

Daily Peace and Crisis Report — Tuesday 17 Mar 2026

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Summary: The Middle East remains the epicentre of global conflict as the US-Israeli war on Iran enters its third week, with civilian casualties mounting across Iran, Lebanon, and Gaza. In Lebanon, Israel launched "limited" ground operations against Hezbollah, while the humanitarian situation for over 830,000 displaced Lebanese deteriorates rapidly. In Gaza, Israeli strikes continue in violation of the ceasefire, bringing the total Palestinian death toll since October 2023 to more than 72,000. Ukraine-Russia peace talks remain stalled as US diplomatic attention is diverted to the Middle East, while fighting continues with Russia claiming 12 settlements seized in March. Sudan faces relentless drone strikes killing dozens, and Yemen saw a deadly artillery attack on a Ramadan gathering that killed 10 civilians including six children.

1. US-Israel War on Iran

The US-Israeli military campaign against Iran, which began on 28 February 2026, entered its third week with no ceasefire in sight. The war has spread to nearly a dozen nations across the Middle East, with Iran launching retaliatory missile and drone strikes on US bases in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, while also targeting Israeli cities. [UN News](#)

Independent experts briefing the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday warned of a widening "spiral of conflict" with escalating

civilian casualties. The chair of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, Sara Hossein, reported that "in almost three weeks, these strikes have resulted in mounting reports of civilian casualties, including children." Residential areas, oil depots, and a desalination plant have been struck or destroyed. [UN News](#)

The most devastating single incident was an airstrike on a school in Minab, southern Iran, on the first day of the war, which killed more than 168 people — the vast majority girl students, many as young as seven years old. The UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, Mai Sato, reported that at least 1,000 civilians have been killed, with hospitals and World Heritage sites destroyed. Strikes on oil infrastructure have also caused toxic environmental consequences in a country already experiencing acute water shortages. [UN News](#)

Iran's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva stated that more than 1,300 people have been killed and more than 7,000 injured, including a six-month-old baby. Three million people are now displaced inside Iran. The Iranian Foreign Minister said his country is not seeking a ceasefire but that "the war must end," adding that Iran is ready to take the conflict "as far as necessary." [Al Jazeera](#); [Iran International](#)

The Gulf Cooperation Council and Jordan condemned Iranian retaliatory strikes on Gulf states, welcoming UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (adopted 11 March), which condemned Iran's attacks against neighbouring countries. The Philippines and ASEAN also expressed serious concern about the regional escalation. [UN News](#)

Amnesty International called for accountability for those responsible for the Minab school strike, which killed over 100 children. The organisation noted that US officials had made public statements suggesting that "long-established rules of engagement do not apply in this conflict." [Amnesty International](#)

2. Lebanon

Israel launched what it described as "limited and targeted ground operations" against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon on 16 March, escalating a conflict that has already killed at least 850 people and displaced more than 830,000 — approximately 14 per cent of Lebanon's population. [Al Jazeera](#)

According to Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health, at least 850 people have been killed and more than 2,100 injured since the current escalation began, including 107 children and 66 women among the dead. Israeli displacement orders now cover approximately 1,470 square kilometres — around 14 per cent of Lebanon's territory — encompassing large parts of southern Lebanon, Beirut's southern suburbs, and areas of the Bekaa Valley. [OCHA](#)

Of the 830,000 displaced, 290,000 are children. Only 15 per cent are in public shelters; many others rely on host families, informal arrangements, or are sleeping on streets and roadsides. The World Health Organization has recorded 28 attacks against healthcare facilities in just two weeks, resulting in 30 deaths and 35 injuries. [OCHA](#)

A joint statement by the UK and other governments warned that "a significant Israeli ground offensive would have devastating humanitarian consequences and could lead to a protracted conflict." Indonesia formally condemned Israeli strikes on UN peacekeeping positions in Lebanon. UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited Beirut on 12 March, calling for an immediate ceasefire and stating that civilians "deserve to live without fear." [UK Government](#)

Analysts note that Israel is using military occupation of southern Lebanon and the displacement crisis as leverage to dictate ceasefire terms, with Israel stating that displaced Lebanese will not be allowed to return until its own conditions are met. [Al Jazeera](#)

3. Gaza and the West Bank

Israeli strikes continued in Gaza on 15–16 March, killing at least 16 Palestinians in a 24-hour period, including nine police officers. Israeli aircraft targeted a police vehicle on Salah al-Din Street in central Gaza, killing Colonel Iyad Abu Yousef, Director of the Intervention Police in the Central Governorate, along with eight officers. A further three Palestinians were killed when a wall collapsed on tents sheltering displaced families near Nasser Medical Complex. [Palestine Chronicle](#)

The total death toll in Gaza since October 2023 has risen to 72,239 killed and 171,861 wounded, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Since the ceasefire came into effect on 11 October 2025, Israeli attacks have killed 663 Palestinians and injured 1,770 others. A further 756 bodies have been recovered from rubble and previously inaccessible areas. [Palestine Chronicle](#); [OCHA](#)

The UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) condemned the killing of two Palestinian families by Israeli forces over the weekend. In Gaza, an airstrike on one of the last remaining houses in Middle Gaza's Az Zuwaida killed a man, his pregnant wife, their young son, and a teenager. In the northern occupied West Bank, Israeli soldiers shot and killed a couple and their two children, aged five and six, in Tammoun — all were shot in the head. Two older sons survived and reported that soldiers had physically assaulted and verbally abused them after the killings. [OCHA](#); [UN News](#)

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. More than 18,500 patients, including 3,800 children, urgently need specialised care unavailable in Gaza. Only two out of every five health service points are currently operating, most only partially. More than 600 families had their shelters damaged by a dust storm over the weekend. More than half of families in Gaza are burning waste to cook food due to cooking gas shortages. [OCHA](#)

4. Ukraine — Russia War

Russia's military claimed to have seized control of 12 settlements in Ukraine in the first two weeks of March, according to Russian state media citing the country's top general. Ukrainian forces, meanwhile, launched what the Kyiv Independent described as their largest drone attack on Moscow in weeks, with more than 40 aircraft destroyed on approach to the Russian capital. [Reuters](#); [Kyiv Independent](#) (Ukr)

Russia launched a drone attack on Kyiv during morning rush hour on 16 March, causing explosions across the capital. Weekend attacks across Ukraine killed nearly 20 civilians and injured over 150, including children and three health workers. A strike on an ambulance in Kharkiv Region reportedly killed two health workers and injured one. [OCHA](#)

The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine reported that at least 188 civilians were killed and 757 injured in February 2026 — figures 31 per cent higher than February 2025 and 83 per cent higher than February 2024, reflecting intensified hostilities. Since the full-scale invasion began in February 2022, the UN has verified more than 15,000 civilian deaths and over 41,000 injuries, with the actual toll likely considerably higher. [UN News](#)

Peace negotiations remain stalled. The US has postponed its sponsored trilateral talks between Ukraine and Russia due to the Middle East war. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov echoed statements by US President Donald Trump, accusing President Zelensky of being "the main obstacle" to a deal. Zelensky rejected this characterisation, stating that Ukraine supports a comprehensive settlement that would not require conceding territory without fighting, and that US envoys are unable to travel due to the Middle East crisis. [Kyiv Independent](#) (Ukr); [The Moscow Times](#)

The EU sanctioned nine Russian individuals responsible for the Bucha massacre, marking the fourth anniversary of Russia's occupation of the Kyiv suburb. [European Council](#)

5. Sudan

Relentless drone strikes across Sudan's Kordofan and Darfur regions continued to cause civilian casualties and restrict humanitarian access, the UN warned on Monday. Two people were killed in a strike on the town of Al Rahad in North Kordofan, where a hospital was also destroyed. Additional casualties were reported from strikes on Al Fula, the capital of West Kordofan, and from attacks across Darfur, including in the Wadi Sira area and in several neighbourhoods of Nyala, South Darfur's capital. [UN News](#)

A strike on a market in Akidong, West Darfur, on 12 March triggered a large explosion; Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) treated 23 injured civilians — including women and children — at a hospital it supports across the border in Chad. According to Yeni Safak, the overall death toll from recent drone strikes has risen to 59: 28 killed in a West Kordofan displacement camp and 31 in a North Kordofan market strike. [Yeni Safak](#) (Turk)

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reportedly seized the strategic city of Bara in North Kordofan, according to Sudan Tribune, marking the third attack on the city in two weeks. The RSF claimed to have killed 500 soldiers and captured 45 vehicles, though these figures could not be independently verified. [Sudan Tribune](#)

Sudan's broader humanitarian crisis continues to worsen. Over 30.4 million people now require humanitarian aid, and 12 million have been displaced — the world's largest displacement crisis. UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric described the situation as "truly horrific." [UN News](#)

6. Yemen

An artillery attack on a village in Hajjah province, northern Yemen, killed at least 10 people — including six children — and wounded more than 30 others on Sunday, 15 March. Yemen's internationally recognised government blamed Iran-backed Houthi rebels for shelling a group

gathered for iftar, the evening meal that breaks the daily Ramadan fast. The information ministry stated the death toll was likely to rise, with several of the wounded in critical condition. [AP](#)

Save the Children confirmed that two children were among the eight initially reported fatalities, describing the incident as the deadliest attack on civilians in Yemen so far this year. UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg said he was "deeply concerned" and called on those responsible to be held to account. [Save the Children](#)

The Houthi movement also threatened to blockade the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in solidarity with Iran, a development that could significantly disrupt global shipping lanes. The conflict in Yemen has pushed the economy to the brink of collapse and caused severe food insecurity across northern provinces, including Hajjah. [Al Jazeera](#)

7. Myanmar

Myanmar's parliament convened on 16 March for the first time since the military coup of February 2021, following elections in December 2025 and January 2026 that were condemned by democracy watchdog groups as a "sham." The pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won 339 of the available seats, while 166 seats — 25 per cent of the total — were reserved for the military. Major opposition parties, including those associated with the National League for Democracy (NLD), were barred from participating. [Al Jazeera](#)

Former general and police chief Khin Yi, widely regarded as a close ally of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, was elected speaker of the lower house. A new five-member Union Consultative Council — described by analysts as a "superbody" — will allow Min Aung Hlaing to maintain control over both military and civilian administration. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) declared it would not recognise the election results. [Al Jazeera](#)

Myanmar has been mired in civil war since the coup, with large areas of the country outside military control. Pro-democracy resistance groups

and long-established ethnic armed organisations continue to fight the junta. The Rohingya population faces renewed displacement as conflict intensifies, with a US report noting that worsening religious persecution, ongoing conflict, and aid cuts are pushing thousands to flee again.

[Muslim Network TV](#)

8. DR Congo

A French national working for the United Nations was killed in a drone strike in Goma, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, French President Macron confirmed. Two other people were also killed in the same strikes on a residential building frequently occupied by expatriates and aid workers. The Congolese government condemned the attack and pointed to the involvement of M23 rebels backed by Rwanda, a claim Rwanda denies. [AFP](#)

Separately, IS-linked rebels staged deadly attacks on mining sites in eastern Ituri province. Humanitarian partners reported that since early March, clashes in villages surrounding Djugu territory have killed at least 21 people and forced many families to flee. Eastern DRC experienced a record number of drone attacks in February, according to a report cited by the New Times Rwanda. [Le Monde](#)

9. International Cooperation and Peacekeeping

UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited Beirut on 12 March on a solidarity visit, meeting senior Lebanese officials and demanding an end to the Middle East war. He reiterated calls for all parties to "fully respect" ceasefire obligations and stated that civilians "deserve to live without fear." [UN News](#)

The European Union sanctioned nine Russian individuals responsible for the Bucha massacre, marking the fourth anniversary of Russia's occupation of the Kyiv suburb during the 2022 invasion. The action was part of ongoing EU efforts to hold perpetrators of war crimes accountable. [European Council](#)

The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) established a new Special Protection Unit in Maridi to boost confidence in reporting violence against women, part of ongoing peacekeeping efforts in the country. France reiterated its full support for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) following a three-month mandate extension. [UNMISS](#)

Former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, a candidate for UN Secretary-General, called for renewed global cooperation, stating that "global cooperation can save humanity" in the face of mounting crises. Ten countries across northern Europe have begun planning civilian evacuation procedures across borders in the event of a major military conflict, reflecting growing concern about regional security. [PassBlue](#); [CEPA](#)

Key Statistics

Conflict / Crisis	Key Statistic	Source	Killed	Wounded
Gaza / Palestine <i>(since Oct 2023)</i>	Total casualties since October 2023 outbreak	Palestine Chronicle ; Gaza Health Ministry	72,239	171,861
Lebanon <i>(current escalation)</i>	Casualties since current escalation began;	OCHA ; Lebanon Health Ministry	850+	2,100+

Conflict / Crisis	Key Statistic	Source	Killed	Wounded
	830,000+ displaced			
Iran <i>(US-Israeli war, Day 17)</i>	Casualties from US-Israeli strikes; 3 million displaced	UN News ; Iranian Ambassador to UN	1,300+	7,000+
Ukraine <i>(full invasion, since Feb 2022)</i>	Verified civilian casualties since full-scale invasion	UN News ; UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission	15,000+	41,000+
Sudan <i>(recent drone strikes)</i>	Killed in recent Kordofan & Darfur drone strikes; 12 million displaced overall	Yeni Safak (Turk); UN News	59+	—
Yemen <i>(Hajjah attack, 15 Mar)</i>	Killed in Houthi artillery strike on Ramadan iftar gathering, Hajjah province	AP ; Save the Children	10	30+

This report is compiled from publicly available sources including UN agencies, international news organisations, and humanitarian bodies. Source bias tags are applied where relevant to assist readers in contextualising information: (Ukr) = Ukrainian outlet; (Rus) = Russian state media; (Turk) = Turkish state broadcaster. All figures are as reported and subject to revision.

Sources consulted: [UN News](#), [OCHA](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [AP](#), [Amnesty International](#), [Save the Children](#), [Kyiv Independent](#) (Ukr), [Palestine Chronicle](#), [Sudan Tribune](#), [Yeni Safak](#)

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