



| Flash |

# Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP

## #15: March 9, 2026

F-2026-03-09b

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: High

Intelligence Requirements: Geopolitics

**March 9, 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 (EST) on March 9, 2026**; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.*

# **| Flash | Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP #15: March 9, 2026**

**| Key Findings**

- The election of Mojtaba Khamenei as Iran’s new supreme leader signals policy continuity in Iran. Iran’s wartime strategy of targeting Gulf nations and broadening the economic costs will very likely continue. Longer term, Mojtaba Khamenei’s appointment signals Iran will reject maximalist demands regarding its nuclear program, support for proxy groups, missile programs, and seek to rebuild them once the conflict ends. Israel will very likely target Mojtaba Khamenei.
- Mojtaba Khamenei’s appointment is unlikely to change the U.S. and Israel’s aims in the short term, with further targeting aimed at debilitating Iran’s offensive weapons program likely over the next week. Expansion beyond these aims would likely include targeting Iran’s enriched uranium with ground forces and actions that threaten the political establishment, such as targeting Iranian energy sites.
- Economic indicators began reflecting the higher probability of a protracted conflict; however, energy prices continue to reflect an optimistic scenario where the war ends shortly. There is a roughly even chance economic factors determine the United States’ war objectives and the duration of the conflict.

## | Latest Details

### Conflicting War Aims

The appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei as Iran's new Supreme Leader very likely removes the possibility that Iran will halt fighting while it maintains the capability to do so.<sup>1</sup> Mojtaba Khamenei is closely aligned with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and will likely adopt their hardline positions over the short term.

- Since the outbreak of protests in December 2025–January 2026, Iranian hardliners have successfully put down political dissent and consolidated power. Mojtaba represents this faction of Iran, and the prospect of regime change is very unlikely while this group remains dominant.
- Mojtaba's appointment does not translate into national popularity or even unity within Iran's ruling political-military establishment, where other more experienced candidates were bypassed. Over the longer term, Mojtaba's appointment will likely increase the risk of renewed protests in Iran, where the conditions for social unrest are almost certain. However, in the short term, it indicates that Iran will continue targeting Gulf states primarily and seek to exert ceasefire pressure by causing energy price shocks that hit consumers globally.

Estimates on Iran's weapons capabilities vary, but it very likely maintains some missile capacity and almost certainly its drone capability to continue the conflict. Other U.S.–Israeli war aims, specifically related to its nuclear program, have yet to develop, while both Israel and the U.S. are likely to reject Mojtaba's appointment, giving them an incentive to prolong the conflict until a more amenable leader emerges. Together these issues represent a heightened probability of a protracted conflict.

- Mojtaba Khamenei was reportedly injured in Israeli targeting;<sup>2</sup> in addition his father, wife, and child have also been killed during the war. Further Israeli led efforts to target Mojtaba Khamenei are very likely.

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<sup>1</sup> [hXXps://apnews.com/article/iran-israel-us-march-8-2026-f0b20dbffaea9351ae1e54183ffe53ff](https://apnews.com/article/iran-israel-us-march-8-2026-f0b20dbffaea9351ae1e54183ffe53ff)

<sup>2</sup>

[hXXps://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/iran-state-tv-confirms-new-supreme-leader-mojtaba-khamenei-was-wounded/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/iran-state-tv-confirms-new-supreme-leader-mojtaba-khamenei-was-wounded/)

However, U.S. President Donald Trump said “unconditional surrender could be that (they) announce it. But it could also be when they can't fight any longer because they don't have anyone or anything to fight with.”<sup>3</sup> Trump has made similar statements suggesting that the war is already won and that Iran has been defeated.

There is a roughly even chance that President Trump defines the war aims as completed when Iran's offensive weapons capabilities are diminished, which could take place in the coming days even if Iran maintains the ability to interfere in Gulf energy markets that produce outside financial effects.

## Energy Prices

Oil prices increased to just under USD 120 a barrel, a nearly 30% jump in a day, following the appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei. This is very likely a reflection that Iran under Mojtaba will almost certainly continue leveraging its ability to target energy supply chains in the conflict.<sup>4</sup>

- Saudi Arabia says it intercepted and destroyed four drones headed towards Shaybah field, the base for Saudi Aramco's Natural Gas and oil production.<sup>5</sup> Bahrain's state oil company declared force majeure on its shipments after Iran attacked the nation's only oil refinery.<sup>6</sup>

On March 9, 2026, Finance Ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) largest economies met to discuss coordinated releases of their oil reserves but ultimately rejected the idea for

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.axios.com/2026/03/06/trump-iran-war-unconditional-surrender>

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<https://www.autoevolution.com/news/oil-prices-spike-30-hinting-at-a-new-gas-price-crisis-and-renewed-interest-in-electric-vehicles-266848.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://x.com/modgovksa/status/2030835023000031364>

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<https://apnews.com/live/iran-war-israel-trump-khamenei-03-09-2026#0000019c-d135-d932-abdf-d3bf0edf0000>

the time being.<sup>78</sup> Oil prices returned to about half their March 9 increase following reports of the meeting. This speaks to the 1.2 barrel stockpile held by G7 countries.<sup>9</sup>

- President Trump is reportedly considering other efforts to tame oil price increases.<sup>10</sup> These could include further loosening of sanctions placed on Russian oil, among other options, after the U.S. already provided a waiver to allow India to buy Russian oil held at sea.<sup>11</sup>
- Saudi Arabia and the UAE both started better utilizing pipelines designed to avoid the SoH, with the Saudi East-West pipeline capable of moving five million barrels a day and the UAE's pipeline to the Gulf of Oman capable of moving 1.5 million barrels a day. The SoH carries around 20 million barrels per day.<sup>12</sup> These pipelines are untested at these levels, and it is not clear if the ports are capable of absorbing the vessels needed to transport this oil. However, if effectively utilized, it would further slow the rise in oil prices. These actions will likely invite targeting by Iran, particularly for drones targeting ships or the pipelines themselves.

Coordinated intervention will likely slow, but not reverse, the increase in oil prices. Oil demand will continue to outpace supply unless the conditions to ship oil in the Middle East return to normal. These workarounds and others designed to reopen the SoH are unlikely to be successful as long as tankers remain vulnerable to missiles, drones, and asymmetric attacks. Even if Iran's capabilities are diminished considerably, unless the conflict is solved diplomatically, Iran can very likely maintain low levels of interference that cause outsized economic impacts.

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[hXXps://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-03-09/g-7-to-discuss-joint-emergency-oil-reserves-release-ft-says](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-03-09/g-7-to-discuss-joint-emergency-oil-reserves-release-ft-says)

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[hXXps://www.reuters.com/business/energy/iea-chief-warns-against-return-russian-gas-amid-global-Ing-surge-2026-03-06/](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/iea-chief-warns-against-return-russian-gas-amid-global-Ing-surge-2026-03-06/)

<sup>9</sup> [hXXps://www.ft.com/content/e1141f96-db3e-41ef-b978-0131e91f1d82](https://www.ft.com/content/e1141f96-db3e-41ef-b978-0131e91f1d82)

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[hXXps://www.reuters.com/world/iran-live-slain-khameneis-son-is-irans-new-supreme-leader-2026-03-09/?arena\\_mid=sL8m1ETWVA5ULfEgU8FA](https://www.reuters.com/world/iran-live-slain-khameneis-son-is-irans-new-supreme-leader-2026-03-09/?arena_mid=sL8m1ETWVA5ULfEgU8FA)

<sup>11</sup> [hXXps://www.cnn.com/2026/03/06/us-india-waiver-russian-oil-iran-war-energy-supply-worries.html](https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/06/us-india-waiver-russian-oil-iran-war-energy-supply-worries.html)

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[hXXps://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-starts-to-shift-crude-exports-to-red-sea-as-hormuz-disruption-mounts-558e90fe](https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-starts-to-shift-crude-exports-to-red-sea-as-hormuz-disruption-mounts-558e90fe)

## Sleeper Cells

According to a federal government alert sent to law enforcement agencies in the U.S., encrypted communications believed to have originated in Iran, possibly activating sleeper cells, were sent. The message was relayed across multiple countries shortly after the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on February 28. The contents of the transmission, however, have not been identified.

Iran and its proxies very likely pose a threat of external attacks on the United States and countries perceived 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 remains unclear if a sufficient command and control system is in place to put these assets into action; however, as the conflict continues in the coming weeks, sleeper cells loyal to Iran are likely to activate and attempt terror attacks.

- 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 allies.<sup>13</sup>

On March 8, 2026, an explosion was reported at the U.S. embassy in Oslo, Norway.<sup>14</sup> While a connection to the war in Iran has yet to be identified, several other notable attacks on diplomatic posts in Nordic nations have been attributed to Iran in recent years.<sup>15</sup> In October 2024 in Stockholm, Sweden gunmen fired on the Israeli embassy and in Copenhagen, two grenades were detonated outside the Israeli embassy there.<sup>16</sup> A month

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<sup>13</sup>

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

<sup>14</sup>

[hXXps://www.reuters.com/world/europe/loud-blast-heard-near-us-embassy-oslo-norway-police-say-2026-03-08/](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/loud-blast-heard-near-us-embassy-oslo-norway-police-say-2026-03-08/)

<sup>15</sup> [hXXps://www.reuters.com/investigations/murder-hire-inside-irans-proxy-war-with-israel-west-2024-10-05/](https://www.reuters.com/investigations/murder-hire-inside-irans-proxy-war-with-israel-west-2024-10-05/)

<sup>16</sup>

[hXXps://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/308418-police-probe-blasts-shooting-at-israeli-embassies-in-nordic-capitals](https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/308418-police-probe-blasts-shooting-at-israeli-embassies-in-nordic-capitals)

earlier, a gunman was shot dead near the Israeli consulate in Munich, Germany. Iran was accused of paying local criminals to carry out these attacks.<sup>17</sup>

## | Cyber Landscape

Coordinated cyber operations continue targeting government infrastructure and private-sector entities across Israel, Iran, and other Middle Eastern countries. These activities appear to be driven primarily by pro-Iranian, pro-Palestinian, pro-Israel, anti-Iran and pro-Russian hacktivist collectives, employing a combination of Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks, website defacement, data exfiltration, and claimed intrusions into Industrial Control Systems (ICS).

### **NoName057(16)**

Pro-Russian threat actor NoName057(16) conducted cyberattacks in support of Iran, targeting Israel- and U.S.-based entities. At the time of this report, the group claimed responsibility for conducting DDoS attacks on multiple Israel-based entities, including:

- rosh-haayin[.]muni[.]il
- umelfahem[.]org
- shas[.]org[.]il

Notably, the group also claimed unauthorized access to Industrial Control Systems associated with an undisclosed water supply or liquid pumping infrastructure in Israel.

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<sup>17</sup>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/large-police-operation-underway-near-munichs-nazi-documentation-centre-2024-09-05/>

⚡⚡⚡ Our volunteers from the project [DDoSia Project](#) received full access to an industrial system for monitoring and controlling pumping equipment - a critical water supply or liquid pumping infrastructure in Israel.

👤 *What volunteers control:*

- Control of pumps and valves with indication.
- Key parameters in real time: levels, alarms, timers and settings.
- Switching between automatic and manual control modes, allowing you to completely bypass the automation.

**NoName057(16)'s Telegram post**

Source: ZeroFox Intelligence

**Cardinal**

A pro-Russian hacktivist group claimed to have “disabled” defense systems associated with an undisclosed entity likely based in Tel Aviv. The compromised system indicated to be linked to a defense radar system. Furthermore, the group also claimed unauthorized access to Negev Nuclear Research Center’s and RAHEL’s (National Emergency Authority) internal systems—which was subsequently advertised on the Russian Legion Telegram channel. Notably, the group claimed to have access to an internal document associated with the Mossad and Israel government.

*To the attention of the civil and military departments.  
Cardinal Group officially confirms the complete hacking and deactivation of air defense systems in key sectors. Today, the Iron Dome and the radars of RADA Defense in the central region have become nothing more than a set of dead iron.*

*, OPERATION STATUS:*

- *Tel Aviv: THE SYSTEM IS DISABLED. The sky is open. Our algorithms have completely suppressed the detection signals.*
- *Ratification: FULL BLACKOUT. The coordinates are erased, and the control interfaces are blocked. We keep our finger on the pulse of your servers.*

*A SPECIAL SOLUTION: JERUSALEM*

*We deliberately left the perimeter of Jerusalem untouched. We do not touch the city of kings and shrines. This place is protected by history and higher powers that are above any digital wars. We respect the sanctity of this land, but we do not forgive those who hide behind technology in other regions.*

**Cardinal's Telegram post**

Source: ZeroFox Intelligence

**Additional Findings:**

Notable cyber activity over the last 24 hours (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Hactivist group **“Islamic Cyber Resistance in Iraq”** claims it has been carrying out cyberattacks against government infrastructure in Kuwait for over 72 hours. The group says several platforms were targeted, including those of the Kuwait Ministry of Defense, Kuwait National Guard, Kuwait Ministry of Health, and Public Authority for Civil Information. The reporting X post claimed that this information regarding the group’s claims has been sourced from Telegram channels and the actual activities remains to be verified.<sup>18</sup>
- A threat actor known as **“shenira6core”**, supposedly linked to the “Team CyberCrime Indonesia” and “Team TDX” threat collectives, claims to have exfiltrated sensitive data from databases associated with the Israel Ministry of Defense. The alleged dataset includes intelligence profiles, asset-seizure orders, and detailed personal and financial information of individuals and businesses under surveillance, though the breach has not been independently verified.<sup>19</sup>
- Hactivist group **“Hider\_Nex”** claims to have targeted multiple websites in Bahrain with DDoS attacks—such as the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Tatweer Petroleum, The Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications, Bahrain Space Agency, Ministry of Information, Alwatan for Publication & Press, ALAYAM, The Bahrain Center for Strategic International and Energy Studies, and Bahrain News Agency.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/FalconFeedsio/status/2030705942137070072?s=20](https://x.com/FalconFeedsio/status/2030705942137070072?s=20)

<sup>19</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/DarkWebInformer/status/2030348511409996047?s=20](https://x.com/DarkWebInformer/status/2030348511409996047?s=20)

<sup>20</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/FalconFeedsio/status/2030855000121831468](https://x.com/FalconFeedsio/status/2030855000121831468)

## 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%