

Gulf Studies Report 6

The U.S./Israel War against Iran and its Implications on GCC Security

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INTRODUCTION

On February 28, 2026, the U.S. and Israel launched strikes across Iran, marking the beginning of the second war between these states since July 2025. However, in less than three hours, Iran responded in retaliation, targeting its GCC neighbors. Iranian officials then went on to justify these strikes by claiming that they only targeted U.S. military bases on GCC territories from which attacks against Iran were launched or facilitated. This came despite repeated assertions by GCC states in the weeks prior to the conflict that their territories and airspace would under no circumstances be used to facilitate or initiate any strikes against other countries. Additionally, while Iran claimed that its missiles and drones would only hit military targets, the vast majority of its attacks have targeted civilian infrastructure including airports, hotels, and critical oil and gas facilities across the region. Iran has also threatened to target banks and educational institutions associated with U.S. investors or shareholders.

In response to these attacks, GCC states have responded by implementing precautionary measures such as airspace closure, suspending commercial flights and public activities, and shifting to remote work and education. Several oil and gas companies were forced to declare force majeure after being directly targeted and compelled to shut down operations until hostilities ended. Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz has restricted commercial activity and energy, adversely impacting global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies from the GCC, while also causing severe global shortages in the supply of critical materials such as fertilizers, helium, and other critical materials. Other major sectors such as education, transportation, tourism, and real estate have also been disrupted.

This report aims to assess the impact of Iranian attacks on GCC security. It is structured to examine each of the six GCC countries individually across three key dimensions: the nature and scale of attacks on each state, the internal and international official statements issued by government authorities, and the domestic measures implemented in response to the attacks and threats. This structure allows for a comprehensive and comparative understanding of how each state responded to the Iranian attacks and the evolving security threats. The report covers the period from February 28 to April 26.

Maryam Al-Kuwari

The State of Qatar

Scale of Attacks

Qatar was shocked by the escalation of events on February 28, when Iranian missiles were launched against civilian infrastructure in its territory. Qatar and Iran have generally maintained a pragmatic relationship and have displayed diplomatic coordination during Qatar's mediation efforts between Iran and the United States. On August 15, 2023, successful Qatari mediation efforts resulted in the Iranian-American Prisoner Swap Deal.¹ Despite their relationship, citizens and residents in Qatar reported hearing waves of explosions, which authorities then reported as the result of intercepting Iran's missiles by Qatari defense interceptions.² The attacks continued into the evening as authorities reported that dozens of missiles were launched, most of which were successfully intercepted. However, two missiles reached Al-Udeid Base, and debris from the intercepted missiles resulted in several civilian injuries in multiple locations across the state.³ Most of the injuries were caused by debris falling into the industrial area, with 16 people confirmed injured, ranging in severity.⁴

In a severe act of escalation on March 2, Iran targeted the world's largest LNG facility in Ras Laffan. QatarEnergy, the operator of the facility in Ras Laffan Industrial City and Mesaieed Industrial City that cater for approximately 20% of the global LNG production,⁵ announced that

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs – State of Qatar, “Official Spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Qatari Efforts Led to Iranian-American Prisoner Swap Deal,” *Latest News*, August 15, 2023, <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/1445/01/28/official-spokesperson-for-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-qatari-efforts-led-to-iranian-american-prisoner-swap-deals>

² “Qatar Ministry of Defence Intercepts Missiles: Al Jazeera,” *The Peninsula*, February 28, 2026, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/28/02/2026/qatar-ministry-of-defence-intercepts-missiles-al-jazeera>

³ Qatar News Agency, “Ministries of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs: Armed Forces Interrupted Waves of Iranian Missiles, No Casualties,” *Qatar News Agency*, March 1, 2026, <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=ministries-of-defense-interior-foreign-affairs-armed-forces-interrupted-waves-of-iranian-missiles-no-casualties&date=1/03/2026>

Enes Abuomer, “Missile Debris Injures Eight in Qatar After Iran Launches Barrage,” *Al Jazeera*, February 28, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/28/missile-debris-injures-eight-in-qatar-after-iran-launches-barrage>.

⁴ Enes Abuomer, “Missile debris injures 16 in Qatar after Iran launches barrage,” *Al Jazeera*, February 28, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/28/missile-debris-injures-eight-in-qatar-after-iran-launches-barrage?>

⁵ “Qatar's Energy Boss Says He Had Warned of Dangers of Provoking Iran,” *Reuters*, March 20, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/qatars-energy-boss-says-he-had-warned-dangers-provoking-iran-2026-03-20/>

as a result of the attack, the operations at the facility had to be suspended, and declared force majeure.⁶

Minister of Energy, also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, Saad Al Kaabi, reported that approximately 17% of the Ras Laffan facility was destroyed.⁷ Among the most critical components destroyed were all the cold box units used for purifying and chilling the gas prior to export.⁸ The attack resulted in severe operational and infrastructural damage and the scale of destruction could require up to five years to repair.

The following day, on March 3, Dr. Majed Al-Ansari, the Advisor to the Prime Minister and the Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirmed that Qatar's armed forces had successfully intercepted two Iranian missiles aimed at Hamad International Airport. Al-Ansari condemned Iran's military attacks across the GCC, noting that the missile attacks targeted national territories, civilian infrastructure and the most critical economic assets in Qatar.⁹

On March 3, Qatari officials announced the arrest of ten suspected members of two cells operating for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Seven suspects admitted to taking part in espionage, while three others were taking part in sabotage operations.¹⁰

Following heightened security threats, officials began evacuating residential areas located near the U.S. Embassy.¹¹ Several other residential areas were later evacuated as the threat of attacks increased. The IRGC issued a list of potential targets, including American-affiliated

⁶ Al Jazeera, "Gas Prices Soar as QatarEnergy Halts LNG Production After Iran Attacks," *Al Jazeera*, March 2, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/2/qatarenergy-worlds-largest-lng-firm-halts-production-after-iran-attacks>

⁷ Edna Mohamed and Reuters, "Qatar Says Iran Missile Attack Sparks Fire, Causes Damage at Gas Facility," *Al Jazeera*, March 18, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/20/qatarenergy-ceo-says-warned-us-industry-officials-against-attack-on-energy>.

⁸ "Qatar's Energy Boss Says He Had Warned of Dangers of Provoking Iran," *Reuters*, March 20, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/qatars-energy-boss-says-he-had-warned-dangers-provoking-iran-2026-03-20/>

⁹ "Advisor to Prime Minister and Spokesperson for Foreign Ministry: Qatar Resilient Against any Aggression Targeting Its Security and Sovereignty," *MOFA*, March 3, 2026, <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2026/03/03/advisor-to-prime-minister-and-spokesperson-for-foreign-ministry--qatar-resilient-against-any-aggression-targeting-its-security-and-sovereignty>

¹⁰ "Qatar Announces Arrest of Iranian IRGC Sleeper Cells," *Al Jazeera*, March 3, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/3/qatar-announces-arrest-of-iranian-irgc-sleeper-cells>

¹¹ Khitam Al Amir, "Qatar Evacuates Residents Near US Embassy in Doha," *Gulf News*, March 5, 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/qatar/qatar-evacuates-residents-near-us-embassy-in-doha-1.500463758>

businesses and technology companies, as well as American universities.¹² As a precautionary measure, residents in areas such as Education City, which hosts American universities, were asked to evacuate.¹³ Together, these measures reflected a broader effort to mitigate security threats and protect civilians amid escalating threats.¹⁴

On March 22, while on routine surveillance duty, a Qatari military helicopter crashed into Qatari territorial waters, resulting in the deaths of all seven personnel on board. The victims included four members of the Qatari Armed Forces and three Turkish nationals, one serving with the Qatar–Turkey joint air forces and two technicians. In a joint statement, the Qatari and Turkish defense ministries confirmed that the helicopter crashed due to a technical malfunction.¹⁵

Finally, on March 31, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar stated that the absence of phone security alerts does not indicate an end to the Iranian attacks on the state, noting that Iran continued to target numerous locations in Qatar. However, Qatari armed forces were successful in intercepting over 90 percent of incoming missiles and drones.¹⁶

Official Statements

Official statements are a key method of domestic crisis management.¹⁷ They aim to provide the public with essential information while maintaining the solid state-society relationship

¹² “Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Order US Company Employees to Evacuate Gulf Offices,” *Türkiye Today*, March 16, 2026, <https://www.turkiyetoday.com/region/irans-revolutionary-guards-order-us-company-employees-to-evacuate-gulf-offices-3216353>

“Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Threatens US Universities in the Middle East,” *Le Monde*, March 29, 2026, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2026/03/29/iran-s-revolutionary-guard-threatens-us-universities-in-the-middle-east_6751905_4.html

¹³ Mohamed Elashi, “Qatar Repels Overnight Iran Raid as Evacuations Announced, Officials Outline Supply Readiness,” *Euronews*, March 14, 2026, <https://www.euronews.com/2026/03/14/qatar-repels-overnight-iran-raid-as-evacuations-announced-officials-outline-supply-readine>

¹⁴ “Advisor to Prime Minister: Stopping Iranian Attacks Requires Clear Decision, Not Investigative Committees,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Qatar)*, March 16, 2026, <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2026/03/16/advisor-to-prime-minister--stopping-iranian-attacks-requires-clear-decision--not-investigative-committees>

¹⁵ “All Seven on Board Qatar Military Helicopter Killed in Crash,” *Al Jazeera*, March 22, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/22/six-killed-as-qatar-army-helicopter-crashes-due-to-technical-malfunction-2>.

¹⁶ “Over 90% of Incoming Threats Intercepted,” *Qatar Tribune*, March 17, 2026, <https://www.qatar-tribune.com/article/224529/nation/over-90-of-incoming-threats-intercepted>

¹⁷ Cedric Crelo, Juliana Dahl “When Every Word Matters: The Importance of Crisis Communication,” *European Stability Mechanism* April 8, 2025, <https://www.esm.europa.eu/blog/when-every-word-matters-importance-crisis-communication>

necessary to overcome such crises. Public statements made by the Qatari officials reflect a careful and well-calculated balance between political transparency and social security. They serve to reaffirm the relationship between the state and its citizens, emphasizing mutual trust, good faith and most importantly, coordinated action during challenging times.

Since the beginning of the crisis, there have been numerous press conferences and interviews on local Qatari channels as well as international media platforms featuring prominent Qatari diplomats. Officials have highlighted Qatar's stance on the war and local updates regarding the political, economic and security situation in the country. Some of the most important official statements from the state were delivered by Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al- Thani, Prime Minister of Qatar, Dr. Mohammed Al Khulaifi, Minister of State, and Dr. Majed Al- Ansari, Spokesperson for Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These statements remained consistent, especially in condemning Iranian attacks on Qatar's infrastructure, as well as in detailing the role of the state in blocking the attacks and maintaining domestic security.

On March 13, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Minister of Interior and the Commander of Qatar's Internal Forces, appeared in an interview on Qatar TV. His interview came in response to public concerns and addressed three main issues concerning the day-to-day state security situation, the provision of essentials such as food and medication, and the availability of potable water.¹⁸

During his interview, Sheikh Khalifa reassured the public that all state institutions are coordinating and working to minimize the impact of the missile strikes and to ensure overall domestic stability. He further reassured the public with plans to increase strategic food reserves to meet public needs for 18 months, while stating that Qatar possesses the world's largest water reserves, sufficient to meet public consumption needs for four months.¹⁹

Furthermore, Qatar issued numerous diplomatic statements directed at Iran through domestic and international platforms. As Iran continued to launch attacks on Qatari civilian infrastructure, tensions with Tehran escalated, leading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue an

¹⁸ "Qatar's Interior Minister Says Security Situation 'Stable' amid Iran War," *Al Jazeera*, March 13, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/13/qatars-interior-minister-says-security-situation-stable-amid-iran-war>

¹⁹ "Qatar Ensuring Public Safety, Continuity of Daily Life," *The Peninsula*, March 15, 2026, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/15/03/2026/qatar-ensuring-public-safety-continuity-of-daily-life>

official note to the Iranian embassy on March 18 during a meeting between Ibrahim Yousif Fakhro, Director of Protocol at MOFA, and Ali Salehabadi, Ambassador of Iran to Qatar,²⁰ declaring the military attaché, the security attaché and the embassy staff as "persona non grata," and giving them a 24-hour notice to leave the country.²¹

Qatar also extended its efforts to cooperate with external actors. As part of broader international efforts to mitigate the conflict and pursue a diplomatic resolution, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad attended the Antalya Diplomacy Forum on April 17.²² Qatar's participation aimed at exploring potential resolutions, particularly in light of the failure of the Islamabad talks, while demonstrating Qatar's continued commitment to resolving the conflict with Iran through diplomatic means.

Domestic Measures

Following the first wave of Iranian attacks on February 28, emergency alerts were issued by the state to all civilian phones, providing strict official safety guidelines for residents to follow.²³ In response to the intensifying security situation on the same day, Qatar temporarily closed its airspace, forcing Qatar Airways to suspend all aviation operations to ensure the safety of domestic and international flights.²⁴

Iran's attacks on Qatar continued into the evening, leading up to a state press conference that brought together officials from the Qatari Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁵ During the press conference, officials addressed the public and provided updates on the domestic security situation, as well as the state's official response to the

²⁰ Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Qatar Declares Iranian Embassy Military, Security Attachés 'Persona Non Grata,'" *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, March 18, 2026, <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2026/03/18/qatar-declares-iranian-embassy-military--security-attaches--persona-non-grata>

²¹ Ibid.

²² "HH the Amir Attends the Opening of Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2026," *Diwan of the State of Qatar*, April 17, 2026, <https://www.diwan.gov.qa/en/briefing-room/news/international-occasions/2026/april/17/hh-the-amir-attends-the-opening-of-antalya-diplomacy-forum-2026>

²³ "Qatar Issues National Emergency Alert, Calls for Public to Stay Indoors," *The Peninsula*, February 28, 2026, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/28/02/2026/qatar-issues-national-emergency-alert-calls-for-public-to-stay-indoors>

²⁴ Simon Calder, "Travel Chaos as Dubai and Doha Flights Suspended After US and Israeli Strikes on Iran," *The Independent* February 28, 2026, <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/qatar-airways-flights-suspended-doha-iran-us-strikes-trump-b2929410.html>

²⁵ "Qatar Fully Ready, Capable to Protect Its Sovereignty and Respond Decisively to Any External Aggression," *The Peninsula*, March 1, 2026, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/01/03/2026/qatar-fully-ready-capable-to-protect-its-sovereignty-and-respond-decisively-to-any-external-aggression>

unfolding events. Furthermore, officials outlined immediate and mandatory measures, including the implementation of remote working arrangements for all public sector employees, excluding those working in military, defense and health-related jobs.²⁶ Furthermore, the public was instructed to avoid spreading rumors and to rely only on official state sources for information and news regarding the situation.²⁷ The press conference concluded with the officials reassuring the population that the State of Qatar, through the coordination with the Ministry of Defense and all other related entities, will take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of its citizens.

Shortly after the press conferences concluded, the Ministry of Education announced that all schools and universities in Qatar were transitioning to remote learning until further notice.²⁸ To reaffirm the measures mentioned during the press conference, the Ministry of Interior implemented strict legal and administrative penalties. These include imposing fines, such as a 100,000 QR fine for sharing videos or photos of the attacks, and the possibility of arrest for individuals spreading misinformation.²⁹ The MOI further announced that the Economic and Cyber Crimes Combating Department at the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation arrested 194 individuals from various nationalities convicted of these crimes.

Four weeks later, after thoroughly evaluating domestic security conditions and in an attempt to restore normalcy and the routine functioning of the state, the Ministry of Interior announced the resumption of in-office work on March 24, while the Ministry of Education reinstated in-person schooling on March 29.³⁰

²⁶ “Qatar Announces Remote Work for Government Employees on Sunday,” *The Peninsula Qatar*, February 28, 2026, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/28/02/2026/qatar-announces-remote-work-for-government-employees-on-sunday>

²⁷ Mohamed Elashi & Aadel Haleem, “Qatar Says ‘Situation Secure’ After Iranian Attacks Foiled, Urges Vigilance on Rumours,” *Euronews*, March 1, 2026, <https://www.euronews.com/2026/02/28/qatar-says-situation-secure-after-iranian-attacks-foiled-urges-vigilance-on-rumours>

²⁸ *The Peninsula*, “Qatar Fully Ready, Capable to Protect Its Sovereignty and Respond Decisively to Any External Aggression,” *The Peninsula*, March 1, 2026, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/01/03/2026/qatar-fully-ready-capable-to-protect-its-sovereignty-and-respond-decisively-to-any-external-aggression>

²⁹ “The Gulf States in Wartime: The Battle to Control Information,” *Daraj*, March 11, 2026, <https://daraj.media/en/the-gulf-states-in-wartime-the-battle-to-control-information/>

³⁰ “Qatar Resumes Full Workplace Attendance from Today,” *Qatar Tribune*, March 24, 2026, <https://www.qatar-tribune.com/article/225510/front/qatar-resumes-full-workplace-attendance-from-today>

:Qatar Announces Gradual Return to In-Person Learning After Eid; Full School Attendance from March 29,” *The Peninsula Qatar*, March 23, 2026, <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/23/03/2026/qatar-announces-gradual-return-to-in-person-learning-after-eid-full-school-attendance-from-march-29>

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Scale of Attacks

On February 28, loud explosions were reported in the Saudi capital, Riyadh as well as the Eastern Province.³¹ Iran launched attacks on multiple sites in the kingdom, including the eastern region which is home to key oil facilities and large urban centers, Prince Sultan Air Base, Riyadh Airport, Shaybah oil field, SAMREF refinery, and the ARAMCO oil refinery in Ras Tanura which was attacked multiple times, resulting in casualties. The refinery was briefly shut down as a result of the attacks but was reopened later.³² While Iran claimed that it is targeting the U.S. and Israeli assets, its attacks have been against civilian and infrastructure targets across the kingdom. Saudi Arabia has experienced near-daily attacks by drones and missiles, although the majority of these have been intercepted by Saudi air defenses.

On March 3, the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh was targeted by two drones, resulting in a minor fire and some material damage.³³ On March 4, the ARAMCO oil refinery in Ras Tanura was hit for the second time by a projectile, reportedly resulting in the death of a USMC Lance corporal.³⁴ On March 8, the Pentagon announced that a U.S. soldier died due to an Iranian missile attack on a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia, marking the seventh U.S. fatality in the war against Iran.³⁵ On March 9, the Saudi Civil Defense announced that two Bangladeshi nationals were killed and 12 others were injured after a projectile fell on a residential area in Saudi Arabia's Al-Kharj governorate.³⁶ On March 27, missiles and drones struck Prince Sultan Air Base, wounding 12 U.S. troops and damaging at least two KC-135 aerial refueling aircraft. Officials described the attack as "one of

³¹ AFP: Loud explosions heard in Saudi capital Riyadh, Middle East Eye, February 28, 2026.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/afp-loud-explosions-heard-saudi-capital-riyadh>

³² Saudi Aramco restarted Ras Tanura oil refinery on March 13, IIR says, Reuters, March 18, 2026.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/saudi-aramco-restarted-ras-tanura-oil-refinery-march-13-iir-says-2026-03-18/>

³³Timour Azhari, US embassy in Riyadh hit by drones, Saudi defence ministry says, Reuters, March 3, 2026.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/fire-us-embassy-complex-riyadh-after-blast-heard-sources-say-2026-03-03/>

³⁴ Ras Tanura hit again as projectile strikes Saudi Aramco facility, The Economic Times, March 4, 2026.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/ras-tanura-hit-again-as-projectile-strikes-saudi-aramco-facility/articleshow/129019147.cms?from=mdr>

³⁵ Eric Schmitt and Helene Cooper, Pentagon Announces Seventh U.S. Death in War with Iran, The New York Times, March 8, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/08/world/middleeast/american-soldier-killed-iran-war.html>

³⁶ 2 Bangladeshi nationals killed, 11 injured after projectile falls on residential area in Al-Kharj, Arab News, March 9, 2026. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2635743/amp>

the most serious” breaches of American air defenses in the war with Iran.³⁷ Iran has also attacked the East-West pipeline, also known as Petroline, which links Saudi Arabia’s major oilfields in the country’s Eastern Province with the port of Yanbu. The pipeline was key to reroute oil away from Strait of Hormuz that came under attack by Iran.³⁸

According to reports, up to half of the nearly 1,000 drone attacks on the kingdom were launched from Iraq.³⁹ Unlike Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE, Saudi Arabia did not report any arrests of individuals or cells operating on behalf of Iran and its proxies. Rather than adopting an offensive strategy in response to Iran’s attacks, Saudi Arabia preferred containment with emphasis on diplomatic and defensive measures, and by participating in regional efforts to end the war, while intercepting Iranian missiles and drones targeting its territories.

Official Statements

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia strongly condemned the “blatant and cowardly Iranian attacks” that targeted Riyadh and the Eastern Province, confirming that the attacks were repelled.⁴⁰ In a statement issued by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the kingdom stated that they “cannot be justified under any pretext or in any way, and they came despite the Iranian authorities knowing that the Kingdom had confirmed that it would not allow its airspace and territory to be used to target Iran.”⁴¹ The Saudi cabinet also stated that it will take all necessary measures to defend Saudi Arabia’s security, territory, citizens, and residents.⁴² Despite the attacks, Saudi Arabia intensified diplomatic backchannels with Iran to try and contain the war.⁴³ However, as the attacks persisted,

³⁷ Iranian strike on Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia injures 12 US troops, *Turkiye Today*, March 28, 2026. <https://www.turkiyetoday.com/region/iranian-strike-on-prince-sultan-air-base-in-saudi-arabia-wounds-12-us-troops-2-seriou-3217035>

³⁸ Iran attacks on crucial Saudi pipeline and production facilities slash kingdom’s oil output, *CNBC*, April 9, 2026. <https://www.cnbcm.com/2026/04/09/iran-war-oil-saudi-arabia-east-west-pipeline.html>

³⁹ Stephen Kalin, Saudi Arabia and Iraq Are Caught in a Hidden War Within the War, *The Wall Street Journal*, April 20, 2026. https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-iraq-conflict-iran-war-0d9dd8d8?eafs_enabled=false

⁴⁰ Saudi Arabia Condemns in Strongest Terms Iranian Attacks that Targeted Riyadh and Eastern Region, *Qatar News Agency*, February 28, 2026. <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=saudi-arabia-condemns-in-strongest-terms-iranian-attacks-that-targeted-riyadh-and-eastern-region&date=28/02/2026>

⁴¹ Multiple Arab states that host US assets targeted in Iran retaliation, *Al Jazeera*, February 28, 2026. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/28/multiple-gulf-arab-states-that-host-us-assets-targeted-in-iran-retaliation>

⁴² Saudi Arabia to take all necessary measures to defend its security, cabinet says, *Reuters*, March 4, 2026. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-take-all-necessary-measures-defend-its-security-cabinet-says-2026-03-03/>

⁴³ Saudi Arabia intensifies engagement with Iran to defuse war, *Bloomberg*, March 6, 2026. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-03-06/saudi-arabia-has-intensified-direct-line-to-iran-to-defuse-war>

the kingdom hardened its rhetoric in a statement and warned that “if Iran presses ahead with its attacks, it would bear the heaviest diplomatic, economic, and strategic consequences, and be the biggest loser.”⁴⁴

On March 19, Saudi Arabia hosted a meeting of foreign ministers from Arab and Islamic countries to discuss the Iranian attacks on the GCC states.⁴⁵ The gathering was intended as a diplomatic effort to discuss ways to de-escalate the ongoing war. However, during the meeting, Iran launched ballistic missiles targeting Riyadh and the Eastern Province but these were intercepted by air defenses. At the press conference, Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, warned that his country had limited patience with Iran and reserved the right “to take military actions if deemed necessary,” adding, “we will not shy away from protecting our country and our economic resources.”⁴⁶

He further stated that “what little trust” there was between the Kingdom and Iran had “completely been shattered.” The two countries had re-established diplomatic relations in March 2023 through a China-brokered deal, and their rapprochement has persisted despite the shock of the Israeli-U.S. military strikes on Iran in June 2025. However, the missile and drone attacks that started on February 28 have undermined the relationship.⁴⁷ Despite asking the Iranian military attaché and other embassy personnel to leave the country,⁴⁸ Saudi Arabia has not closed its embassy in Tehran.

On March 26, Saudi Arabia, along with the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Jordan, jointly condemned Iran and its affiliated armed groups in Iraq, as well as its attacks against countries in the region and their facilities and infrastructure.⁴⁹ Riyadh also welcomed the UN

⁴⁴ Iran will be the ‘biggest loser’ from escalation: Riyadh, Arab News, March 9, 2026.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2635748/saudi-arabia>

⁴⁵ Foreign ministers from Arab and Muslim countries meet in Riyadh over Iranian attacks on Gulf States, Associated Press, March 19, 2026.

⁴⁶ Vivian Nereim, Saudi Official Warns Patience Is Limited as Iranian Attacks Barrage Kingdom, New York Times, March 19, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/19/world/middleeast/iran-missiles-saudi-arabia-riyadh-yanbu.html>

⁴⁷ Aziz Alghashian, ‘Saudi Outrage at Iran and Israel’, In Iran War: Gulf Unity, Economic Shocks, and Regime Scenarios, AGSI, March 2, 2026. <https://agsi.org/analysis/iran-war-gulf-unity-economic-shocks-and-regime-scenarios/>

⁴⁸ Saudi Arabia expels Iran military attaché, four embassy staff, Al Jazeera, March 21, 2026.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/21/saudi-arabia-expels-iran-military-attache-and-four-team-members>

⁴⁹ Six Arab Nations Issue Statement Condemning Attacks by Iran-aligned Iraqi Factions, Asharq Al-Awsat, March 26, 2026. <https://english.aawsat.com/gulf/5255360-six-arab-nations-issue-statement-condemning-attacks-iran-aligned-iraqi-factions>

Security Council's adoption of Resolution 2817, co-sponsored by all six GCC states, which condemned Iran's attacks against the GCC states and Jordan.

Riyadh has also engaged in diplomatic efforts with regional powers, holding talks with the foreign ministers of Turkey, Pakistan, and Egypt on the sidelines of the summit held in Riyadh, and discussing ways to coordinate their efforts for the first time.⁵⁰ Following this meeting, the foreign ministers of the four-nation bloc met in Islamabad to accelerate diplomatic efforts.⁵¹ Amid the war, Saudi foreign minister held a phone call with his Iranian counterpart to discuss ways to defuse tensions.⁵² Facing threats to its security, Saudi Arabia has also signed a deal with Ukraine for defense expertise and technology.⁵³ Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, together with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, also warned that continued Iranian attacks on other GCC states may lead to a broader regional escalation.⁵⁴

Domestic Measures

In line with broader regional responses to the attacks, Saudi Arabia adopted precautionary measures. Although Saudi authorities did not announce a shift to remote government services, some businesses and U.S. firms transitioned to remote work, citing security threats.⁵⁵

Since the onset of the attacks, GCC states have been alerting citizens and residents through sirens, either via mobile phones or loudspeaker systems. However, Saudi citizens and residents received their first emergency phone alerts on March 18 after the first attacks, warning of "hostile

⁵⁰ Ragip Soylu, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan meet as Ankara pushes for a security pact, Middle East Eye, March 21, 2026. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-saudi-arabia-egypt-and-pakistan-meet-ankara-pushes-security-pact>

⁵¹ Patrick Wintour, Islamabad talks signal emergence of new four-nation bloc in Middle East, The Guardian, March 30, 2026. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/mar/30/egypt-pakistan-saudi-arabia-turkey-talks-embryo-new-order>

⁵² Saudi FM receives phone call from Iranian counterpart, discusses ways to 'reduce tension', Al Arabiya English, April 9, 2026. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2026/04/09/saudi-fm-receives-phone-call-from-iranian-counterpart-discusses-ways-to-reduce-tension->

⁵³ Ukraine signs deal with Saudi Arabia offering drone expertise, BBC, March 27, 2026. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2r4wxdw3no>

⁵⁴ Saudi crown prince, UAE president warn of dangerous escalation as Iranian attacks continue, Arab News, March 16, 2026. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2636547/saudi-arabia>

⁵⁵ Stephen Kalin, Saudi Business Hubs Shift to Remote Work After Iran Threats to U.S. Firms, The Wall Street Journal, April 2, 2026. https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/iran-war-news-trump/card/saudi-business-hubs-shift-to-remote-work-after-iran-threats-to-u-s-firms-PEA0Xm0ofTukx1NozJFg?eafs_enabled=false

aerial threats.⁵⁶ Phone alerts were activated the day Riyadh hosted the regional summit in order to discuss ways to end the war.

When Iran attacked key transit airports across other GCC countries, it disrupted flights as countries, such as Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, and the UAE, closed their airspace. With airports in the GCC forced to suspend operations, Saudi Arabia's airports, particularly in Dammam and Riyadh, remained operational and became key transit hubs.⁵⁷ Travelers stranded in Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait relied on Saudi airports for transit.⁵⁸ The impact of these disruptions extended beyond transportation to major international events in the region. On March 14, Formula One announced the cancellation of Saudi Arabian and Bahrain Grand Prix 2026 due to the outbreak of the war.⁵⁹

The United Arab Emirates

Scale of Attacks

Since the beginning of the war, the United Arab Emirates has been the most heavily attacked by Iran in terms of number of missiles and drones combined. According to official figures, as of March 31, the UAE air defense systems had engaged and intercepted a total of 433 ballistic missiles, 19 cruise missiles and 1,977 drones.⁶⁰ According to Horizon Brief database, in the period between February 28 and April 8, Iran attacked the UAE with 2,221 drones, 520 ballistic missiles, 26 cruise missiles accounting for 35% of the total Iranian assaults.⁶¹ Following the announcement of a ceasefire, the Ministry of Defence reported that on 8 April, UAE air defence systems intercepted 17 ballistic missiles and 35 drones launched from Iran.⁶² Since the onset of

⁵⁶ Saudi citizens receive phone alerts warning of hostile threat in Riyadh, The Telegraph Online, March 18, 2026. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/world/us-israel-versus-iran-war-day-nineteen-live-updates/cid/2151944>

⁵⁷ Hundreds of thousands of travelers stranded by flight disruptions after attack on Iran, AP, March 1, 2026. <https://apnews.com/article/iran-israel-us-flights-airspace-travel-0346e29ee99eae2838c8e08f4facb78>

⁵⁸ Thousands of flights cancelled as Iran conflict upends global air travel, Reuters, March 1, 2026. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-iran-conflict-disrupts-thousands-flights-travel-chaos-deepens-2026-03-01/>

⁵⁹ Giles Richards, F1 cancels Bahrain and Saudi Arabia GPs because of Middle East war, The Guardian, March 14, 2026. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2026/mar/14/formula-one-cancel-bahrain-saudi-arabia-grand-prix-war-middle-east>

⁶⁰ Huda Ata, "11 Killed, 188 Injured Since the Start of Iranian Attacks on the UAE," *Gulf News*, March 28, 2026, <https://www.gulfnews.com/uae/11-killed-188-injured-since-the-start-of-iranian-attacks-on-the-uae-1.500492023>

⁶¹ Ibrahim Jalal, "Data: 83% of Iran-Linked Attacks Struck Arab States, Not Israel," *Substack*, April 7, 2026, <https://ibrahimjalal.substack.com/p/data-83-of-iran-linked-attacks-struck>

⁶² Emirates News Agency (WAM), "UAE Air Defences Engage 17 Ballistic Missiles, 35 UAVs," April 8, 2026, [UAE Air Defences Engage 17 Ballistic Missiles, 35 UAVs](https://www.wam.ae/en/News/2026/04/08/uae-air-defences-engage-17-ballistic-missiles-35-uavs).

the Iranian attacks, the UAE Ministry of Defence reported on April 9 that, in its latest data shared, UAE air defences have engaged a total of 537 ballistic missiles, 26 cruise missiles, and 2,256 UAVs.⁶³ In total, these attacks resulted in 13 deaths and 224 injuries.⁶⁴ The main targets of these attacks were not military sites, as numerous residential and commercial facilities were also hit and damaged. On March 1, attacks struck major sites across the UAE, including Burj Al Arab, Dubai International Airport, Jebel Ali Port, and Zayed International Airport in Abu Dhabi, causing fires, casualties, and damage to key infrastructure and landmarks.⁶⁵ On March 3, a drone strike caused a fire near the U.S. Consulate in Dubai, but authorities confirmed it was quickly contained with no reported injuries.⁶⁶ On March 10, a drone attack targeted Abu Dhabi's Ruwais Industrial Complex, sparking a fire at the largest refinery in the Middle East which processes about 922,000 barrels of crude oil and condensate per day, but no injuries were reported.⁶⁷ On March 16, a drone strike caused a fire in a fuel tank near Dubai International Airport, prompting authorities to temporarily suspend all flights out of caution. Flight operations gradually resumed later that day after the fire was contained with no reported injuries.⁶⁸

While Abu Dhabi and Dubai experienced majority of the strikes, on March 16, a drone attack targeted the strategically significant port and industrial zone at Fujairah, one of the region's largest oil storage and export hubs. Located on the UAE's eastern coast along the Gulf of Oman, Fujairah allows vessels to access the port without navigating the Strait of Hormuz, underscoring its critical importance.⁶⁹ On April 6, authorities in Fujairah said they were responding to an

⁶³ UAE Ministry of Defence, "Ministry of Defence confirms UAE airspace free of any air threats," *X (formerly Twitter)*, April 9, 2026, <https://x.com/modgovae/status/2042196918672191644>

⁶⁴ Ajanta Paul, "UAE Intercepts 17 Ballistic Missiles, 35 Drones After US-Iran Ceasefire," *Khaleej Times*, April 8, 2026, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/uae-intercepts-17-ballistic-missiles-35-drones-april-8>

⁶⁵ "Iran Attacks Luxury Hotels and Airports in Dubai," *Le Monde* (with AFP), March 1, 2026, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2026/03/01/iran-attacks-luxury-hotels-and-airports-in-dubai_6750972_4.html

⁶⁶ BBC News, "Live: Middle East tensions," last modified March 3, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cy0dp1157nxt?post=asset%3A3a05e72b-6dd3-470e-8d76-84c6a64f63ce#post>.

⁶⁷ *The National*, "Fire Breaks Out at Al Ruwais Refinery in UAE After Drone Strike," March 10, 2026, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/energy/2026/03/10/fire-breaks-out-at-al-ruwais-refinery-in-uae-after-drone-strike>

⁶⁸ *Gulf News*, "US-Israel War with Iran Day 17: Trump Urges Allies to Secure Strait of Hormuz; UAE Reopens Airspace After Brief Closure," March 17, 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/usisrael-war-with-iran-day-17-trump-urges-allies-to-secure-strait-of-hormuz-uae-reopens-airspace-after-brief-closure-1.500475750>

⁶⁹ Gabriela Pomeroy, "Iran Hits Key UAE Oil Port and Dubai Airport," *BBC News*, March 16, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crl4gxgkkylo>.

incident after an Iranian-launched drone targeted a telecommunications building with no injuries reported.⁷⁰

As the GCC's leading financial hub and a critical node in global shipping and logistics networks, the UAE has been a central target in Iran's strategy to pressure the United States by amplifying economic disruption and undermining international trade flows. Compared to other GCC states, the UAE has borne the brunt of Iranian attacks in both scale and intensity, experiencing a higher volume of projectiles and the most extensive and varied damage in the region. The distribution of strikes also indicates a clear pattern of civilian targeting, as an International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) report showed that 37 out of 42 targeted sites were civilian facilities, including hotels and residential buildings, as well as oil and industrial infrastructure and key transport and logistics hubs.⁷¹ In total, 48 confirmed strikes have hit key strategic assets, including major financial, industrial, and logistical infrastructure such as Dubai's financial districts, Jebel Ali port, Fujairah's energy storage facilities, the Ruwais refinery, international airports, and critical digital infrastructure. According to the International Criminal Court (ICC), it is a war crime to intentionally direct attacks against civilian objects, those not constituting military objectives, during an international armed conflict.⁷² On April 8, despite the ceasefire between the United States and Iran, UAE authorities responded to a debris incident following intercepted threats, marking the third attack on Abu Dhabi's Habshan gas facility since the beginning of the conflict.⁷³

On March 20, the UAE announced that it had dismantled a Hezbollah- and Iran-linked terrorist network operating in the country under fake business fronts, with all members arrested.⁷⁴ The second incident took place on April 20, as the UAE State Security Department announced the

⁷⁰ Emirates News Agency (WAM), "Authorities in Fujairah Respond to Incident Targeting 'du' Building by Drone from Iran," April 6, 2026, <https://www.wam.ae/en/article/175otv1-authorities-fujairah-respond-incident-targeting-du>

⁷¹ Ellen Clarke, Noor Hammad, and Asna Wajid, "Mapping the Damage: Iranian Strikes on the GCC," *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*, March 27, 2026, <https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2026/03/mapping-the-damage-iranian-strikes-on-the-gcc/>

⁷² International Criminal Court, *Elements of Crimes* (The Hague: International Criminal Court, 2011), [Elements of Crimes PDF](#)

⁷³ *Khaleej Times*, "3 Injured as Debris Hits Habshan Gas Complex in Abu Dhabi amid Iran War," April 8, 2026, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/3-injured-debris-hits-habshan-gas-complex-abu-dhabi-iran-war>

⁷⁴ Anadolu Agency, "UAE Says It Dismantled Terror Cell Operating Inside the Country," March 20, 2026, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/uae-says-it-dismantled-terror-cell-operating-inside-the-country/3872373>

UAE had arrested 27 members of an Iran-linked group accused of planning systematic terrorist and sabotage acts, according to state security authorities.⁷⁵

Official Statements

Official statements sought to reassure the public while projecting an image of resilience, portraying the UAE as ‘a strong nation [united] with its citizens and residents’⁷⁶. In his first public statement since the onset of the war, UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan emphasized the state’s responsibility to safeguard both citizens and residents, reinforcing a narrative of unity and protection.⁷⁷ As part of broader crisis communication and symbolic state performance, a video was released showing the UAE President alongside Dubai Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum visiting Dubai Mall, a hallmark of the country, accompanied by the caption “Close to the people. Steady in leadership.”⁷⁸ By prioritizing the protection of citizens and residents while highlighting the preparedness of military and security institutions, these statements underscore the centrality of institutional strength in maintaining national stability.⁷⁹

In the international domain, based on official statements from the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the UAE’s position has evolved in a calibrated trajectory from initial restraint to a more assertive and internationally coordinated stance.⁸⁰ In the early phase, Abu Dhabi adopted a legally grounded and de-escalatory posture, condemning Iranian attacks as violations of sovereignty and international law.⁸¹ On March 2, in a joint statement, the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, and the United States condemned Iran’s missile and drone attacks

⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, “UAE Reports Dismantling of Iran-Linked ‘Terror’ Cell,” April 20, 2026,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/20/uae-reports-dismantling-of-iran-linked-terror-cell>

⁷⁶ Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, “All Is Well in the UAE and We Will Emerge Stronger Than Before,” *Mohamed bin Zayed Official Website*, March 7, 2026, <https://www.mohamedbinzayed.ae/en/latest-news-listing/2026/03/UAE-President-All-is-well-in-the-UAE-and-we-will-emerge-stronger-than-before>

⁷⁷ Huda Ata, “UAE ‘Not an Easy Target’, President Warns Enemies Not to Misjudge Its Strength,” *Gulf News*, last modified March 7, 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/government/uae-not-an-easy-target-president-warns-enemies-not-to-misjudge-its-strength-1.500466859>

⁷⁸ Jonathan Wolfe, “Dubai’s Leader Appears in Mall as Video Circulates Amid Iran Conflict,” *New York Times*, March 3, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/03/world/middleeast/dubai-president-mall-video-iran.html>

⁷⁹ Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, “Security, Sovereignty, and People’s Safety Remain the UAE’s Top Priority,” *National Media Authority (UAE)*, March 7, 2026, <https://www.mohamedbinzayed.ae/en/latest-news-listing/2026/03/UAE-President-Security-sovereignty-and-peoples-safety-remain-the-UAEs-top-priority>

⁸⁰ The analysis is based on the official statements between 28 February 2026 and 31 March 2026 and retrieved from United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Media Hub: News,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/MediaHub/News>

⁸¹ United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “UAE Condemns in Strongest Terms Iran’s Blatant Missile Attacks,” February 28, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2026/2/28/uae-iran>

as a dangerous escalation that violated sovereignty, threatened civilians, and undermined regional stability while reaffirming their commitment to collective defense.⁸² Further, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned Iran's ambassador and issued a formal protest condemning Tehran's attacks as a blatant violation of sovereignty and a threat to national security.⁸³

As attacks intensified, the UAE shifted toward a posture of defensive assertiveness, highlighting its military preparedness, the effectiveness of its air defense systems, and its right to self-defense under international law.⁸⁴ At the same time, official discourse hardened, increasingly framing Iranian actions as "terrorist" and "unprovoked," thereby delegitimizing Tehran's position within a broader international legal and normative framework.⁸⁵

A further shift is evident in the UAE's efforts to internationalize the conflict. Through joint statements with the GCC and Western partners, Abu Dhabi reframed the crisis as a collective security issue, linking Iranian actions to threats against global energy security, maritime navigation, and international stability. This multilateral approach allowed the UAE to amplify pressure on Iran while avoiding unilateral escalation. Notably, the UAE formally called on the United Nations to take "immediate action" under Chapter VII to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, including potential authorization of force, thereby elevating the crisis from a regional confrontation to a matter of international peace and security.⁸⁶ The UAE has maintained a strategy of controlled escalation without direct war entry. Even as it took significant steps such as closing its embassy in Tehran⁸⁷, it continued to emphasize that it does not seek further escalation, while preserving its right to respond. On April 20, speaking at the Antalya Diplomacy

⁸² United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Joint Statement Condemning Iran's Missile and Drone Attacks in the Region," March 2, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2026/3/2/uae-iran-attacks>

⁸³ United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "UAE Summons Iranian Ambassador and Delivers Note of Protest over Iran's Terrorist Attacks," March 2, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2026/3/2/uae-iran>.

⁸⁴ United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "UAE Rejects Characterization of Iran's Attacks as 'Retaliatory,'" March 17, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/MediaHub/News/2026/3/17/UAE-Iran>

⁸⁵ United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "UAE Condemns Iran's Terrorist Attack on Habshan Gas Facility and Bab Field," March 19, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/MediaHub/News/2026/3/19/uae-iran> Also see United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "UAE Strongly Condemns Iran's Unprovoked Terrorist Attack on the Kingdom of Bahrain," March 24, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/MediaHub/News/2026/3/24/UAE-BAHREIN>

⁸⁶ Magdalena Del Valle, "UAE Asks UN to Approve Measures, Including Force, to Open Hormuz," *Bloomberg*, April 1, 2026, updated April 2, 2026, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-04-01/uae-asks-un-to-approve-measures-including-force-to-open-hormuz>

⁸⁷ United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "UAE Announces Closure of Embassy in Tehran and Withdrawal of Ambassador and Diplomatic Mission, Condemns Iranian Missile Attacks," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, March 1, 2026, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/MediaHub/News/2026/3/1/UAE-iran>

Forum, Anwar Gargash, the diplomatic advisor to the UAE President said the UAE remains open to diplomacy, but "it is impossible to return to the previous pace in relations without review, candor, and guarantees, and it is unacceptable to accept tension, threats, and aggression as a new reality."⁸⁸

Domestic Measures

At the domestic level, the UAE implemented a combination of nationwide and targeted measures, similar to those adopted by other GCC states, aimed at minimizing the impact of the ongoing conflict on citizens and residents. The UAE actively utilized and adapted its geolocation-based early warning system during the conflict, issuing targeted alerts to areas directly exposed to missile and drone threats rather than implementing nationwide warnings. This approach enabled authorities to enhance precision in crisis response, strengthen public preparedness, and maintain societal stability while avoiding unnecessary disruption across unaffected regions.⁸⁹ Further, the Emirates expanded distance learning measures during the conflict, extending remote education across all schools and universities until at least April 17, initially introduced on March 2, and later extended as tensions escalated.⁹⁰ The Ministry of Education announced the resumption of in-person learning for all students and staff in public and private nurseries, kindergartens, and schools effective Monday, April 20.⁹¹

For the second time since the onset of the war, on April 17, a temporary closure of UAE's airspace was announced. Later that day, the UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority confirmed that air traffic operations had returned to normal⁹² According to news reports, Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA) has confirmed it declared force majeure on some contracts, as bunker suppliers in Fujairah, the Middle East's largest marine fuels hub, also began issuing force majeure notices,

⁸⁸ *Khaleej Times*, "UAE: Anwar Gargash Says 'Unacceptable to Accept Threats' as New Reality at Antalya Diplomacy Forum," April 20, 2026, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/uae-anwar-gargash-statement-antalya-diplomacy-forum>.

⁸⁹ Ajanta Paul, "UAE Geolocation-Based Early Warning Alert System: Why You May or May Not Receive Alerts," *Khaleej Times*, March 25, 2026, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/uae-geolocation-based-early-warning-alert-system>

⁹⁰ Zainab Husain, "UAE Distance Learning 2026: Latest Updates on Schools, Universities and Exams," *Gulf News*, April 2, 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/living-in-uae/education/uae-distance-learning-2026-latest-updates-on-schools-universities-and-exams-1.500493429>

⁹¹ UAE Ministry of Education (@MOEUAEofficial), "Post on X," April 16, 2026, <https://x.com/MOEUAEofficial/status/2044456238705217725>

⁹² *Gulf News*, "UAE Temporarily Closes Its Airspace to Ensure Safety, Security," March 17, 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/uae-temporarily-closes-its-airspace-to-ensure-safety-security-1.500476853>

including Mediterranean Eastern Enterprise (MEE), which cited Iranian drone attacks and escalating regional hostilities following retaliatory strikes after U.S. and Israeli attacks.⁹³

The State of Kuwait

Scale of Attacks

Since the first attacks on February 28, Kuwait has been facing disruptions to its security and civilian life, resulting in significant damage and casualties. Iranian drones struck multiple strategic sites in the country, including its international airport, and the Ali Al Salem Air Base which houses Italian forces,⁹⁴ and the U.S. garrison at Camp Buehring in northeastern Kuwait.⁹⁵

On March 1, Iranian drones struck a U.S. military logistics hub near Port Shuaiba in Kuwait, killing six U.S. service members and injuring dozens, making it one of the deadliest attacks since the beginning of the war.⁹⁶ In a separate incident, two Kuwaiti border security personnel were killed, and other fatalities, including military and civilian deaths, were reported as tensions escalated.⁹⁷ In the fog of war, a Kuwaiti F/A-18 fighter jet accidentally shot down three U.S. F-15s, but the American crew members survived the incident.⁹⁸

On March 2, the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait was struck by drone attacks.⁹⁹ Separate attacks were also reported against U.S. military bases at Camp Arifjan and Ali Al-Salem Air Base. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has also reportedly carried out attacks against targets in Kuwait.¹⁰⁰ The

⁹³ *Gulf Business*, “Emirates Global Aluminium declares force majeure on some contracts,” 2026, <https://gulfbusiness.com/en/2026/uae/emirates-global-aluminium-force-majeure-contracts-al-taweelah/>; and *Argus Media*, “UAE’s Fujairah bunker suppliers declare force majeure,” March 4, 2026, <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news-and-insights/latest-market-news/2796111-uae-s-fujairah-bunker-suppliers-declare-force-majeure>

⁹⁴ ‘Significant damage’ to runway at Kuwait base hosting Italian troops: Italy, *Al Arabiya English*, February 28, 2026. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2026/02/28/-significant-damage-to-runway-at-kuwait-base-hosting-italian-troops-italy->

⁹⁵ Iranian drone strikes US military facility in Kuwait, *Al Jazeera*, March 1, 2026.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/video/newsfeed/2026/3/1/iranian-drone-strikes-us-military-facility-in-kuwait>

⁹⁶ No warning, no siren: Six US service members killed in Iranian strike that hit makeshift operations center in Kuwait, *CNN*, March 2, 2026. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/mar/02/us-fighter-jets-kuwait>

⁹⁷ Kuwait says two navy soldiers killed, *Reuters*, March 2, 2026. <https://www.reuters.com/world/kuwait-says-two-navy-soldiers-killed-2026-03-02/>

⁹⁸ Richard Luscombe, Three US fighter jets mistakenly shot down over Kuwait, *The Guardian*, March 2, 2026.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/mar/02/us-fighter-jets-kuwait>

⁹⁹ US embassy in Kuwait was struck by drones: three diplomats to AFP, *Arab News*, March 2, 2026.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2635049/middle-east>

¹⁰⁰ Islamic resistance in Iraq targets U.S. interests in Kuwait, *Iraqi News*, April 5, 2026.

https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq/ashab-al-kahf-kuwait-shalamchek-retaliation-2026/#google_vignette

Kuwaiti consulate in the Iraqi city of Basra was also reportedly targeted. Kuwait said protesters who attacked the consulate included pro-Iranian militia groups near the Iran and Kuwait borders.¹⁰¹ Even during a reported ceasefire period, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense announced that two explosive-laden drones launched from Iraq targeted northern border posts of the country on April 25, causing material damage but no casualties.¹⁰²

Iranian attacks on Kuwait have also affected daily life as vital assets such as electricity and desalination plants were hit. Debris from drones reportedly put six power lines out of service,¹⁰³ and Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy reported that Iranian drones struck a power and desalination plant, causing structural damage.¹⁰⁴ Kuwait blamed Iran for the attack, while Iran denied responsibility and, in return, blamed Israel.¹⁰⁵ As a result, Kuwait's Electricity Ministry announced a temporary power outage in limited parts in the Jahra Governorate.¹⁰⁶ Iran's attacks on desalination plants in Kuwait posed a serious threat as the country has nearly 90 percent of its drinking water from coastal desalination plants. Critical infrastructure, particularly in the energy sector, has also been consistently targeted. For instance, Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery that has a capacity of 346,000 barrels per day was hit multiple times.¹⁰⁷ Another attack caused a fire at the Shuwaikh Oil Sector Complex, which hosts both the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the Oil Ministry's headquarters, leading to wider disruptions in Kuwait's oil industry.

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) declared force majeure on its delivery contracts and cut oil production as exports through the Strait of Hormuz stopped amid the waterway's blockade

101 David S. Cloud, Pro-Iranian Protesters Attack Kuwait Consulate in Southern Iraq, The Wall Street Journal, April 7, 2026. <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/iran-war-2026-trump-deadline-latest-news/card/pro-iranian-protesters-attack-kuwait-consulate-in-southern-iraq-1NdBhoiRELRtIWhizE9zE>

102 Kuwait says drones coming from Iraq target border posts, Al Arabiya English, April 25, 2026. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2026/04/25/kuwait-says-drones-coming-from-iraq-target-border-posts>

103 Kuwait says drone debris knocks out six power transmission lines, Al Arabiya, March 12, 2026. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2026/03/12/kuwait-says-drone-debris-knocks-out-six-power-transmission-lines>

104 Kuwait's power, water plants damaged as Iran keeps attacking Gulf states, Al Jazeera, April 5, 2026.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/5/kuwait-says-power-water-facilities-hit-by-iran-as-gulf-attacks-continue>

105 Iran blames Israel for attack on power, desalination plant in Kuwait, TASS, March 30, 2026.

<https://tass.com/world/2109005>

106 Kuwait's Electricity Ministry Announces Temporary Power Outage in Limited Parts in Jahra Governorate, QNA, April 4, 2026 <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=kuwaits-electricity-ministry-announces-temporary-power-outage-in-limited-parts-in-jahra-governorate&date=4/04/2026>

¹⁰⁷ KNPC Official Page: <https://www.knpc.com/en/about-us/who-we-are>

by Iran.¹⁰⁸ Before the war, Kuwait, the fifth-largest oil producer in OPEC, was producing about 2.6 million barrels per day. However, production has since been limited to domestic consumption, as confirmed by KPC chief executive Sheikh Nawaf Al Sabah during the CERAWEEK event in March.¹⁰⁹ The Ministry of Finance (MoF) building in Kuwait City was also attacked, resulting in no injuries, with staff instructed to work remotely.¹¹⁰ Multiple drone attacks also targeted Kuwait International Airport, causing “significant” damage to the radar system at the airport.¹¹¹

Since Iran began attacking Kuwait and other GCC states, authorities across the region have arrested several individuals suspected of links to Hezbollah or Iran. On March 25, Kuwait uncovered and dismantled a terrorist cell linked to Hezbollah. According to the official statement, the group consisted of 16 people, including 14 Kuwaiti nationals and 2 Lebanese citizens. Officials said the suspects were allegedly involved in recruiting individuals to join the organization and attempting to spread unrest and disrupt public order.¹¹² Earlier in March, the Interior Ministry said it had disrupted another plot against vital infrastructure, arresting another 10 individuals affiliated with Hezbollah who were accused of plotting “terrorist” attacks.¹¹³ This marked the second Hezbollah-affiliated cell to be arrested in Kuwait within a week, amid ongoing Iranian attacks. Kuwait also arrested 24 people as part of an investigation into the “financing of terrorist entities,” including five former lawmakers. In a statement, Kuwait’s Interior Ministry did not name any particular country or organization behind the plot, but said it had “thwarted a plot targeting the

¹⁰⁸ Kuwait declares force majeure, cuts crude oil output due to Middle East conflict, Reuters, March 7, 2026. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/kuwait-cuts-oil-production-precaution-amid-iran-tensions-kpc-says-2026-03-07/>

¹⁰⁹ Aarti Nagraj, Iran targets key infrastructure in Kuwait, Bahrain and UAE, The National, April 05, 2026. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/energy/2026/04/05/kuwait-petroleum-headquarters-and-power-plants-hit-by-drone-attacks/>

¹¹⁰ Iranian drone strikes damage Kuwait Ministries complex and power plants, Gulf News, April 5, 2026. <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/kuwait/iranian-drone-strikes-damage-kuwait-ministries-complex-and-power-plants-1.500496787>

¹¹¹ Drone Attacks Damage Radar System at Kuwait International Airport, Qatar New Agency, March 28, 2026. <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=drone-attacks-damage-radar-system-at-kuwait-international-airport&date=28/03/2026>

¹¹² Kuwait Says It Has Uncovered Hezbollah-Linked Cell, Qatar News Agency, March 17, 2026. <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=kuwait-says-it-has-uncovered-hezbollah-linked-cell&date=17/03/2026>

¹¹³ Kuwait arrests 10 Hezbollah members, thwarts ‘terrorist’ plot, Al Arabiya English, March 19, 2026. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2026/03/19/kuwait-arrests-10-hezbollah-members-thwarts-terrorist-plot#:~:text=Ukraine%20World%20News,Kuwait%20arrests%2010%20Hezbollah%20members%2C%20thwarts%20'terrorist'%20plot,killed%20in%20an%20Israeli%20attack.>

undermining of the homeland's security."¹¹⁴ It is significant to note that Iran continued attacks on Kuwait even after the Pakistani-mediated ceasefire went into effect on April 7 and 8.

Official Statements

As the attacks mounted, Kuwait's leadership publicly addressed the war. In a televised speech, Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah stated: "Our country has been subjected to a brutal attack by a neighboring Muslim country, which we consider a friend, even though we have not permitted the use of our land, airspace, or coasts for any military action against it, and we have repeatedly informed them of this through our diplomatic channels."¹¹⁵ He also emphasized Kuwait's "full and inherent right to self-defense," speaking for the first time since Iran's attacks began on February 28.

In diplomatic efforts, Kuwait aligned itself with regional states in condemning the attacks. On March 26, Kuwait, along with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, and Jordan, issued a joint condemnation of Iran and its affiliated armed groups in Iraq, as well as their attacks against countries in the region and their facilities and infrastructure.¹¹⁶ They have called on Iraq to take the necessary measures to halt the attacks launched from its territory. Kuwait is not only attacked by Iran, but also by the Iranian proxies in Iraq.¹¹⁷

Kuwait's Foreign Minister, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, also strongly condemned what he described as a "systematic pattern" of Iranian aggression targeting vital infrastructure and civilians.¹¹⁸ During the Arab League meeting held in March, the Kuwaiti foreign minister has also criticized the organization for failing to effectively maintain regional security and called for a firm, unified response.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ 24 arrested in Kuwait over 'financing of terror', Arab News, April 13, 2026. https://www.arabnews.jp/en/middle-east/article_168092/#:~:text=In%20a%20statement%2C%20Kuwait%E2%80%99s%20Interior.%20said%20were%20planning%20%E2%80%9Cassassinations.%E2%80%9D

¹¹⁵ Kuwait's Emir: We are facing an attack from a neighboring country despite not allowing use of our land, LBC, March 9, 2026. <https://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/middleeastnews/912635/kuwait-emir-we-are-facing-an-attack-from-a-neighboring-country-despit/en>

¹¹⁶ Gulf states say they're ready for 'self-defense' as stance shifts on Iran war, CNBC, March 26, 2026.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2026/03/26/gulf-states-ready-for-self-defense-against-iran-as-war-stance-shifts.html>

¹¹⁷ Six Middle Eastern countries urge Iraq to halt Iran-backed attacks amid regional escalation, Al Jazeera English, March 26, 2026. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyH1tFlaa_g

¹¹⁸ Kuwait slams Iran aggression, Kuwait Times, March 29, 2026. <https://kuwaittimes.com/article/41610/kuwait/other-news/kuwait-slams-iran-aggression/>

¹¹⁹ Kuwait calls for Arab League reform, says bloc falling short, Kuwait Times, March 29, 2026.

Domestic Measures

Beyond the immediate military impact, the Iranian attacks have significantly affected daily life in Kuwait. As a precautionary measure, during Ramadan, Kuwait Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs suspended Taraweeh and Qiyam prayers for a short period before resuming them with reduced durations.¹²⁰ Additionally, Kuwait's Ministry of Education adopted a flexible system centered on remote learning across all public and private school levels following Eid al-Fitr due to regional security concerns.¹²¹ Unlike other GCC states, Kuwait had a delayed transition to a mobile alert system. On March 22, Kuwait launched a national emergency alert system using cellular technology.¹²²

Kuwait International Airport suffered extensive damage after several Iranian attacks, which hit its radar system, terminal, runway, and fuel depots.¹²³ The attacks injured several workers and forced the suspension of all commercial passenger flights. Authorities activated emergency response protocols, and the airport remains closed until full security was restored. Kuwait reopened its airspace on April 23 for the first time since February 28.

The Kingdom of Bahrain

Scale of Attacks

Since the onset of the war on February 28, the Kingdom of Bahrain, like its neighbors in the GCC, reported numerous missile attacks from Iran. The attacks on the first day also targeted the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters in Manama, in close proximity to the Al-Juffair district,

<https://kuwaittimes.com/article/41612/kuwait/other-news/kuwait-calls-for-arab-league-reform-says-bloc-falling-short/>

¹²⁰ Kuwait resumes Taraweeh prayers after week-long suspension, Saudi Gazette, March 8, 2026.

saudigazette.com.sa/article/659540/world/kuwait-resumes-taraweeh-prayers-after-suspension-over-regional-tensions

¹²¹ Distance learning exceeds 41 days as Kuwait studies end-of-year exam options, Kuwait Times, April 11, 2026
<https://timeskuwait.com/distance-learning-exceeds-41-days-as-kuwait-studies-end-of-year-exam-options/>

¹²² Kuwait announces launch of National Emergency Alert System amid ongoing US-Israel-Iran war, Times of India, March 22, 2026. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/kuwait-news-kuwait-announces-launch-of-national-emergency-alert-system-amid-ongoing-us-israel-iran-war/articleshow/129730812.cms>

¹²³ Iran strike shuts Kuwait airport indefinitely, MSN, March 8, 2026. <https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/insight/iran-strike-shuts-kuwait-airport-indefinitely/gm-GM0A49AA83?gemSnapshotKey=GM0A49AA83-snapshot-0&uxmode=ruby>

which includes civilian infrastructure and residential areas. As a result, the Bahraini MOI and security forces quickly evacuated residents and civilians from all nearby areas.¹²⁴

Bahrain continued to report daily interceptions of missiles and drones launched from Iran. Several of these attacks have resulted in infrastructural damage and civilian casualties. Among these were attacks that intentionally targeted strategic state infrastructure. On March 5, Bahraini authorities confirmed an attack on the industrial area of Ma'ameer. Although no casualties were reported, this strike marked the beginning of a series of attacks aimed at destroying domestic strategic facilities.¹²⁵

Moreover, on March 7, Bahraini officials reported an attack on the state's main desalination facility, which produces most of Bahrain's drinking water.¹²⁶ The strike led to civilian injuries, and damage to the outskirts of the facility was caused by debris. Security threats escalated further the next day with another major attack on Bahrain's petroleum refinery BAPCO, causing severe injuries of 30 individuals and operation disruption. As a result of the attacks, BAPCO declared force majeure due to its inability to fulfill global contractual obligations.¹²⁷

Bahrain continued to intercept Iranian missile and drone attacks throughout the war targeting both civilian sites and state infrastructure. On March 10, an attack on Manama's Seef district resulted in the death of a 29-year-old Bahraini woman.¹²⁸ On March 12, Bahraini forces arrested four citizens for engaging in espionage operations. The suspects, three males and one female, admitted to conducting spying activities, including photographing and recording coordinates for the IRGC.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ "Bahrain Confirms There Were Attacks Inside Its Territory: State News Agency," *Al Arabiya English*, February 28, 2026, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2026/02/28/bahrain-confirms-there-were-attacks-inside-its-territory-state-news-agency>

¹²⁵ "Bahrain Says Fire Erupted After Iranian Attack on Maameer Area," *Anadolu Agency*, March 9, 2026, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/bahrain-says-fire-erupted-after-iranian-attack-on-maameer-area/3855854>

¹²⁶ "Bahrain says water desalination plant damaged in Iranian drone attack," *Al Jazeera*, March 8, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/8/bahrain-says-water-desalination-plant-damaged-in-iranian-drone-attack>

¹²⁷ "Bahrain's Bapco Declares Force Majeure after Iran Strikes – Statement," *Al Arabiya English*, March 9, 2026, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2026/03/09/bahrain-s-bapco-declares-force-majeure-after-iran-strikes-statement>

¹²⁸ Naman Arora, "REPREHENSIBLE: Young Bahraini Woman Killed by Debris after Drone Smashes into Tower Block," *Gulf Daily News (GDN Online)*, March 11, 2026, <https://www.gdnonline.com/Details/1378211/REPREHENSIBLE-Young-Bahraini-woman-killed-by-debris-after-drone-smashes-into-tower-block>

¹²⁹ "Bahrain Arrests Four for Spying for Iran's IRGC as Gulf Attacks Intensify," *Arab News*, March 12, 2026, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2636120/middle-east>.

A major attack on March 29 targeted Aluminum Bahrain (ALBA), one of the world's largest aluminum producers in the country, causing two minor injuries and damage across the facility. Bahraini officials stated that ALBA is currently assessing the impact of the attacks on the facility and its operations.¹³⁰

Finally, on April 5, a fire broke out in Bahrain's Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company following an Iranian drone attack. Bahraini defense authorities mitigated the damage from the attack, and no injuries were reported.¹³¹

Official Statements

The Bahraini National Communications Centre (NCC) announced that the Kingdom of Bahrain had been subjected to external attacks targeting domestic sites within the Kingdom's borders.¹³² Furthermore, since the onset of the war, the government has maintained consistent and transparent communication with the public.

On February 28, multiple messages were issued by the Bahraini Ministry of Interior to the public. The messages began by urging the public to remain calm, avoid panic, refrain from spreading rumors, and strictly adhere to safety instructions.¹³³ Furthermore, these messages were intended to reassure the public that all Bahraini agencies are working in close coordination to ensure the safety of the citizens and the state. Additionally, the state immediately activated emergency response protocols.¹³⁴

Throughout the course of the war, Bahraini officials maintained continuous communication with the public, constantly emphasizing the importance of following safety precautions while providing updates on ongoing attacks and developments. In addition, the Ministry of Defense

¹³⁰ Lekshmy Pavithran, "Iran attack hits Bahrain's Alba plant, two employees injured," *Gulf News*, March 29, 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/bahrain/iran-attack-hits-bahrains-alba-plant-two-employees-injured-1.500489686>

¹³¹ "Bahrain's Gulf Petrochemical Industries Says Fire under Control at Units after Iran Drone Attack," *Reuters*, April 5, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/bahrains-gulf-petrochemical-industries-says-fire-under-control-units-after-iran-2026-04-05/>

¹³² "Bahrain Reports Attacks Targeting Sites and Facilities within Territory," *Qatar News Agency (QNA)*, February 28, 2026, <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=bahrain-reports-attacks-targeting-sites-and-facilities-within-territory&date=28/02/2026>

¹³³ National Communication Centre, "Statement by the National Communication Centre," *Bahrain News Agency*, February 28 2026, <https://www.bna.bh/en/StatementbytheNationalCommunicationCentre.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2bDtLxIH5pbwnYwjJ1RJmX5Q%3d>

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

issued daily reports detailing the number of missiles and drones successfully intercepted.¹³⁵ These updates do not only serve as a display of the effectiveness of national defense measures but also reinforce public confidence and maintain trust in the government's ability to ensure domestic security.¹³⁶

While maintaining strong communication with the public, Bahrain also coordinated with its international partners to help de-escalate the conflict, both politically and economically. In an effort to limit rising tensions and address Iranian attacks on international commercial ships, while also seeking to restore economic activity through the Strait of Hormuz, Bahrain and the UAE were the only two Arab states to join a 40-country coalition, led by the UK, which was aimed at exploring options for reopening the strait.¹³⁷

Furthermore, for the Month of April, Bahrain holds the presidency of the United Nations Security Council. On April 7, Bahrain presented a draft resolution calling for military measures to ensure safe ship navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.¹³⁸ While 11 countries voted in favor of the resolution, 2 countries abstained, and Russia and China cast their veto votes.¹³⁹

Domestic Measures

In response to the fast escalation of regional security, most GCC member states, as well as other neighboring states such as Iraq, Iran and Jordan, implemented immediate airspace closure.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Bahraini officials immediately urged all its citizens visiting Iran for tourism and religious activities to leave immediately for urgent safety reasons.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ "Bahrain Defence Force Air Defences Intercept and Destroy 2 Missiles and 10 Drones in the Last 24 Hours," *Gulf Daily News (GDN Online)*, April 2, 2026, <https://www.gdnonline.com/Details/1380279/Bahrain-Defence-Force-air-defences-intercept-and-destroy-2-missiles-and-10-drones-in-the-last-24-hours>

¹³⁶ Gregory A. Porumbescu "Using Transparency to Enhance Responsiveness and Trust in Local Government: Can It Work?" *State & Local Government Review* 47, no. 3 (2015): 205–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24639237>.

¹³⁷ AJ Staff, "UK-Led Coalition of 35 Countries Vows Action on Hormuz Strait Gridlock," *Al Jazeera*, April 2, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/2/uk-led-coalition-of-35-countries-vows-action-on-hormuz-strait-gridlock>

¹³⁸ Merve Aydogan, "UN Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution on Freedom of Navigation in Strait of Hormuz," *Anadolu Agency*, April 7, 2026, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/un-security-council-fails-to-adopt-draft-resolution-on-freedom-of-navigation-in-strait-of-hormuz/3896479>

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Al Jazeera Staff and Reuters, "Airspace Closed, Airlines Halt Flights as US, Israel Attack, Iran Responds," *Al Jazeera*, February 28, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/28/airspace-closed-airlines-halt-flights-as-us-israel-attack-iran-responds>

¹⁴¹ "Ministry of Foreign Affairs Urges Bahraini Nationals in Iran to Depart Immediately," *Bahrain News Agency*, February 28, 2026,

Following the attacks, and to ensure domestic security, the Bahraini Ministry of Interior activated all emergency protocols. Public emergency sirens were sounded across the Kingdom, reinforcing the seriousness of the situation and the need for compliance with safety directives.¹⁴²

Additionally, the Bahraini Ministry of Interior immediately opened 13 shelters across the Kingdom, providing refuge, food, and medical assistance to 2,600 locals and expatriates. Officials further announced that they had prepared over 30 refuge locations across Bahrain, ranging from schools, sports halls, malls and hotels, if needed.¹⁴³ Furthermore, Like its Gulf neighbors, Bahrain's Ministry of Interior has also warned citizens and residents that publishing misinformation, including statements, photos or videos related to Iranian strikes on the Kingdom will lead to fines and imprisonment.¹⁴⁴

In addition to evacuating residential areas and closing its airspace, Bahrain's Ministry of Education announced a temporary shift to remote learning for all educational institutions as a precautionary measure.¹⁴⁵ However, during the first week of April, to gradually restore normal daily domestic operations, the Bahraini Ministry of Education reopened nurseries, kindergartens, and schools for students with special needs.¹⁴⁶ In the following week, Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, the Minister of Education, announced that students in public schools would be given the option to continue remote learning or return to in-person classes.¹⁴⁷

Finally, the Bahraini Civil Service Bureau (CSB) which had previously announced the temporary transition to remote working for government agencies, and, after careful assessment of

<https://bna.bh/en/MinistryofForeignAffairssurgesBahraininationalsinIrantodepartimmediately.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2bDhASf9pImVI56i0CE46U4Ik%3d>

¹⁴² "Warning Sirens Activate Only When Threats target Bahrain Directly", *News of Bahrain*, March 11, 2026

<https://www.newsofbahrain.com/bahrain/128302.html>

¹⁴³ Sandeep Singh Grewal, "Emergency protocols during current situation highlighted" *Gulf Daily*

News(GDNonline), <https://www.gdnonline.com/Details/1377539>

¹⁴⁴ "الخليج أونلاين"، "في ظل التوتر.. دول الخليج تحمي جبهتها الداخلية من 'حرب الشائعات'، كمال السلامي

<https://alkhaleejonline.net/>

¹⁴⁵ "Education Ministry Announces Temporary Shift to Remote Learning in All Educational Institutions as a Precautionary Measure," *Bahrain News Agency*, February 28, 2026,

<https://bna.bh/en/National/EducationMinistryannouncestemporaryshifttoremotelarninginalleducationalinstitutionsasaprecautionarymeasure.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2bDqTFIie7QqarhtJV0h6dfcA%3d>

¹⁴⁶ "Bahrain to reopen Nurseries and Special Needs Schools from April 5", *News of Bahrain*, March 31, 2026,

<https://www.newsofbahrain.com/bahrain/129575.html>

¹⁴⁷ "Bahrain Offers Public Schools Choice Between In-Person Classroom and Remote Learning," *Gulf News*, April

12, 2026, <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-offers-public-schools-choice-between-in-person-classroom-and-remote-learning-1.500504458>

the domestic security situation of the Kingdom, announced the resumption of normal on-site working starting April 26.¹⁴⁸

The Sultanate of Oman

Scale of Attacks

Tehran has targeted critical infrastructure in Oman, despite its role as a key regional mediator between Iran and the US prior to the war. Oman was the main mediator in indirect talks between Iran and the U.S. in Geneva in late February.¹⁴⁹ Oman played a crucial mediating role in 2013 by hosting and facilitating secret U.S.–Iran negotiations in Muscat, which laid the groundwork for the eventual 2015 nuclear agreement.¹⁵⁰ Despite the record of cordial relations between Tehran and Muscat, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, Iranian drones targeted the commercial port of Duqm on Oman’s eastern coast on March 3, striking fuel storage facilities and causing limited damage.¹⁵¹ On the same day, Oman’s state news agency reported that two drones had been intercepted in the southwestern Dhofar region, while a third crashed near the Port of Salalah, the country’s largest port.¹⁵²

On March 10, Iranian drone strikes targeted Oman’s Port of Salalah again, igniting several oil storage tanks and causing fires at the facility, leading to a partial suspension of the port’s operations.¹⁵³ Although Iran denied responsibility for the attack,¹⁵⁴ this reflects a broader pattern of targeting alternative maritime routes intended to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, which is

¹⁴⁸ “Ministries, Government Bodies Return to Regular Office Hours from Sunday,” *Gulf Daily News (GDNonline)*, <https://www.gdnonline.com/Details/1392503/Ministries,-government-bodies-return-to-regular-office-hours-from-Sunday>

¹⁴⁹ Al Jazeera, “Peace ‘Within Reach’ as Iran Agrees No Nuclear Material Stockpile: Oman FM,” February 28, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/28/peace-within-reach-as-iran-agrees-no-nuclear-material-stockpile-oman-fm>

¹⁵⁰ BBC News, “Secret Talks Set Stage for Iran Nuclear Deal,” November 25, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25086236>

¹⁵¹ “Drone Hits Fuel Tank at Oman’s Duqm Port,” Reuters, March 3, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/drone-hits-fuel-tank-omans-duqm-port-2026-03-03/>

¹⁵² “Israel-Iran Conflict Live Updates,” *BBC News*, last modified April 5, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cy0dp1157nxt>

¹⁵³ Jeniffer Gnana, “Iran’s Attack on Salalah Aims to Close Hormuz Exit Ramps,” *The National News*, March 12, 2026, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/energy/2026/03/12/irans-attack-on-salahah-aims-to-close-hormuz-exit-ramps/>

¹⁵⁴ “Iran War: Drones Strike Fuel Tanks at Oman’s Salalah Port, Operations Suspended,” *Bloomberg*, March 11, 2026, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-03-11/operations-suspended-at-oman-port-as-drones-hit-fuel-tanks>

effectively closed. Developed over decades to reduce dependence on the Strait of Hormuz, the Port of Salalah, a key tanker hub on Oman's Arabian Sea coast, has gained strategic importance. Iranian drone attacks struck the al-Awahi industrial area in Sohar province on March 13, leaving two people dead.¹⁵⁵ As the war entered its second month, attacks on Oman's critical infrastructure continued, and according to reports, the Port of Salalah was targeted on March 28, causing injuries to a worker.¹⁵⁶ The attacks also targeted Oman's transport and logistics infrastructure, including key ports that serve as alternative routes to bypass the traditional maritime chokepoint. Compared with other GCC states, Oman experienced the lowest attack volumes and the least damage.¹⁵⁷ According to the Horizon Brief database as of April 7, Oman was targeted by 20 drones, accounting for 0.25% of the total Iranian attacks.¹⁵⁸

Official Statements

The official narrative from Oman suggests that Muscat was taken by surprise by the attacks on Iran in late February. Just two days prior, Oman's foreign minister, Badr Al-Busaidi, had emphasized "significant progress" and ongoing consultations, pointing to a positive negotiating trajectory and sustained momentum toward a structured diplomatic process between the United States and Iran.¹⁵⁹

On February 28, Oman's Foreign Ministry issued its first official statement on the crisis, calling for an immediate halt to attacks across the region, including the territories of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, and Jordan, while urging dialogue and diplomacy to

¹⁵⁵ "Two Killed in Oman by Drones, Several Also Fired at Saudi Arabia," *Al Jazeera*, March 13, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/13/two-killed-in-oman-by-drones-several-also-fired-at-saudi-arabia>

¹⁵⁶ Suha Ma'ayeh, "Port in Oman Hit in Drone Attacks," *Wall Street Journal*, March 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/iran-war-middle-east-news-updates/card/spVFA8YxF0Mb0z6in4J>

¹⁵⁷ Ellen Clarke, Noor Hammad, and Asna Wajid, "Mapping the Damage: Iranian Strikes on the GCC," *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*, March 27, 2026, <https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2026/03/mapping-the-damage-iranian-strikes-on-the-gcc/>

¹⁵⁸ Ibrahim Jalal, "Data: 83% of Iran-Linked Attacks Struck Arab States, Not Israel," *Substack*, accessed April 26, 2026, <https://ibrahimjalal.substack.com/p/data-83>

¹⁵⁹ Badr Albusaidi, "We have finished the day after significant progress in the negotiation between the United States and Iran...", X (formerly Twitter), February 26, 2026, <https://x.com/badrbusaidi/status/2027089708392579576>.

prevent further escalation.¹⁶⁰ On March 29, the Omani foreign ministry declared the attacks on Oman to be “treacherous and cowardly”.¹⁶¹

Oman’s stance in the war reflects a policy of positive neutrality grounded in mediation, but with a notably sharper attribution of responsibility toward the United States and Israel. Muscat has openly criticized the war as a disruption of diplomacy, with its foreign minister expressing dismay that “active and serious negotiations have yet again been undermined” and urging Washington that “this is not your war.”¹⁶² Omani official statements have described the U.S.–Israeli actions as “in violation of international law and the principle of resolving disputes through peaceful means rather than hostility and bloodshed.”¹⁶³ Crucially, Oman has framed the war as “not of Iran’s making,” reinforcing a narrative that places primary responsibility for escalation on external actors.¹⁶⁴ Oman’s response to the current war on Iran reflects Muscat’s foreign policy trajectory, as the Omani foreign minister reiterated Oman’s standpoint that America’s friends have a responsibility to tell the truth and added:

“That begins with the fact that there are two parties to this war who have nothing to gain from it, and that the national interests of both Iran and America lie in the earliest possible end to hostilities. This is an uncomfortable truth to tell, because it involves indicating the extent to which America has lost control of its own foreign policy. But it must be told.”¹⁶⁵

At the same time, Muscat maintains its balanced posture by condemning Iran’s retaliation against GCC states as unacceptable, while continuing to stress that the door to diplomacy remains open. On March 1, Oman’s foreign minister spoke by phone with his Iranian counterpart, urging

¹⁶⁰ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Oman Calls for Immediate Halt to Attacks Against Sites in Countries Across the Region,” *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, February 28, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/38129/>

¹⁶¹ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Oman Condemns the Ongoing War and All Military Targeting of Countries Across the Region,” *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, March 29, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/40194>

¹⁶² The narrative is based on the official statements of Oman’s foreign minister’s on X between February 26 and 24 March 2026. See Badr Albusaidi (@badralbusaidi), posts on X (*formerly Twitter*), February 26–March 24, 2026, <https://x.com/badralbusaidi>.

¹⁶³ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Oman Expresses Regret Over Israeli and US Military Operations Against Iran,” *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, February 28, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/38110/>

¹⁶⁴ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Minister: Oman Working Intensively for Safe Passage Arrangements for Strait of Hormuz,” *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, March 23, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/39858>

¹⁶⁵ Badr Albusaidi, “America’s Friends Must Help Extricate It from an Unlawful War,” *The Economist*, March 18, 2026, <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2026/03/18/americas-friends-must-help-extricate-it-from-an-unlawful-war>.

Iran to exercise restraint and avoid actions that could undermine good-neighborly relations, while emphasizing de-escalation and dialogue.¹⁶⁶ On March 11, Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, in a call with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, expressed Oman's clear disapproval and condemnation of the targeting of its territory, while reaffirming the country's neutral stance and commitment to de-escalation through dialogue.¹⁶⁷ On April 8, Oman's Foreign Ministry welcomed the announced ceasefire between Iran and the United States, commended mediation efforts, and urged intensified diplomatic action to secure a lasting end to the conflict.¹⁶⁸

Apart from official statements, Omani leaders held diplomatic meetings during the war. In early March, Oman's foreign minister conducted an extensive round of diplomatic calls with counterparts across the GCC, Europe, Asia, and beyond, focusing on supporting mediation efforts and reinforcing the ceasefire to end ongoing hostilities.¹⁶⁹ On March 30, Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Al-Busaidi joined a consultative meeting with GCC states, Russia, and Jordan.¹⁷⁰ On April 16, Oman hosted Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, as Sultan Haitham bin Tarik held talks with the Qatari leader, emphasizing the need for a lasting resolution to the crisis and for safeguarding maritime navigation and energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz.¹⁷¹

The diplomatic relations between Oman and Iran have not been disrupted. On April 4, Oman and Iran held undersecretary-level talks with technical experts to explore proposals aimed at ensuring the safe and uninterrupted passage of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Diplomatic Communication Between Oman and Iran," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, March 1, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/38217/>

¹⁶⁷ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "His Majesty Receives Call from Iranian President," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, March 12, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/39151/>.

¹⁶⁸ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Oman Welcomes Ceasefire Between Iran and the United States," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/41661>

¹⁶⁹ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Minister Participates in Intensive Diplomatic Contacts," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, March 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/41970/>

¹⁷⁰ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Minister Participates in Consultative Ministerial Meeting," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, March 30, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/40327>

¹⁷¹ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "His Majesty and Emir of Qatar Discuss Regional Developments," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, April 16, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/42560/>

¹⁷² Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Oman and Iran Hold Talks Regarding Strait of Hormuz," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, April 5, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/41479/>.

Domestic Measures

While Oman had a mobile-based early warning system capable of sending alerts to phones in specific areas, available reports suggest that authorities did not deploy it on a large scale during the escalation.¹⁷³ Furthermore, Oman did not announce remote working or distance learning during the ongoing attacks, except between March 24 and 26, due to severe weather conditions.¹⁷⁴

The lower frequency of attacks and Oman's geopolitical location created an edge for Oman to become a prominent transit and logistical hub for the region during the ongoing conflict, assisting other GCC countries. Oman's airspace remained open, and it became the main southern bypass route around the closed central Middle East corridor. Following a temporary shutdown of Muscat International Airport on March 9, Oman Air announced the addition of around 80 flights and reported assisting more than 97,000 passengers as travelers were rerouted through Muscat, as its airports remained operational.¹⁷⁵ In a statement, Oman's top diplomat reiterated Muscat's positions and said: "For everyone hoping to fly home from the Gulf, the Omani government is working with your governments and international airlines to organize flights to get you home. We mean everyone, whatever passport you hold. The citizens of all countries have the human right to safety and security. People matter. Let's stop the war now."¹⁷⁶

As part of its domestic measures during the war, Oman coordinated with relevant authorities and overseas missions to facilitate the phased return of its citizens, organizing safe travel through land crossings and flights from GCC countries and Jordan.¹⁷⁷ Oman did not declare a general force majeure, though limited actions occurred at the company level, most notably in

¹⁷³ Sultanate of Oman, "Mobile-Based Early Warning System," *Oman eGovernment Portal*, accessed April 26, 2026, <https://oman.om/en/home-top-level/eparticipation/mobile-based-early-warning-system>

¹⁷⁴ Nida Sohail, "Back to Class, or Still Online? How Are Schools Functioning Across the GCC," *Gulf Business*, March 24, 2026, <https://gulfbusiness.com/en/2026/education/back-to-class-or-still-online-how-are-schools-functioning-across-the-gcc/>

¹⁷⁵ Oman Air (@omanair), "Over the past week, we operated nearly 80 additional flights and helped more than 97,000 passengers get home...", X (formerly Twitter), March 9, 2026, <https://x.com/omanair/status/2030858324158374178>

¹⁷⁶ Badr Albusaidi, "For everyone hoping to fly home from the Gulf, the Omani government is working with your governments and international airlines to organise flights to get you home...", X (formerly Twitter), March 2026, <https://x.com/>

¹⁷⁷ Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Ministry Continues to Facilitate Repatriation of Omanis to the Homeland," *Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman*, March 9, 2026, <https://www.fm.gov.om/en/38897/>

energy contracts, with the Omani trading house OQ declaring force majeure for a customer in Bangladesh after Qatari supply was halted.¹⁷⁸

CONCLUSION

This report attempts to reflect the diverse reactions and implications of the Iranian attacks on each GCC state. The varying responses of the GCC states reflect the range of foreign and domestic policy approaches across the GCC. While there have been calls for a unified regional stance, the conflict has instead unlocked a new era of unpredictability in politics, energy markets, economic stability, and global alliances.

In conclusion, multiple scenarios continue to emerge regarding the trajectory of the war, such as failed negotiations, broken ceasefires, potential escalation, and the use of ground troops, and the inevitable long-term consequences for both the region and the wider international community. These scenarios remain the subject of ongoing debate among political leaders and analysts, reflecting the uncertainty of the current state of the conflict.

What distinguishes this war from previous conflicts is its scale, complexity, and reach. That is, the current war is of a unique nature. It has drawn in actors that have not traditionally been directly involved in conflict, expanded across regions, and affected foundations of civilian livelihoods and national economies. As a result, conventional approaches to conflict resolution may no longer be sufficient. Instead, a more adaptive and responsive diplomatic framework is required to address the harsh realities of the war while prioritizing an immediate ceasefire to end the hostilities. Without such an approach, the risk of a prolonged and more deeply entrenched regional conflict will persist and undermine the prospects for lasting peace among the region's neighboring states.

¹⁷⁸ Alma Milisic, "Force Majeure: What Is It and Why Have Some Gulf Countries Invoked It?" *Al Jazeera*, March 13, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/13/force-majeure-what-is-it-and-why-have-some-gulf-countries-invoked-it>

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