



Daily



22
MAR
12:41 UTC

MAX - MENA Region Daily Summary - March 22, 2025

The following report reviews current events in the MENA region and their possible effect on business continuity and security.

Highlights of the Day

- **Iraq:** HHN official warns of attacks against US forces, per unconfirmed March 20 report; threat likely rhetorical in nature
- **Israel:** High Court of Justice freezes government’s dismissal of Shin Bet Chief on March 21; to catalyze protests, raise prospect of labor action
- **Israel & Lebanon:** IDF conducts strikes in Lebanon following rocket launches into Israel’s Metulla on March 22; large-scale escalation unlikely
- **Israel & Yemen:** Houthis warn that Ben Gurion Airport has become ‘unsafe’ on March 22; attacks targeting critical assets to recur

Actionable Items

MENA: Pro-Palestinian protests slated in Bahrain, Morocco on March 22; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - Activist groups in Bahrain and Morocco have called for pro-Palestinian protests on March 22 in response to the resumption of Israel's ground operations in the Gaza Strip. In **Bahrain**, the "Bahraini Society for Resisting Normalization with Israel" has scheduled a demonstration in Manama's Adliya in front of the organization's headquarters at 20:30 (local time). In **Morocco**, the "Moroccan Front to Support Palestine and Oppose Normalization in Casablanca" has called for a protest march, which will commence at 21:30, from the Marshal Square and end in front of the US Consulate in Casablanca. The same group has also made a general call, urging for protests nationwide in Morocco on March 22.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Bahrain and Morocco on March 22 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance and allot for disruptions in the aforementioned areas due to the slated demonstrations.

Source: [Bahrain](#), [Morocco](#)

Israel: Anti-government protests slated in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem on March 22, over coming days; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation - Activist groups have called for anti-government protests in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem over the coming days to denounce the "dictatorial" behavior of the Prime Minister (PM) Benjamin Netanyahu-led government and to "defend democracy". In Tel Aviv, protesters will gather at Habima Square and then march to Begin Gate from 18:30 (local time) on March 22. In Jerusalem, protests have been scheduled outside PM Netanyahu's residence on Azza Street at 11:00 on March 22, and at 09:00 on March 24. Protests have also been scheduled for unspecified times at the same location on March 23 and March 25.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on March 22 and over the coming days are advised to maintain heightened vigilance near key protest locations such as Azza Street in Jerusalem, and Habima Square and Begin Gate in Tel Aviv due to the risk of unrest. Remain cognizant of the possibility of spontaneous anti-government protests materializing across major cities in Israel.

Source: [Hafganot](#)

Israel & Lebanon: IDF conducts strikes in Lebanon following rocket launches into Israel's Metulla on March 22; large-scale escalation unlikely

Current Situation - The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) announced the interception of three

rockets fired from Lebanon's Arnoun region. Israeli Defense Minister reportedly reaffirmed Israel's commitment to securing the Galilee communities, stating that "the fate of Metulla is the same as the fate of Beirut." The IDF released a statement indicating that the "state of Lebanon" bears responsibility for "upholding the agreement" between Israel and Lebanon. Hezbollah reportedly denied involvement, while Israeli military sources stated they would respond in Lebanon regardless of the perpetrator.

Assessments & Forecast - This marks the first attack on Israel from Lebanon since December 2024. Regardless of the perpetrator, considering that the rocket attacks indicate a continued threat to northern Israel, the IDF is likely to expand its operations in southern Lebanon to contain these threats, including those that may be posed by Hezbollah. While the possibility of strikes in Beirut cannot be entirely ruled out, this scenario is less likely given that it would be considered an escalation. Any further operations are therefore expected to remain limited to identifying and neutralizing immediate threats and are unlikely to escalate into large-scale operations at this time.

Recommendations - Continue to closely monitor regional developments and Home Front Command (HFC) guidelines, which may change on short notice. Remain cognizant of the whereabouts of shelters/safe areas at all times.

Source: [Israel Defense Forces](#)

Israel & Yemen: Houthis warn that Ben Gurion Airport has become 'unsafe' on March 22; attacks targeting critical assets to recur

Current Situation - On March 21, Israel intercepted a missile launched from Yemen before it reached Israeli territory. The attack triggered Color Red sirens across central Israel, with reports indicating that operations at Ben Gurion International Airport were briefly disrupted during the interception. The Houthi spokesperson stated that they targeted the airport with a "Palestine 2" missile and warned that "all airlines" would find the airport "unsafe for air traffic" until the "aggression against Gaza stops."

Assessments & Forecast - This is the fourth claimed Houthi attack against Israel in the past four days, and the second such attack targeting the Ben Gurion Airport, although none have successfully penetrated Israeli territory. The direct threats against Ben Gurion Airport are likely intended to pressure Israel into ceasing military operations in the Gaza Strip by targeting Israel's main international airport and disrupting commercial activity. Although Israeli air defenses have successfully defended against the attacks so far, the continued attacks pose an ongoing risk to commercial aviation, as seen in the [temporary airport shutdowns](#) during interceptions. In the coming days, the Houthis are likely to continue targeting critical assets in the country, including airports and military bases.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Israel are advised to remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding flight operations at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport due to the risks posed by possible rocket attacks.

Source: [Israel Air Force](#)

Lebanon & Syria: LAF closes seven illegal border crossings along Syria-Lebanon frontier on March 19-20; continue to avoid all travel to border

Current Situation - The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) announced the closure of a crossing in the Qasr-Hermel area, and three other crossings in the Qaa area on March 19. It subsequently announced the closure of three additional crossings in the Qaa and Doura areas on March 20. All crossings are located in the Baalbek-Hermel Governorate of northeastern Lebanon.

Assessments & Forecast - This follows an escalation in cross-border clashes between the Syrian Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham-led Military Operations Department (MOD) and Lebanese armed elements on [March 16-17](#), prior to a ceasefire deal agreed on [March 17](#). The LAF's closure of several illegal crossings since, which are used by criminals for smuggling weapons and narcotics, underlines its commitment to reducing volatility along this border region and preventing a further escalation of violence that could jeopardize the ceasefire deal. The LAF will likely remain deployed in the area, conducting patrols to identify further illegal crossings and prevent destabilizing activity in the region that has historically been characterized by its lawlessness. The continued entrenchment of criminal syndicates in this region will challenge the LAF and MOD efforts, sustaining the threat of violence in the border region.

Recommendations - Those operating or residing in Lebanon and Syria are advised to avoid all travel to the Lebanese-Syrian border area due to the continued risk of armed clashes and entrenchment of criminal organizations.

Source: [Lebanese Armed Forces \(LAF\)](#)

Notable Events

Iran: Tehran to respond to US letter on nuclear negotiations soon, per March 20 statement by Foreign Minister; tensions to remain elevated

Current Situation - Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi stated that Tehran will consider both the "opportunities" and "threats" presented in the letter by US President Donald Trump. Araqchi added that in the "conditions of pressure, threats, and an escalation of sanctions", Iran would "certainly not negotiate directly". Meanwhile, the US and Israel will reportedly hold "high-level" talks next week on Iran's nuclear program.

Assessments & Forecast - President Trump on [March 7](#) stated that he had invited Iran to engage in nuclear negotiations, which he would prefer over military action. While Araqchi's response could signal a potential openness to talks, parts of it also align with Tehran's stance of rejecting negotiations conducted under US pressure. Meanwhile, the

scheduled discussions between Israel and the US will likely raise concerns in Iran over the discussion of potential military action against its nuclear facilities. It also reflects that US engagement with Iran over its nuclear program will likely be inclusive of and align with Israeli strategic interests. With Washington unlikely to shift its stance or de-escalate its [maximum pressure policy](#), and Iran refusing to negotiate under pressure, tensions between the two will likely remain elevated.

Source: [IRNA](#)

Iraq: HHN official warns of attacks against US forces, per unconfirmed March 20 report; threat likely rhetorical in nature

Current Situation - A senior official from the Iran-backed Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba (HHN) warned of “advanced and modern strikes” on US forces if they remain in Iraq beyond 2025, [when Washington is scheduled to withdraw all its troops from the country](#). He also called US airstrikes on the Houthis a “grave mistake”. Meanwhile, another unconfirmed report citing “trusted sources” claims that Iran has urged Iraqi militias to refrain from “provoking” the US.

Assessments & Forecast - This comes as other Iraqi militias reportedly vowed to target US interests in response to recent US airstrikes in Yemen. Although unconfirmed, escalating tensions may prompt militias to target US assets in Iraq, as evidenced by their history of increased anti-US activity during periods of regional escalations. Similarly, while unverified, reports of Iran warning militias against attacking US interests cannot be entirely ruled out. This is especially as Tehran could be looking for avenues to alleviate US pressure on itself, including through influencing its allied militia groups. Regardless, while the HHN has the capability to launch attacks, these statements are likely largely rhetorical, especially as launching such attacks in the immediate term would risk a significant and damaging response from the US.

Source: [Newsweek](#)

Israel: High Court of Justice freezes government’s dismissal of Shin Bet Chief on March 21; to catalyze protests, raise prospect of labor action

Current Situation - The temporary injunction will remain in place until April 8, at the latest, to enable petitions by the opposition to be heard. Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara prohibited Prime Minister (PM) Benjamin Netanyahu from appointing Shin Bet Chief Ronen Bar’s replacement or involvement in the process due to a potential conflict of interest. Members of the Netanyahu-led coalition denounced the court’s decision, indicating that it would not be adhered to. The Israel Business Forum threatened to “shut down the Israeli economy” if the High Court of Justice (HCJ) decision was not respected, while the General Organization of Workers in Israel (Histadrut) warned that it would not “sit silently” as the government brings Israel to the “verge of anarchy”.

Assessments & Forecast - These developments will [further antagonize grievances](#) among the anti-government camp that perceives Bar's dismissal as a politically-motivated attempt to obstruct the Shin Bet's investigation into alleged collusion between the PM's Office and Qatar. Protests will continue over the coming days, primarily in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Should the government proceed with the dismissal of Bar, in contradiction to the court order, further disruptions to business continuity could materialize, including labor action.

Source: [Kan](#)

Other Developments

- **Israel & Palestinian Territories:** On March 21, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated that they eliminated the head of Hamas' military intelligence in southern Gaza. On the same day, the IDF intercepted two launches from Gaza.
- **Syria:** On March 20, the Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a message to Syria's transitional government President, Ahmed al-Sharaa, expressing Russia's willingness to develop "practical cooperation" and bolster bilateral ties with Syria.
- **Turkey:** The Central Bank of Turkey decided to increase the Bank's overnight lending rate to 46 percent, according to the Bank's statement on March 2.

Notable Dates

9
APR Tunisia Holiday: Martyrs' Day

9
APR Iraq Holiday: Baghdad Liberation Day (KRG only)

12
APR Israel Holiday: Passover

13
APR Iran Holiday: Martyrdom of Imam Sadeq

13
APR MENA Holiday: Palm Sunday

17
APR Syria Holiday: Independence Day
