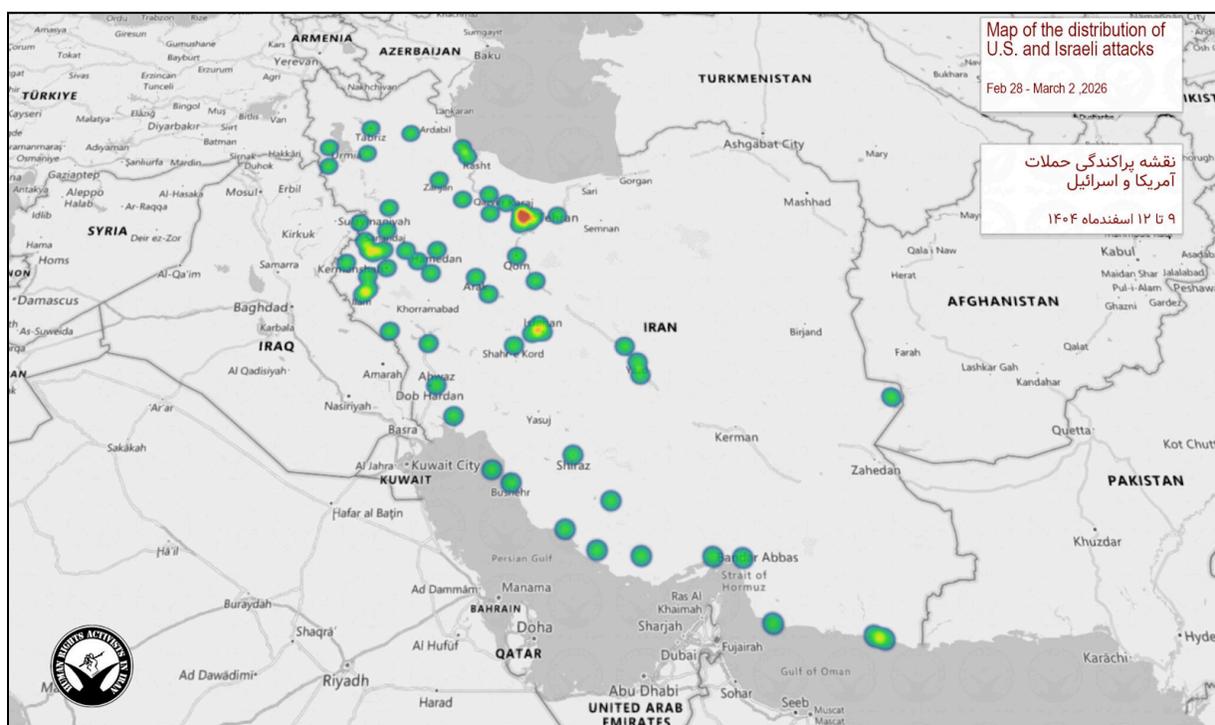
Distribution of U.S. and Israeli air strikes as of March 3, 2026
Source: Human Rights Activist News Agency

There are unconfirmed reports citing U.S. intelligence officials that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is working to arm Kurdish forces in northern Iran.[4] This policy is almost certainly in support of U.S. President Trump's stated aim of inciting a popular

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[2]

hXXps://www.en-hrana[.]org/the-fourth-day-of-the-u-s-israel-war-on-iran-strikes-continue-in-western-regions-of-the-country/

[3] hXXps://www.reuters[.]com/world/china/iran-says-natanz-nuclear-site-hit-us-israeli-strikes-2026-03-02

[4] hXXps://edition.cnn[.]com/2026/03/03/politics/cia-arming-kurds-iran

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uprising in Iran. Kurdish nationalists across the region have long agitated for an independent homeland and have been regularly used as proxies by the United States in Iraq, both following the 2003 invasion of Iraq and after the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014.

While Iranian attacks across the region continue, the country is firing fewer missiles every day, instead relying on sophisticated drones laden with high explosives. An Israeli military spokesman claimed that 200 Iranian missile launchers have been destroyed.[5] If true, this represents roughly half of all assessed Iranian launchers, which would almost certainly account for the rapid decrease in missile strikes.

- Saudi Arabia intercepted five drones near Al-Kharj; the city of Al-Kharj is adjacent to Prince Sultan Air Base, which houses U.S. Air Force combat aircraft and was very likely the intended target.

- Qatar intercepted one ballistic missile targeting Doha, while a second missile impacted Al Udeid Air Base, the largest U.S. military base in the region.[6]

Iran's strategy for attacking regional neighbors is very likely to expand the war, increase the cost for Arab countries to continue supporting the joint U.S.-Israeli operation, and ultimately outlast U.S. political will for the conflict. While Iran may appear to be lashing out in a chaotic display, it is almost certainly a calculated strategy developed long before hostilities began. Iran's chosen targets in the region suggest it is likely focused primarily on U.S. logistics and military hubs, with the secondary aim of imposing significant costs on Arab neighbors for supporting the United States.

Shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz remains relatively low, with most vessels that would normally use it sitting in the northern Persian Gulf in an attempt to avoid hostilities. However, Iran is reportedly allowing Chinese and Russian vessels to transit the

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[5] hXXps://www.jns[.]org/50-of-iranian-missile-launchers-destroyed/

[6] hXXps://thepeninsulaqatar[.]com/article/04/03/2026/qatar-targeted-by-iranian-ballistic-missiles-one-intercepted-another-hits-al-udeid-air-base-mod

Strait.[7] This is likely a direct result of Chinese intervention in the IRGC's threats to close the Strait to all traffic.

- China buys 80 percent of oil produced in Iran and received a reported 1.38 million barrels per day in 2025.[8] China almost certainly views closing the Strait of Hormuz as an existential crisis for its manufacturing sector, which relies heavily on Iranian oil to maintain its high production and export levels.

Israel continued its operations against Lebanese Hezbollah, striking at least 60 targets, including weapons depots, command and control facilities, missile launchers, and leadership infrastructure.[9] Israel will likely maintain pressure on Hezbollah to prevent the Iran-backed Shia militia from expanding its role in the wider war. There is a roughly even chance that Israel's leadership is seeking a strategic pretext for a ground invasion of Lebanon.

International Responses

European responses have focused on Iran's retaliations, with most leaders withholding judgment on the U.S.-Israeli operation. In response to Iranian missile and drone strikes, French President Macron ordered France's only nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to the Mediterranean in order to provide defensive support in the region.[10]

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer reassured the House of Commons that the United Kingdom was not involved in the initial U.S.-led air strikes against Iran but that, in the aftermath of its partners in the region coming under threat, the country has deployed aircraft to provide intercept capabilities and protect regional interests.[11]

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[7]
hXXps://www.republicworld[.]com/world-news/iran-to-allow-only-chinese-russian-vessels-through-strait-of-hormuz-citing-beijing-moscow-s-support-in-ongoing-conflict

[8] hXXps://www.reuters[.]com/business/energy/chinas-heavy-reliance-iranian-oil-imports-2026-01-13/

[9] hXXps://x[.]com/IAFsite/status/2028938191005467098?s=20

[10]
hXXps://apnews[.]com/article/france-macron-aircraft-carrier-charles-de-gaulle-mediterranean-dd185933de5e5cee87828768c0046fba

[11] hXXps://www.gov[.]uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-oral-statement-on-iran-2-march-2026

- PM Starmer intimated that UK aircraft have already successfully intercepted Iranian ballistic missiles and drones in the Gulf region.

Spain told the United States that no Spanish bases can be used for operations in Iran. Consequently, U.S. aircraft were seen leaving Spain, with President Trump threatening to cut off all trade with Spain.[12]

Iranian Proxy Threat

Iran and its proxies very likely pose a threat of external attacks on the United States and countries it perceives as supporting the ongoing conflict. Iran and Hezbollah likely have robust networks across the West, including trained operatives, weapons caches, and developed target lists. It is unclear if a sufficient command and control system is in place to put these assets into action, but as the conflict continues in the coming weeks, sleeper cells loyal to Iran are likely to activate and attempt terrorist style attacks even without direct orders.

- The U.S. Intelligence Community assesses that a large-scale, physical attack against allied nations is unlikely but that sleeper cell attacks "probably" pose a threat to the United States and its partners.[13]

|Emerging Cyber Threats

ZeroFox has observed a significant surge in cyberattacks almost certainly linked to politically and ideologically motivated threat groups, most of which are aligning their cyber efforts with pro-Iran causes. Cyber activity is presently being driven by a diverse range of hacktivist collectives operating predominately across the deep and dark web (DDW) and Telegram. These groups are largely targeting critical infrastructure, government, and finance entities across the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and other countries perceived as Western allies.

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[12]

hXXps://www.reuters[.]com/world/middle-east/us-aircraft-leave-spain-after-government-says-bases-cannot-be-used-iran-attacks-2026-03-02/

[13]

hXXps://www.reuters[.]com/world/middle-east/intelligence-assessment-warns-iranian-attacks-us-following-khameneis-death-2026-03-02/

Similar to its military proxy efforts, Iran also employs proxy groups and asymmetric tactics in the cyber world. ZeroFox has observed anti-U.S., anti-Israel, and pro-Iran collectives targeting the United States, Israel, and Western allies through distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) operations and website defacements. In addition, pro-Russian hacktivist collectives have adopted an anti-Israel and anti-U.S. stance, aligning their operations with broader geopolitical narratives. We have also observed anti-Iran hacktivist collectives targeting Iran, seemingly in support of Israel and likely in response to cyberattacks against Israel.

- The Islamic Cyber Resistance in Iraq – 313 Team claimed to have targeted the servers of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Electricity and Water in a DDoS attack.

- Threat collective FaD Team claimed breaches of both the Saudi Maad Company and Israeli academic platform WeLearn. The breaches reportedly included data exfiltration of employee and customer information.

Politically and ideologically motivated hacktivists and threat collectives will almost certainly continue to target entities—especially those in the critical infrastructure, finance, and energy sectors—in opposition to their stances on this conflict. Continued cyber activity will most likely be aimed at supporting either Western or Iranian-based political interests and disrupting oppositional forces' efforts.

| Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

Red

WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?

Sources may use

TLP:RED when information cannot be effectively acted upon by additional parties and could lead to impacts on a party's privacy, reputation, or operations if misused.

HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?

Recipients may NOT share

TLP:RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.

Amber

Sources may use

TLP:AMBER when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.

Recipients may ONLY share

TLP:AMBER information with members of their own organization and its clients, but only on a need-to-know basis to protect their organization and its clients and prevent further harm.

Note that

TLP:AMBER+STRICT restricts sharing to the organization only.

Green

WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?

Sources may use

TLP:GREEN when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.

HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?

Recipients may share

TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.

Clear

Sources may use

TLP:CLEAR when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.

Recipients may share

TLP:CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.

| Appendix B: ZeroFox Intelligence Probability Scale

All ZeroFox intelligence products leverage probabilistic assessment language in analytic judgments. Qualitative statements used in these judgments refer to associated probability ranges, which state the likelihood of occurrence of an event or development. Ranges are used to avoid a false impression of accuracy. This scale is a standard that aligns with how readers should interpret such terms.

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%