

## Travel Advisory – Middle East (23 March 2026)

**Date:** 23 March 2026

**Areas of Concern:** Middle East

**Overall Risk Level:** HIGH

### Key Developments

#### Monday 23 March 2026

- Donald Trump claimed productive talks with Iran have taken place about resolving tensions in the Middle East, and he has paused planned strikes on Iranian energy infrastructure for five days to allow negotiations to continue. Iranian sources however are denying these talks took place and claim Trump's statement was designed to reduce energy prices and buy time to implement his military plans.
- The International Energy Agency (IEA) said the conflict has severely damaged over 40 energy assets across nine Middle Eastern countries since February 28, disrupting oil and gas supplies. The IAE described the disruption as worse than the 1970s oil crises and 2022 gas crisis combined.
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer confirmed the UK is rapidly deploying short-range air defence systems to Bahrain and working with industry to supply missiles to Gulf partners, including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.
- An Indian national living in UAE was injured by falling shrapnel after a ballistic missile was intercepted. The accident occurred in Abu Dhabi near Al Dhafra Air Base, in the Al Shawamekh area.
- Bahrain and Kuwait issued missile alerts early in the morning over incoming Iranian fire, with no confirmed damage reported.
- Air defence systems in Abu Dhabi also responded to incoming missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) launched from Iran in the morning. The public were urged to 'remain in a safe location'.
- Saudi Arabia's Defense Ministry said it detected two incoming ballistic missiles targeting the Riyadh region, intercepting one while the other landed in an uninhabited area. It also reported intercepting and destroying seven Iranian drones aimed at the Eastern and Northern Border provinces.
- UAE authorities warned of unstable weather this week, including rainfall, thunderstorms and strong winds, with public safety advisories issues. Heavy rain led to temporary road closures in Sharjah, including Al Ezwah Street, which has since reopened. Residents are urged to exercise caution and avoid flood-prone areas.

#### Sunday 22 March 2026

- Iran threatened to target the energy and water systems across the Gulf, specifically in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and UAE, including the Barakah nuclear power plant in Abu Dhabi. This was in response to warnings from Donald Trump about targeting Iran's power infrastructure. The warning raises fears of attacks on civilian infrastructure across the region, where millions rely heavily on desalination plants for water.
- Iran fired three ballistic missiles towards Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with one missile intercepted and two landing in uninhabited areas, according to the Saudi Defense Ministry.
- UAE air defence systems intercepted four ballistic missiles and 25 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

## Saturday 21 March 2026

- One Iraqi police officer was killed in a drone strike by 'outlaw groups' targeting the Iraqi National Intelligence Service headquarters in the Mansour district of Baghdad. The attack took place on Saturday at around 10:00am local time.
- Bahrain government officials reported today on a March 9 incident stating that a Patriot air defence system intercepted an Iranian drone over a residential area. Bahrain said that 32 civilians had been injured in attacks that day, including children who required medical treatment.
- Saudi Arabia ordered Iran's military attache, his assistant and three embassy staff to leave the country within 24 hours after declaring them persona non grata, citing continued Iranian attacks on its territory.
- Saudi Arabia said its forces intercepted dozens of Iranian drones targeting the Eastern Province, including 51 shot down early in the morning and a further 11 later in the day. The attacks focused on key oil infrastructure.
- Kuwait was also targeted by drone strikes on energy infrastructure, but no casualties reported.

## Movement Status

### Airspace Restriction

Airspace across parts of the Middle East remains subject to restrictions and potential short-notice closure due to ongoing military activity. Several international airlines continue to suspend or limit flights to destinations across the Gulf and Israel.

Regional aviation hubs remain operational under contingency procedures.

### Oman

- Muscat International Airport (MCT) – Operational and continuing to handle increased traffic linked to evacuation and repatriation flights.
- Salalah Airport (SLL) – Operational though regional disruption may affect connections.
- Sohar International Airport (OHS) – Operational though regional disruption may affect connections.

### United Arab Emirates

- Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC) – Supporting cargo and limited passenger operations.
- Zayed International Airport (AUH) – Operating with reduced services.
- Other UAE airports – Operational though disruption may affect services.

### Israel

- Ben Gurion Airport (TLV) – Limited flight operations continue, including authorised and repatriation flights

## Airports with Significant Disruption

- Dubai International Airport (DXB) – Gradual resumption of some flights to and from selected destinations, following the temporary suspension implemented as a precautionary measure after a drone hit a nearby fuel tank.
- Kuwait International Airport (KWI) – Operations are severely disrupted as a result of recent drone strikes which damaged infrastructure and radar equipment.
- Hamad International Airport (Qatar) – Flight operations remain affected by the wider regional security situation.

- Bahrain International Airport – Aviation operations remain severely disrupted due to ongoing tensions.
- Airports in Iran, including Imam Khomeini International Airport and Mehrabad International Airport – Civil aviation operations remain heavily restricted due to the conflict.
- Major Saudi airports including King Abdulaziz International Airport (Jeddah), King Khalid International Airport (Riyadh), Prince Mohammad bin Abdulaziz International Airport (Medina), and King Fahd International Airport (Dammam) are experiencing disruption following suspended regional flight routes.

## Local Transport Conditions

Ground transport across much of the region remains generally operational, though travellers should expect varying levels of security presence and possible movement restrictions depending on local developments.

- Major urban centres across the Gulf continue to function normally, with road traffic operating and commercial activity largely continuing as usual in many areas.
- Authorities in several countries maintain increased security around airports, government buildings and critical infrastructure, which may result in additional checkpoints or temporary road closures nearby.
- Movement near international borders may be more restricted, and travellers should expect reduced traffic volumes and increased security checks in these areas.
- Ground sources operating in Saudi Arabia report no perceptible change to the normal pattern of life in Riyadh, with shops open and streets busy during Ramadan. Road traffic along major routes in and out of the capital appears normal, with reduced vehicle movement primarily observed near border crossings.

## Consular Contacts – Five Eye Countries

Travellers are advised to register with their embassy

**Australia** – The Australian Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) provides 24/7 emergency assistance to Australians overseas (+61 2 6261 3305)

**Canada** – The Global Affairs Canada Emergency Watch and Response Centre provides 24/7 emergency consular assistance to Canadians abroad (+1 613 996 8885), WhatsApp/Signal (+1 613 909 8881/8087), email [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)

**New Zealand** – Consular Emergency Line (+64 99 20 20 20)

**United Kingdom** - Provides 24/7 global support to British citizens abroad (+44 20 7008 5000)

**United States** – Provides 24/7 consular assistance to Americans abroad (+1 202 501 4444)

## Government Repatriation/Evacuation Flights

Governments are in the process of organizing evacuation assistance for their nationals across the Middle East however due to ongoing disruptions to flight and airport operations in the region, some flights have been delayed.

## Guidance for Travellers Currently in Middle East

### Best advice is to:

- Shelter in place
- Register with your embassy or consulate as soon as possible
- Follow official instructions of local authorities and your embassy
- Report any security or safety concerns through appropriate official channels
- Rely on trusted news sources for accurate and timely updates
- Conduct regular communication checks with your group and key contacts
- Keep all communication devices fully charged, including spare batteries and power banks
- Stay away from windows and keep curtains or drapes closed as a precaution



**In the event of a missile or drone alert:**

- Immediately
  - Go indoors
  - Move away from windows
  - Use reinforced structures or basements
- Recommended shelter locations
  - Underground parking
  - Basement levels
  - Interior stairwells
  - Designated shelters
- Remain sheltered – Stay inside 10 – 15 minutes after final explosion or alert

**In the event of immediate evacuation**

- Ensure that you are able to move at short notice with minimal baggage
- Keep important documents and essential medications accessible
- Follow official instructions with authorities promptly

**Accountability & Documentation**

Prepare and maintain a nominal roll of all individuals in your party, including

- Full name (as per passport)
- Passport details
- Date of birth (DOB)
- Medical conditions and required medications
- Any special considerations

Also record next-of-kin details to ensure timely updates can be provided if required

Remain flexible and prepared to adapt to conditions as they evolve.