DATE: 04 MAR 2026 | TIME: 16:00 UTC | REGION: Middle East & North Africa

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Escalation Drives Energy, Shipping and Market Disruption Across the Gulf

Regional hostilities continue with sustained Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting infrastructure and transport corridors across the Gulf. U.S. forces have struck more than 1,700 Iranian military targets while introducing an insurance backstop for shipping and signalling possible naval escorts through the Strait of Hormuz to stabilise energy flows. Disruption is spreading across energy and logistics markets. Fujairah bunker suppliers have declared force majeure, QatarEnergy has halted LNG production, and Iraqi exports from the Kurdistan region to Ceyhan have stopped. Container carriers MSC and CMA CGM have suspended bookings to several Gulf ports, while UAE equity markets hit circuit breakers amid rising geopolitical and cyber risk.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Security
- U.S. and Israeli strikes continue targeting Iranian missile and military infrastructure
- Iranian drone and missile launches continue targeting Gulf infrastructure

Aviation
- Commercial flights suspended or rerouted across several Gulf airspaces
- Limited repatriation and cargo flights operating from Dubai and Abu Dhabi

Maritime
- Container carriers MSC and CMA CGM suspend bookings to several Gulf ports
- Tanker traffic slowing as insurers reassess war-risk coverage

Diplomatic / Political
- Governments issuing evacuation guidance for citizens across the region
- Gulf states maintaining elevated defensive and civil defence posture

RISK INDICATORS

Security Risk
- Continued missile and drone activity targeting Gulf infrastructure
- Potential for further U.S.–Iran military escalation

HIGH

Aviation Risk
- Airspace closures disrupting regional airline operations
- Limited flight availability affecting evacuation and cargo movement

HIGH

Maritime Risk
- Container booking suspensions affecting Gulf shipping routes
- Rising war-risk insurance costs and vessel routing changes

HIGH

Energy Risk
- LNG outages and Iraqi export disruptions tightening supply
- Threats to energy infrastructure sustaining market volatility

CRITICAL

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OPERATIONAL IMPACT

Aviation

- Dubai operating limited repatriation and cargo flights
- Etihad suspends scheduled flights from Abu Dhabi until 5 March
- Qatar Airways operations halted while Qatari airspace remains closed
- Muscat functioning as a regional exit hub for departures

Logistics & Supply Chain

- Container booking suspensions affecting Gulf import and export cargo
- Shipping delays increasing freight costs across regional routes
- Air cargo capacity constrained by flight cancellations
- Supply chains facing delays across industrial and retail sectors

Maritime

- CMA CGM suspends new cargo bookings to several Gulf ports
- MSC halts new bookings for Middle East-bound cargo
- Tanker movements slowing near the Strait of Hormuz
- War-risk insurance premiums rising across Gulf routes

Energy Markets

- QatarEnergy LNG production halt tightening global gas supply
- Iraqi exports from Kurdistan to Ceyhan suspended (~200,000 b/d)
- Fujairah bunker suppliers declare force majeure after infrastructure disruption
- Energy infrastructure threats raising supply disruption concerns

OUTLOOK (NEXT 72–96 HOURS)

- Regional conditions are expected to remain volatile as military operations between Iran and the U.S.–Israel coalition continue. Iranian missile and drone launches targeting Gulf infrastructure and transport corridors remain possible, while further U.S. strikes on Iranian military facilities cannot be ruled out.
- Aviation and maritime disruption across the Gulf is likely to persist as airlines and shipping operators continue adjusting routes in response to security risks and insurance restrictions.
- Energy markets will remain sensitive to any additional infrastructure damage or shipping disruption in the Strait of Hormuz. Logistics constraints, container booking suspensions and aviation restrictions are expected to continue affecting regional supply chains.
- Financial markets may experience further volatility, while cyber monitoring across financial and commercial sectors is likely to remain elevated amid concerns of potential retaliatory cyber activity.

ADVISORY NOTE

Organisations and personnel operating across the Gulf should expect continued disruption to aviation, maritime transit and energy infrastructure. Individuals should closely follow official government instructions, including potential shelter-in-place guidance or movement restrictions.

Companies should maintain coordination with local authorities and logistics partners, monitor aviation and maritime advisories, and review contingency planning for supply chain disruption, personnel safety and cybersecurity risk while the regional security environment remains volatile.