



| Flash |

Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP

#14: March 9, 2026

F-2026-03-09a

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 4:00 AM (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 #14: March 9, 2026

| Key Findings

- Iran announced Mojtaba Khamenei as its new Supreme Leader, following the death of his father Ali Khamenei. The decision is unlikely to be seen by the United States as a positive move toward ending the conflict.
- Oil prices surged to over USD 116 in overnight trading, before settling around USD 107, as of writing. The price increase is very likely in response to Israeli attacks over the weekend on Iranian oil infrastructure, but there is also a roughly even chance it is partially in reaction to the new Supreme Leader, whose appointment is likely seen as a sign of a longer war.
- Iran continued firing missiles and drones at regional targets, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. Saudi Arabia warned Iran to cease its attacks on regional states.
- Two Iranian ships reportedly departed a Chinese chemical storage port this week, raising questions about China’s support to Iran amid the conflict. It is very unlikely China will become militarily involved, but it is almost certain it will continue to provide material support to Iran.

| Latest Details

Iran announced Mojtaba Khamenei as its new Supreme Leader, following the death of his father Ali Khamenei. The new Supreme Leader, supported by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and chosen by the 88-member Assembly of Experts, is the second son of the previous ruler of Iran and is a mid-level cleric who has never run for public office before.¹

- The selection of Mojtaba Khamenei as Supreme Leader is an indication that hardliners in the regime—most notably the IRGC—retain power in Tehran, as Mojtaba is likely to continue his father’s policies.
- On March 5, 2026, U.S. President Donald Trump suggested that Mojtaba Khamenei would be an unacceptable choice,² suggesting the United States is unlikely to see the appointment as a positive move toward ending the conflict.



New Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei

Source: BBC

Mojtaba Khamenei’s appointment as the Islamic Republic’s third Supreme Leader will almost certainly be seen by both the United States and Israel as an indication that the

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/3/8/who-is-mojtaba-khamenei-a-contender-for-irans-leadership-a-mid-war>

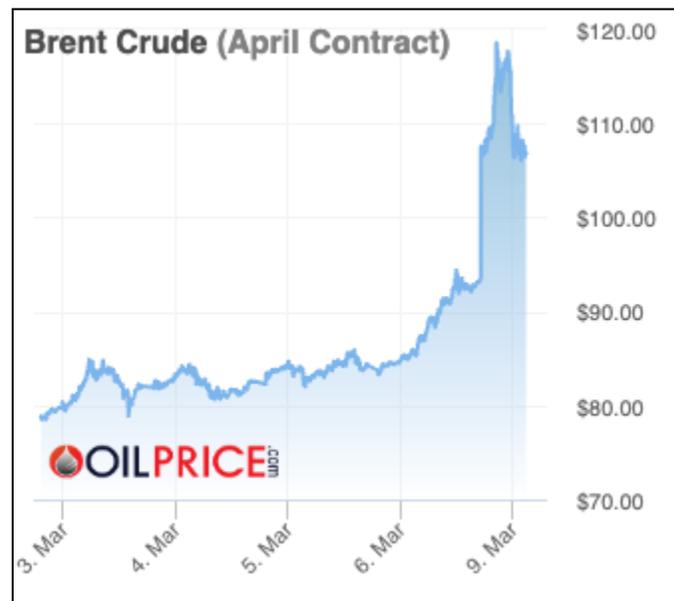
² <https://www.newsweek.com/trump-on-new-iran-supreme-leader-mojtaba-khamenei-11642307>

Iranian regime intends to continue the conflict. Mojtaba Khamenei is very likely to continue the hardline policies of his father, and his appointment indicates the IRGC very likely holds the most power in the Iranian government.

Oil Prices Surge

Brent crude, the industry standard for crude oil prices, surged to over USD 116 per barrel in Asian markets, before settling around USD 107 per barrel, as of writing.³ The surge in price is very likely a market reaction to Israeli targeting of Iranian oil facilities over the weekend; black smoke covered Tehran following attacks on at least three sites near the capital.⁴

- There is also a roughly even chance the surge is partially in response to the appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei as Supreme Leader, which is likely seen as an indication of a prolonged conflict.



Brent crude prices as of 4:00 AM (EST) on March 9, 2026

Source: <https://oilprice.com/oil-price-charts/>

³ <https://oilprice.com/oil-price-charts/>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clygpxq41l3o>

Bahrain’s national oil company, Bapco, declared force majeure following more Iranian attacks on the island nation’s oil infrastructure.⁵ This is the second force majeure declaration in as many days—after Kuwait declared one over the weekend—and will likely be followed by declarations by other Gulf states in the coming days. Cuts in oil production across the region will almost certainly put more strain on global oil markets and will very likely contribute to more price rises.

Iranian Strikes

Iran continued firing missiles and drones at regional targets, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. In Bahrain, 32 people were injured by a drone attack on the capital city of Manama. All those injured were Bahraini citizens, and the youngest victim was a two-month-old.⁶

Saudi authorities reported that a “military projectile” killed two people when it struck a residential area in Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia.⁷ Al-Kharj is the location of Prince Sultan Air Base, a large U.S. base in the region, which was likely the intended target of the strike.

Missile and drone attacks hit targets in Kurdish areas of Iraq, including U.S. forces near Erbil, Iraq.⁸ The strikes in Iraq were likely conducted by both Iran itself, as well as Iranian-backed, Iraqi Shia militias. These attacks are almost certainly intended to deter Kurdish ground incursions into Iran, which have been rumored for several days.

Saudi Arabia warned Iran that Tehran would be the “biggest loser” if it continues attacking regional states.¹⁰ The warning came after yet another Iranian attempt to strike the Shaybah oil field and likely represents a wider sentiment from Arab leaders. Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said his nation felt a sense

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[hXXps://www.reuters.com/business/energy/bahrains-bapco-announces-force-majeure-operations-2026-03-09/](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/bahrains-bapco-announces-force-majeure-operations-2026-03-09/)

⁶ [hXXps://www.bbc.com/news/live/cz0g2yg3579t?post=asset%3A58cf09e3-4413-41d4-ad38-c6d229cbe729](https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cz0g2yg3579t?post=asset%3A58cf09e3-4413-41d4-ad38-c6d229cbe729)

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[hXXps://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/8/two-killed-in-saudi-arabia-after-projectile-falls-on-residential-building](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/8/two-killed-in-saudi-arabia-after-projectile-falls-on-residential-building)

⁸ [hXXps://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2026/03/iran-escalates-attacks-on-kurdistan-region-of-iraq.php](https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2026/03/iran-escalates-attacks-on-kurdistan-region-of-iraq.php)

⁹ [hXXps://www.reuters.com/world/iran-live-slain-khameneis-son-is-irans-new-supreme-leader-2026-03-09/](https://www.reuters.com/world/iran-live-slain-khameneis-son-is-irans-new-supreme-leader-2026-03-09/)

¹⁰ [hXXps://apnews.com/live/iran-war-israel-trump-03-08-2026#0000019c-d064-db8e-a5df-f27e40e80000](https://apnews.com/live/iran-war-israel-trump-03-08-2026#0000019c-d064-db8e-a5df-f27e40e80000)

of betrayal from Iranian attacks and suggested that Iran had miscalculated in its strategy to spread the conflict to the wider region.

- Iran's neighbors are very likely tiring of missile and drone attacks on their territory, especially those that do not target military facilities. While currently unlikely, there is an increasing chance that Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates (UAE) join the U.S.-led operation in a more offensive capacity.

Diplomatic Evacuations

The U.S. State Department ordered non-essential embassy personnel, as well as dependents of U.S. government employees, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to evacuate the Arab kingdom.¹¹ Additionally, Australia ordered dependents of diplomatic staff in the UAE to depart following more attacks in the country.

Western nations expanding diplomatic evacuations in the region suggests that governments likely believe the conflict is entering a new phase rather than winding down. Embassies in the region likely do not have confidence in their ability to protect non-essential civilians if the war continues to escalate.

Iranian Ships Depart China

Two Iranian ships reportedly departed a Chinese chemical storage port this week, raising questions about China's support to Iran amid the conflict.¹² The ships were likely carrying sodium perchlorate, a key ingredient in the solid fuel used in missile construction.

China has long been a supporter of Tehran and routinely provides weapons and parts to build missiles and drones.¹³ Beijing likely sees aiding Iran as vital to its own national security—as Iran is a key source of cheap oil—and will very likely seek more ways to support its Middle East ally without directly confronting the United States.

- It is very unlikely China will become militarily involved in the conflict, but it is almost certain it will continue to provide material support to Iran (especially weapons and missile parts) to reconstitute Iran's capabilities.

¹¹ <https://x.com/USAinKSA/status/2030811967653298423>

¹² <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-889292>

¹³ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/china-has-sent-attack-drones-iran-it-discusses-ballistic-missile-sales>

Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

| | Red | Amber |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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. | 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. |
| 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. | 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 | Clear |
| 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. | Sources may use TLP:CLEAR when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release. |
| 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. | 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% |