



**| Flash |**

# **Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP**

## **#27: March 23, 2026**

F-2026-03-23a

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: High

Intelligence Requirements: Geopolitics

**March 23, 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 4:00 AM (EDT) on March 23, 2026**; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.*

# | Flash | Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP #27: March 23, 2026

## | Key Findings

- On March 21, 2026, U.S. President Donald Trump issued an ultimatum to Iran, demanding the Strait of Hormuz (SoH) be opened within 48 hours. If the SoH is not opened by the deadline, with no threats to shipping, President Trump threatened to attack Iran's power grid and power generation plants.
- In response to President Trump's ultimatum, Iran stated that, if its power grid is targeted, it will "irreversibly destroy" critical U.S. and Israeli infrastructure, including electrical facilities, energy and oil, and water desalination plants. Iran is very unlikely to acquiesce to U.S. demands. Iranian defiance will present President Trump with a choice of whether to follow through on his threats—which will almost certainly escalate the current crisis—or find a way to avoid escalation.
- The SoH will very likely remain effectively closed for the foreseeable future, which will likely continue to deepen the current global economic problems. A continuing shutdown of the SoH will almost certainly have put more pressure on global oil prices, which continued to rise over the weekend—with Brent crude sitting above USD 110, as of writing.

- Iran reportedly launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile at Diego Garcia, a joint U.S.-UK air base in the Indian Ocean. The missile, likely a modified variant of the Khorramshahr-4 intended for longer range, was intercepted by the U.S. Navy and failed to strike its intended target.
- Israel and Iran traded strikes on nuclear facilities, with Israel reportedly striking Iran's Natanz facility and Iran retaliating with attacks on towns near the Dimona nuclear facility. Strikes on nuclear sites are likely calculated to avoid radiation leaks and almost certainly to avoid nuclear escalation.

## | Latest Details

On March 21, 2026, U.S. President Donald Trump issued an ultimatum to Iran, demanding the SoH be opened within 48 hours.<sup>1</sup> If the SoH is not opened by the deadline, with no threats to shipping, President Trump threatened to attack Iran's power grid and power generation plants.<sup>2</sup> Thus far in the war, both sides have avoided targeting civilian electricity generation; airstrikes on Iran's power grid, in the event the SoH remains effectively closed, would be a major escalation and will very likely have regional implications for the expansion of the war.

In response to President Trump's ultimatum, Iran stated that, if its power grid is targeted, it will "irreversibly destroy" U.S. and Israeli critical infrastructure, including electrical facilities, energy and oil, and water desalination plants. Further, the Iranian military also warned that, if its power grid is attacked, the SoH will be completely closed until all power plants are rebuilt.<sup>3</sup> Currently, although the SoH is effectively closed, Iran is allowing some shipping through and is reportedly charging ships a USD 2 million fee to transit the strategic waterway.<sup>4,5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [hXXps://www.jpost\[.\]com/international/article-890725](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-890725)

<sup>2</sup> [hXXps://x\[.\]com/TrumpDailyPosts/status/2035527252931395584?s=20](https://x[.]com/TrumpDailyPosts/status/2035527252931395584?s=20)

<sup>3</sup>

[hXXps://www.theguardian\[.\]com/world/2026/mar/22/iran-says-destroy-middle-east-infrastructure-us-energy-site](https://www.theguardian[.]com/world/2026/mar/22/iran-says-destroy-middle-east-infrastructure-us-energy-site)

<sup>4</sup> [hXXps://www.jpost\[.\]com/international/article-890725](https://www.jpost[.]com/international/article-890725)

<sup>5</sup>

[hXXps://www.foxnews\[.\]com/world/iran-chokes-strait-hormuz-reported-2m-tanker-toll-regime-threatens-global-oil-supply](https://www.foxnews[.]com/world/iran-chokes-strait-hormuz-reported-2m-tanker-toll-regime-threatens-global-oil-supply)

- Iran also threatened to attack power plants of any country in the region that hosts U.S. military bases.<sup>6</sup> This likely includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Qatar. There is a roughly even chance that one or more of these countries will become actively involved in the conflict in the event of such an escalation.
- Additionally, Iran has stated that any company in the region with American shareholders will become a target<sup>7</sup>—which likely includes cyberattacks against information technology companies.

President Trump’s ultimatum, and Iran’s response to it, is likely to escalate the current crisis—at least in the near term. Iran is very unlikely to acquiesce to U.S. demands. Iranian defiance will present President Trump with a choice of whether to follow through on his threats—which will almost certainly escalate the current crisis—or find a way to avoid escalation. Likely adding to President Trump’s decision calculus is the roughly even chance that attacking Iran’s critical infrastructure would expand the conflict to include active participation by Gulf states.

The SoH will very likely remain effectively closed for the foreseeable future, which will likely continue to deepen the current global economic problems. There is a roughly even chance that a unified international effort would reopen the SoH; however, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the organization most likely to do this, is still in deliberation and coordination for an operational response.<sup>8</sup> The normal NATO process of decision-making among its 32 member states likely makes it impossible for a coordinated operation to open the SoH before President Trump’s deadline—which is likely sometime Monday evening.

A continuing shutdown of the SoH will almost certainly have put more pressure on global oil prices, which continued to rise over the weekend—with Brent crude sitting above USD 110, as of writing.<sup>9</sup> An escalation in the war that includes striking oil production

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<sup>6</sup> [hXXps://www.jpost\[.\]com/international/article-890725](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-890725)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> [hXXps://www.dailysabah\[.\]com/world/mid-east/nato-can-reopen-strait-of-hormuz-amid-tensions-rutte-says](https://www.dailysabah.com/world/mid-east/nato-can-reopen-strait-of-hormuz-amid-tensions-rutte-says)

<sup>9</sup> [hXXps://oilprice\[.\]com/](https://oilprice.com/)

facilities—or the electrical grids that power them—would almost certainly send prices above USD 120.

## **Nuclear Sites Targeted**

On March 21, 2026, Iran claimed Israel attacked the Natanz nuclear facility in central Iran. There are no reports of radioactive material leaking or the extent of the damage to the enrichment facility. The Natanz facility was also attacked by Israel during the 12-Day War in June 2025; the site was also one of the targets of U.S. airstrikes in the same conflict.<sup>10</sup> There has been no confirmation from Israel or the United States that Natanz was targeted.

- The United States and Israel very likely consider nuclear enrichment facilities as legitimate military targets. From the outset of hostilities on February 28, 2026, preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon has been a stated, strategic objective of the war.<sup>11</sup>
- Iran reportedly has 400 kg of highly enriched uranium, which the United States and Israel likely believe Iran would use to build a viable nuclear weapon.<sup>12</sup>

Iran reportedly attacked towns near Israel's Dimona nuclear facility in response to the Natanz attack. The towns of Dimona and Arad were reportedly targeted, injuring 180 people.<sup>13</sup> The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said there have been no indications of damage or radiation leaks from the Dimona nuclear facility; the agency called for restraint from both sides to avoid escalation around nuclear infrastructure.<sup>14</sup>

There is a roughly even chance that both sides will continue a tit-for-tat targeting of nuclear facilities. However, these attacks are very likely to avoid radiation leaks and will almost certainly be calculated to avoid nuclear escalation.

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<sup>10</sup> [hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/news/2026/3/21/iran-says-us-and-israel-attacked-natanz-nuclear-facility](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/21/iran-says-us-and-israel-attacked-natanz-nuclear-facility)

<sup>11</sup> [hXXps://www.pbs\[.\]org/newshour/world/read-trumps-full-statement-on-iran-attack](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/read-trumps-full-statement-on-iran-attack)

<sup>12</sup> [hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/news/2026/3/21/iran-says-us-and-israel-attacked-natanz-nuclear-facility](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/21/iran-says-us-and-israel-attacked-natanz-nuclear-facility)

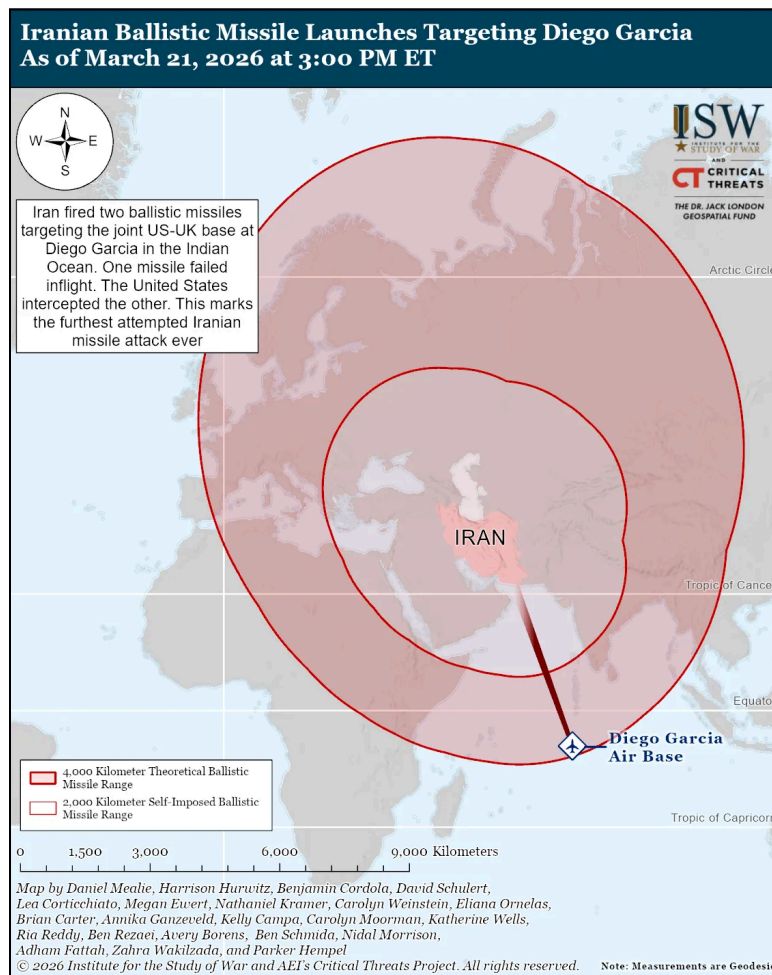
<sup>13</sup>

[hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/news/2026/3/21/iran-strikes-towns-near-israels-nuclear-site-in-escalating-tit-for-tat](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/21/iran-strikes-towns-near-israels-nuclear-site-in-escalating-tit-for-tat)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

## Iran Targets Diego Garcia

Iran reportedly launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile at Diego Garcia, a joint U.S.-UK air base in the Indian Ocean. The missile, likely a modified variant of the Khorramshahr-4 intended for longer range, was intercepted by the U.S. Navy and failed to strike its intended target.<sup>15</sup> The Khorramshahr-4 has a range of 1,250 miles, but the modified version likely has a range as far as 2,500 miles.<sup>16</sup> This extended range very likely brings European countries within a theoretical Iranian target set.



### Range of Khorramshahr-4 and assessed modified variant

Source: Institute for the Study of War

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/22/uk-confirms-iran-fired-two-missiles-at-british-american-base.html>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

At this point, it is unlikely that Iran would target Europe. However, if the conflict persists, and if NATO nations participate in operations to open the SoH, Iran likely retains the ability to reach targets deeper into Europe than previously assessed. The number of modified missiles is unknown, but it is very unlikely that Iran fired its only missile in a failed attempt to strike Diego Garcia. It is almost certain that more modified Khorramshahr-4 missiles remain in Iran's inventory.

## **Cyber Activity**

ZeroFox continues to observe cyber activity related to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. 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).

On March 22, 2026, pro-Iranian threat collective Handala Hack issued a statement that, if Iran's power grid is attacked, the group will conduct retaliatory cyberattacks. The group also claimed that it possesses precise data and coordinates for key water and electricity infrastructure across Israel and posted images of the layouts of Israeli power and desalination plants.

# The Slightest Aggression: Enemy Infrastructure Reduced to Ashes

2026-03-22

Know and be aware: If Iran's power plants are targeted, the response will not only be at the same level but far beyond. As observed today, all information and precise coordinates of key water and electricity infrastructure in the occupied territories are fully stored in Iran's target bank. The slightest aggression against Iran's vital facilities will mean the beginning of a devastating reaction that will turn all these vital infrastructures to ashes. Iran is ready to respond with unimaginable power to any threat or hostile action and impose an irreparable cost on the enemy. Make no mistake; the era of appeasement is over, and any action against Iran will mark the beginning of the collapse of the enemy's vital infrastructures.

## **Handala Hack's statement**

*Source: ZeroFox Intelligence*

Handala Hack has likely been the most active pro-Iran threat actor since the initiation of hostilities on February 28, 2026. The group's claims of data pertaining to Israeli targets is likely legitimate, and the threat collective is very likely to continue targeting organizations in Israel—likely believing they are part of the Iranian strategic response to U.S. and Israeli strikes.

A North Africa-based pro-Palestinian hacktivist group known as Keymous+ conducted cyberattacks in support of Iran, targeting UAE and Kuwait-based entities. As of writing, the group has claimed responsibility for conducting DDoS attacks on the following entities:<sup>17</sup>

### **UAE-based entities**

- u[.]ae
- government[.]ae
- moi[.]gov[.]ae[:.]80

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<sup>17</sup> ZeroFox Intelligence

**Kuwait-based entities**

- e[.]gov[.]kw
- cmgs[.]gov[.]kw
- mod[.]gov[.]kw
- moe[.]edu[.]kw
- mof[.]gov[.]kw

Other threat actors have conducted or claimed cyberattacks against targets in Israel, the United States, and Arab countries across the Middle East. These groups include 313 Team (which has conducted DDoS operations against U.S., Australian, and Kuwaiti targets), Conquerors Electronic Army (which exclusively targeted Israeli organizations), and pro-Russian threat collective NoName057 (which targeted several Israel-based organizations).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> ZeroFox Intelligence

## **| 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%