



**| Flash |**

# **Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP**

## **#21: March 12, 2026**

F-2026-03-12b

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: High

Intelligence Requirements: Geopolitics

**March 12, 2026**

## 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 1:00 PM (EDT) on March 12, 2026; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.*

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## | Key Findings

- U.S. President Donald Trump has continued to signal that the United States is preparing to end hostilities soon, while Iran has signaled that it will continue causing disruptions to Gulf economies and global energy trade as long as it feels threatened.
- The prospect of avoiding prolonged disruptions to oil markets is diminishing. The agreement by members of the International Energy Agency (IEA) to release 400 million barrels of oil is likely a signal that Operation Epic Fury is having difficulty clearing the Strait of Hormuz (SoH) and limiting Iran's ability to target the region's energy sector. Iran has also broadened its attacks against shipping assets, pushing up the price of oil—likely over concerns about the length of the war.
- Iran's parameters for a ceasefire are that the United States and Israel must guarantee not to target the country in the future. Such a guarantee remains very unlikely while Iran's political and military establishment remains embedded.

## Latest Details

On March 11, 2026, President Trump stated that the United States agreed to the release of emergency oil reserves (alongside 30 other countries that belong to the IEA) to alleviate oil prices while Operation Epic Fury seeks to “finish the job” in its campaign against Iran.<sup>1</sup>

One of the key stated aims of Operation Epic Fury has been to dismantle the Iranian political and military establishment, which has created a risk to Western diplomatic and commercial interests in the Middle East via Iran’s nuclear program, its support for regional proxies, and its missile program. Israeli targeting in particular remains focused on hitting key political and military leaders following the strike on Iran’s Supreme Leader, who was killed on the first day of the conflict.

- Overnight, Israeli targeting hit Iranian street-level checkpoints, which were likely established to identify and circumvent protest activity.<sup>2</sup> The targeting is likely designed to weaken both Iran’s ability to control domestic opposition and the wider political-military establishment over the long term.

Thus far, Iran’s political and military establishment has remained united, as demonstrated by the appointment of the Supreme Leader’s son to succeed him alongside the lack of popular unrest or other demonstrations of Iranian disunity.

On March 12, 2026, official statements from Iran’s new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, were released by Iranian media. In them, he said Iran should continue leveraging the closure of the SoH and that Iran will look to open other fronts if Operation Epic Fury continues.<sup>3</sup>

- In the last 24 hours, Iran hit six more vessels in and around the SoH. There is a roughly even chance the escalation in Iranian targeting, some of which was

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[hXXps://www.aa\[.\]com\[.\]tr/en/americas/trump-says-were-not-leaving-until-that-job-is-finished-amid-operation-in-iran/3860626](https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/trump-says-were-not-leaving-until-that-job-is-finished-amid-operation-in-iran/3860626)

<sup>2</sup> [hXXps://www.iranintl\[.\]com/en/202603122539](https://www.iranintl.com/en/202603122539)

<sup>3</sup> [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]com/news/live/c4gqjy0vx3t](https://www.bbc.com/news/live/c4gqjy0vx3t)

conducted by explosive-laden small boats,<sup>4</sup> was designed to coincide with the announcement by the IEA to help offset the rise in oil prices caused by the war.

- The record size of the reserves withdrawal, combined with continued Iranian attacks, likely contributed to oil surpassing USD 100 a barrel on March 12.<sup>5</sup> The war has been ongoing for less than two weeks, and the IEA reserves will be exhausted in roughly one month at the current usage rate.
- Iran also struck locations across Iraq,<sup>6</sup> iBahrain,<sup>7</sup> Kuwait's International Airport,<sup>8</sup> and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Dubai authorities reported at least two strikes on March 12.<sup>9</sup> One drone hit the Creek Harbor residential towers.<sup>10</sup>

Alongside the intensification of attacks on vessels in recent days, drones also struck fuel tanks in Oman's Salalah Port, while others were intercepted. In response, Oman's Mina Al Fahal oil terminal,<sup>11</sup> which sits outside the SoH, evacuated ships, demonstrating how the conflict is expanding to threaten the remaining ports from which Middle Eastern oil can still be shipped.

- U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) warned that U.S. forces cannot guarantee the safety of shipping ports, saying, "the Iranian regime is using civilian ports along the Strait of Hormuz to conduct military operations that threaten international shipping."<sup>12</sup> CENTCOM also states, "Civilian ports used for military purposes lose protected status and become legitimate military targets under international law."<sup>13</sup> This prompted Iranian military spokesperson Abolfazl Shekarchi to say, "If

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<sup>4</sup> [hXXps://aje\[.\]news/2s2lhi?update=4391299](https://aje[.]news/2s2lhi?update=4391299)

<sup>5</sup> [hXXps://www.cnn\[.\]com/world/live-news/iran-war-us-israel-trump-03-11-26](https://www.cnn[.]com/world/live-news/iran-war-us-israel-trump-03-11-26)

<sup>6</sup> [hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/italian-base-iraqi-kurdistan-hit-by-missile-defence-ministry-says-2026-03-12/](https://www.reuters[.]com/world/italian-base-iraqi-kurdistan-hit-by-missile-defence-ministry-says-2026-03-12/)

<sup>7</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/moi\\_bahrain/status/2031882224031998141?s=20](https://x[.]com/moi_bahrain/status/2031882224031998141?s=20)

<sup>8</sup>

[hXXps://www.timesofisrael\[.\]com/liveblog\\_entry/iranian-drones-damage-kuwait-international-airport-no-casualties/](https://www.timesofisrael[.]com/liveblog_entry/iranian-drones-damage-kuwait-international-airport-no-casualties/)

<sup>9</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/AJABreaking/status/2032060121451200945?s=20](https://x[.]com/AJABreaking/status/2032060121451200945?s=20)

<sup>10</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/DXBMediaOffice/status/2031873670772400200?s=20](https://x[.]com/DXBMediaOffice/status/2031873670772400200?s=20)

<sup>11</sup>

[hXXps://www.straitstimes\[.\]com/world/middle-east/oman-evacuates-vessels-from-oil-terminal-in-precautionary-move?ref=latest](https://www.straitstimes[.]com/world/middle-east/oman-evacuates-vessels-from-oil-terminal-in-precautionary-move?ref=latest)

<sup>12</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/CENTCOM/status/2031746326484984196](https://x[.]com/CENTCOM/status/2031746326484984196)

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

Iran's ports are threatened, all ports and docks in the region will be our legitimate targets."<sup>14</sup>

Iran's threat of target expansion likely increases concerns the conflict could broaden and impact other regional energy producers; further, it repudiates economic indicators suggesting the worst of the conflict's impact on energy trade is already over. To reopen the SoH, Operation Epic Fury will likely have to eliminate all airborne threats from Iran while its Navy clears Iran's lengthy coastline of fast boats, mines, and other threats to oil tankers, which is almost certainly a lengthy task.

## Ceasefire Conditions

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran needs firm assurances against international aggression to agree to a ceasefire, suggesting the United States and Israel must guarantee not to attack in the future.<sup>15</sup>

- It is unclear if the Trump administration is willing to give Iran such a guarantee and if it would be able to oblige Benjamin Netanyahu's government to do the same. Israel's hostilities against Iran as part of Operation Epic Fury are likely to match those of the United States, although its front against Hezbollah in Lebanon is very likely to continue regardless.
- However, it is unlikely that Israel would maintain its hostilities against Iran if the United States ceases, and there is a more than even possibility that Israel in particular will return to targeting Iran within months of a ceasefire—especially if there is evidence of popular protests.

The war has underscored how easy the SoH is to shut down, as high insurance effectively closed it before the attacks escalated. It is possible the SoH will remain closed even after hostilities have ended because of Iran's drones, mines, and other asymmetric capabilities.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/nq7zzpn8z>

<sup>15</sup> <https://aje.com/news/apjw94?update=4390852>

President Trump’s statement indicates that he is preoccupied with avoiding a prolonged conflict that impacts energy prices, while military targeting signals the United States is looking to weaken the Iranian military-political establishment to the point it is less threatening to the region. Iran is likely aiming to bring about a ceasefire while maintaining the political-military status quo by leveraging energy price shocks.

## Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

	<b>Red</b>	<b>Amber</b>
<b>WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?</b>	<b>Sources may use</b> <b>TLP:RED</b> 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.	<b>Sources may use</b> <b>TLP:AMBER</b> when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.
<b>HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?</b>	<b>Recipients may NOT share</b> <b>TLP:RED</b> with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.	<b>Recipients may ONLY share</b> <b>TLP:AMBER</b> 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. <b>Note that</b> <b>TLP:AMBER+STRICT</b> restricts sharing to the organization only.
	<b>Green</b>	<b>Clear</b>
<b>WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?</b>	<b>Sources may use</b> <b>TLP:GREEN</b> when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.	<b>Sources may use</b> <b>TLP:CLEAR</b> when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.
<b>HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?</b>	<b>Recipients may share</b> <b>TLP:GREEN</b> information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.	<b>Recipients may share</b> <b>TLP:CLEAR</b> 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%