

## **15,000 targets struck in Iran, Hegseth says; Lebanon is near a “breaking point”; U.S. temporarily lifts Russian oil sanctions**

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# War on Iran

- **U.S. and Israeli airstrikes pound Iran for the fourteenth day:** A series of heavy airstrikes hit areas in and around Tehran on Friday, and blasts were heard in several neighborhoods, including Poonak, Marzdaran, Shahr Rey, Lavasan, Zafaranieh, and Tehran Pars. One strike hit near a large rally in the capital where thousands gathered for the annual Quds Day (Jerusalem Day) demonstration, a state-organized rally in support of Palestinians. The rally took place despite the Israeli military issuing an earlier warning on its Farsi-language X account for people to evacuate the area. The airstrike hit the area of Ferdowsi Square, just down the street from the heart of the rally. Iran’s state-owned Press TV reported that shrapnel killed one person. Top government officials attended the demonstration, including Ali Larijani, the head of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, and Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejechi, who heads the country’s judiciary.
- **Casualty count:** At least 1,444 people have been killed and 18,551 injured in US-Israeli attacks on Iran since the war began on February 28, according to Iran’s Health Ministry.
- **Trump issues another threat against Iran:** President Donald Trump said in a statement on [Truth Social](#) overnight that: “Iran’s Navy is gone, their Air Force is no longer, missiles, drones and everything else are being decimated, and their leaders have been wiped from the face of the earth. We have unparalleled firepower, unlimited ammunition, and plenty of time - Watch what happens to these deranged scumbags today.”
- **Hegseth: Over 15,000 targets hit in Iran:** War Secretary Pete Hegseth claimed in a press conference on Friday that over 15,000 targets have been struck in Iran, equating to more than 1,000 a day since the day began. Despite senior Iranian officials being filmed at the demonstration in Tehran on Friday, Hegseth said Iran’s leadership is, “Desperate and hiding, they’ve gone underground, cowering – that’s what rats do.” Hegseth also claimed that Iran’s new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei is “wounded and likely disfigured.” A senior Iranian

official confirmed to Drop Site that Khamenei was injured in the initial strikes of the war, but declined to comment on the extent of his injuries.

- **Iranian Red Crescent says over 21,700 civilian sites hit during war:** The head of the Iranian Red Crescent [said](#) more than 21,720 civilian sites have been targeted during attacks on the country by the U.S. and Israel, including 17,353 residential units, 4,122 commercial properties, and 160 medical centers. The organization also said 69 schools and 16 Red Crescent branches were struck, and that 21 rescue vehicles and 19 ambulances were targeted. According to the group, one Red Crescent worker was killed and seven were injured. Across the broader medical sector, 12 healthcare workers have been killed and 78 have been wounded.

- **Khamenei vows to keep Hormuz closed and promises revenge:** In his first address to the country on Thursday, Iran's new Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei [vowed](#) to keep the Strait of Hormuz closed and promised "revenge" against the United States and Israel, saying in a statement read by a state TV presenter the "leverage of blocking the Strait of Hormuz must certainly continue to be used." The 56-year-old cleric, chosen Sunday by the Assembly of Experts after the killing of his father at the start of the war, has not appeared publicly since the conflict began.

- **Brent crude tops \$100 as Hormuz disruption continues:** Brent crude [closed](#) above \$100 for the first time since July 2022 as the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway that normally carries about one-fifth of the world's oil, remains largely closed. At least 16 vessels have been attacked in and near the Strait of Hormuz since February 28, according to the New York Times, with two of the most recent attacks targeting Iraqi tankers, causing the country to suspend operations at its oil export terminals on its southern ports. U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright told CNBC on Thursday that the U.S. military is currently "not ready" to escort oil tankers through the corridor, though officials say a U.S.-led multinational naval coalition could begin planned escorts later this month or in early April.

- **Drone strike hits tourist camp on Iran's Qeshm Island, killing three civilians:** A U.S.-Israeli drone strike [hit](#) a tourist camp on Iran's Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday, killing three and injuring another, according to the island's police commander. The island was also struck five days earlier when U.S.-Israeli forces hit a desalination plant, an attack authorities said disrupted water supplies to roughly 30 villages.

- **Israel targets Basij checkpoints in Tehran:** Israel [said](#) its air force struck Basij militia checkpoints and officers across Tehran after claiming the units were setting up roadblocks around the capital, vowing to continue attacks aimed at damaging "the Iranian regime's core systems and foundations." The Basij is a volunteer paramilitary force that operates under the

IRGC. Iranian state media reported that at least ten Basij officers were killed in drone strikes over the past day.

- **Six U.S. crew members die after refueler crashes in Iraq:** All six crew members aboard a KC-135 Stratotanker refueling aircraft that crashed in western Iraq have been confirmed dead, [according](#) to U.S. Central Command. CENTCOM said the accident occurred in airspace controlled by friendly forces. CENTCOM added that the crash “was not caused by enemy or friendly fire,” though further details have not yet been released. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed responsibility for the attack.

- **Drone attacks hit Iraqi army positions near Makhmour, killing a French soldier:** A drone attack struck Iraqi army positions in the Makhmour district of Nineveh province, which Iraqi authorities [said](#) involved four drones. French President Emmanuel Macron later announced that a French soldier stationed at the joint Peshmerga-French base was killed in the attack, marking the first French fatality since the start of the U.S.-Israel war with Iran. At least six other French soldiers were wounded in the strike.

- **Two killed in Oman:** Two people were killed in Oman on Friday after the downing of a drone in Sohar province, according to Oman’s state news agency.

- **IRGC says it struck U.S. Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain:** Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [said](#) its navy launched two waves of missile and drone strikes early Friday targeting the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet at Mina Salman port in Manama, Bahrain. The IRGC claimed the attack struck anti-drone systems, drone storage depots, fuel tanks, support equipment, and areas where U.S. personnel were gathered, using one-way attack drones along with cruise and ballistic missiles. The statement added that “by God’s grace, the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed.”

- **Debris from aerial interception sparks fire in Dubai industrial district:** Authorities [said](#) Friday that a fire broke out in an industrial district of Dubai after debris fell following what officials described as a successful aerial interception. The falling fragments damaged the exterior of a building in central Dubai and sent heavy smoke over parts of the skyline. Officials said no injuries were reported.

- **IRGC claims missile and drone strike damaged USS Abraham Lincoln, while U.S. says it fired on a vessel that got “too close”:** Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [claimed](#) early Friday that a missile and drone attack caused significant damage to the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier during operations in the region, according to a report from Anadolu. The U.S. [said it fired](#) on a vessel that approached the USS Abraham Lincoln “earlier this week” and it is not clear whether the account is of the same incident. The USS Abraham

Lincoln is a nuclear-powered Nimitz-class aircraft carrier that has long supported U.S. operations in the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific.

- **U.S. temporarily lifts sanctions on Russian oil already at sea:** The Trump administration [announced](#) on Thursday that it will temporarily allow shipments of Russian oil already at sea to reach global buyers as part of its efforts to stabilize surging energy prices. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the exemption, in place until April 11, could release roughly 130 million barrels into the market and help curb the soaring prices of Brent crude. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Friday criticized the U.S. decision to ease sanctions on Russian oil. “Six members of the G7 expressed a very clear view that this is not the right signal to send,” Merz said.

## Lebanon

- **Casualty count:** The death toll from Israel’s assault on Lebanon has risen to at least 687, according to Lebanon’s Health Ministry. The number of paramedics killed has risen to 18, with 45 wounded, since March 2.

- **Israeli strikes hit multiple sites across Lebanon:**

- At least eight people were killed and nine wounded in an Israeli attack on a residential building in Saida, southern Lebanon, on Friday, according to the state-run National News Agency.

- At least two people were also killed in a strike on the town of Qalila in southern Lebanon, with at least two others still missing under the rubble.

- On Thursday evening, Israeli strikes [hit](#) at least four locations across Beirut, including Saint-Therese in the southern suburbs, Zoqaq al-Blat in central Beirut, Bachoura near Downtown Beirut, and the Faculty of Sciences at the Lebanese University in Hadath.

- An Israeli drone strike on the campus killed faculty director Hussein Bazzi and professor Mortada Srour as they stood in the courtyard, in what officials say is the first direct strike on a university during the current escalation. The Israeli military [admitted](#) it conducted the strike and claimed without evidence that Srour was a Hezbollah operative.

- **Eight members of a single family killed in Israeli strike:** Eight members of a single family from Tyre were [killed](#) in a recent Israeli strike, according to local reporting cited by Sahat news. The father, who returned after the attack, said the blast left multiple family

members dismembered, including his five-year-old daughter, whose body he said had been torn apart.

- **Israel's defense minister admits attacking Lebanese infrastructure:** An Israeli strike on Friday targeted a bridge over the Litani River, a major crossing point between northern and southern Lebanon. Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz said afterwards, "This is just the beginning." He added, "The Lebanese government, which misled and failed to fulfill its commitment to disarm Hezbollah, will pay an increasing price through strikes on Lebanese national infrastructure."

- **Lebanon nearing displacement "breaking point":** Lebanon is approaching "a breaking point," as displacement accelerates, with one in every seven people uprooted from their homes, [according](#) to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). At least 816,000 people have been displaced since March 2, according to official figures. Israel's evacuation orders have now engulfed 1,470 square kilometres, or 14 percent of Lebanon. "The scale of destruction and displacement is increasing with every passing hour," Maureen Philippon, NRC Country Director in Lebanon, said in a statement. "This indiscriminate bombing must stop."

- **Missile strike in northern Israel:** Nearly 30 people were [injured](#) in the Israeli village of Zarzir after Hezbollah said it fired a rocket salvo at northern Israel near the Lebanon border.

## The Gaza Genocide, Israel and the West Bank

- **IDF drops indictment against soldiers accused of sexually abusing Palestinian detainee:** Israel's Military Advocate General Itay Offir has [canceled](#) the indictment against five Israeli soldiers accused of sexually assaulting a Palestinian detainee at the Sde Teiman military detention facility, citing evidentiary and procedural problems, according to The Jerusalem Post. The soldiers were accused of sodomizing the detainee with a sharp object, and medical reports found fractured ribs, chest trauma, and a perforated rectum requiring surgery. Video of the assault was leaked by the former military advocate, who was later forced to resign. Defense Minister Israel Katz welcomed Thursday's decision, calling the case a "blood libel against IDF soldiers" and saying the military legal system should protect troops "who engage heroically in war."

- **Israel deepens restrictions on aid entering Gaza:** Israel is exploiting the war with Iran to deepen Gaza's humanitarian crisis, with aid deliveries falling to 30% of required levels and transfers of critically ill patients out of the enclave halted, according to Ultra Palestine. Amjad al-Shawa, head of the Palestinian NGO Network in Gaza, told Ultra Palestine that the Rafah crossing remains fully closed, while Kerem Shalom is operating only partially, allowing about 200 trucks daily instead of the 600 required under the humanitarian protocol. The UN said

food distributions had been cut in half due to aid disruptions, while hospitals face growing generator failures due to shortages of spare parts and oil, and that 23,000 suspected infection cases linked to insect infestations were recorded last month.

## United States

*By Julian Andreone, with Ryan Grim. Have a tip on Capitol Hill? Email Andreone at [Julian@dropsitenews.com](mailto:Julian@dropsitenews.com).*

· **Attack on synagogue in Michigan:** Ayman Ghazali, the man who rammed a truck loaded with explosives into a Michigan synagogue yesterday, lost several members of his family in an Israeli air strike on the town of Mashgara in Lebanon, Ryan Grim [reports](#). Ghazali was killed after driving through the doors of Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, law enforcement sources told news outlets. No injuries or deaths were reported as a result of the attack, according to officials from the synagogue. A source close to the family told Drop Site that Ghazali posted photos of his brothers, niece, and nephew on WhatsApp the night before the attack.



**Ryan Grim**

[@ryangrim](#)

**NEWS: The man who rammed his explosives-laden truck into a Michigan synagogue today was named Ayman Ghazaleh, according to a source familiar with the situation. Ghazaleh posted photos overnight of his family members, including young children, who were killed in a recent Israeli**



Ayman Hamido

Today, 12:40 AM



طيور في الجنة 🐦❤️

- **ROTC instructor killed in shooting at Old Dominion University investigated as terrorism:** An Army Lieutenant Colonel and ROTC instructor, Brandon A. Shah, was [killed](#), and two other U.S. Army personnel were wounded in an attack at Old Dominion University in Virginia on Thursday, which authorities are now investigating as a potential act of terrorism. The suspected gunman, Mohamed Bailor Jalloh, a 36-year-old former Army National Guard member previously convicted on terrorism-related charges, was also killed after the attack in an ROTC classroom shortly before 11 a.m., according to federal officials. Investigators said Jalloh had previously pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State and had been released from prison in 2024.

- **AIPAC spends over \$15M on four Illinois House races:** The race in Illinois's Ninth Congressional District has narrowed to a contest between progressive candidates Daniel Biss, the mayor of Evanston, and political newcomer Kat Abughazaleh. Super PACs, however, have spent heavily on the campaign of state senator Laura Fine, who has received nearly \$4 million from AIPAC-backed groups. Illinois's Democratic primary is March 17. More on the state of the race in IL-09 is at The American Prospect [here](#)—and more on the dark money in Illinois's House races is available [from local reporter Matthew Eadie here](#).

- **Federal prosecutor Jay Clayton holds investments tied to cases he oversees:** Jay Clayton, the acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and President Donald Trump's pick for the post, holds more than \$1.6 million in investments in companies that could be affected by investigations his office is handling, according to ethics disclosures reviewed by The Lever. Clayton maintains large holdings in Apollo Global Management, where he served as board chairman, as well as stakes in major banks linked to congressional probes into Jeffrey Epstein and in oil companies that could benefit from potential changes in Venezuela's energy sector. Clayton is in charge of the investigation into Epstein and the DOJ's case against Nicholas Maduro. The full report on Clayton's potential conflicts of interest is available from The Lever, [here](#).

- **Colorado meatpackers:** 3,800 meatpacking workers for JBS in Colorado are [set to strike](#) on Monday, the first major labor strike in the meatpacking industry in decades. The workers' contract expired in July; the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7, said it had met with the company over two dozen times in an attempt to reach a new agreement.

## Other International News

- **China mediates to ease Pakistan-Afghanistan fighting:** China's mediation between Afghanistan and Pakistan in their ongoing conflict has been effective, [according to Reuters](#).

While daily clashes continue along the 2,600-kilometer border, Pakistani airstrikes appear to have halted, and ground fighting has tapered as China's special envoy shuttles between the two countries, urging a return to negotiations. Three Pakistani officials told Reuters that Chinese outreach has helped to reduce the fighting, the worst between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

- **Sudanese army drone strike kills four civilians at border market:** Four people were [killed](#) when a Sudanese Armed Forces drone struck fuel reserves at the Adikong market near the Sudan-Chad frontier, triggering explosions that burned the victims to death. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) reported that 23 injured civilians—including four women and seven children under 15—were treated at an MSF-supported hospital in Adré, Chad. MSF said the strike was the second deadly drone attack in Adikong in less than a month, warning that civilians continue to bear the brunt of Sudan's war. Earlier Thursday, the UN reported that drone strikes in Sudan had killed more than 200 civilians since March 4. UN officials also warned the conflict is spreading into White Nile state south of Khartoum, where RSF drone attacks have struck schools, clinics, and power infrastructure.”

- **Senegal passes harsh anti-LGBTQ law:** Senegal's parliament has passed a law that would impose up to 10 years in prison for same-sex relations and criminalize the “promotion of homosexuality.” The bill passed overwhelmingly with 135 votes in favor, none against, and three abstentions, and now awaits the signature of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye.

- **South Africa summons new U.S. ambassador over criticism:** South Africa's Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola summoned newly appointed U.S. Ambassador Leo Brent Bozell III after he publicly criticized the country's policies, including its ties with Iran, affirmative action laws addressing apartheid-era inequality, and a land reform law allowing expropriation without compensation. Bozell also condemned a court ruling allowing the controversial “Kill the Boer” chant, calling it hate speech. Tensions between Washington and Pretoria remained high after the expulsion of South Africa's ambassador from Washington and U.S. moves to exclude the country from G20 meetings.

- **Somalia warns against Israeli military base in Somaliland:** Somalia's government [warned](#) Thursday that its territory cannot be used for foreign military operations after reports that Israel is considering establishing a base in the breakaway region of Somaliland near the strategic port of Berbera on the Gulf of Aden. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ali Omar told Al Jazeera that only Somalia's federal government has the authority to approve foreign military arrangements. (For background, read Drop Site's report on how Israel's [recognition of Somaliland](#) is sowing conflict.)

- **Russia says Ukrainian drone strike killed eight medics in Donetsk:** Russia's Defense Ministry said Thursday that eight medics were killed and 10 people wounded in a Ukrainian drone attack earlier this week on a medical facility in the Donetsk region, which is largely controlled by Russian forces, according to [Reuters](#). The ministry claimed the facility had never been used for military purposes. Ukraine did not immediately comment on the allegation, and Reuters said it could not independently verify the incident.
- **Cuba confirms "sensitive dialogue" with U.S.:** Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel [confirmed](#) that officials from Cuba and the United States have recently held conversations aimed at resolving their longstanding differences. The announcement by Díaz-Canel is the first official confirmation from Cuba that official talks with the U.S. were happening, following weeks of rumors and comments from U.S. President Donald Trump that he and Secretary of State Marco Rubio were in contact with Havana.
- **French UN staffer killed in drone strike in Goma:** French UN humanitarian worker Karine Buisset, 54, was killed in a drone strike in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, along with two civilians early Wednesday morning, the UN said. The drone struck a residential building in the Himbi district, an area housing many aid workers and expatriates. Security sources cited by AFP said the strike may have been aimed at M23 figures in the neighborhood but hit the residence by mistake. Local media reports said a second drone targeting Corneille Nangaa, political coordinator of the AFC alliance aligned with M23, fell into Lake Kivu. M23 blamed the Congolese army, and the government said it would investigate.

## More from Drop Site

- **Ryan Grim** [asked](#) Rep. Cory Mills (R-FL) whether his support for Trump's Iran war has anything to do with his [ownership of an arms trafficking company](#). Mills, who currently serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee (specifically as Chairman of the Oversight and Intelligence Subcommittee), co-founded PACEM Solutions International and PACEM Defense, which manufacture and distribute munitions, including high-explosive grenades. He claimed today to have divested from the companies, but later backtracked on that assertion.