



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., March 13, 2024

Northern Arena	Israeli Casualties	Rocket Fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1,039 attacks• 239 Hezbollah operatives killed• 47 operatives of other terrorist-organization killed• One non-affiliated operative• One Lebanese army soldier killed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 1,500 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)• 130 hostages remain in the Gaza Strip	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 11,000 rockets and mortar shells• Approximately 9,000 rockets and mortar shells launched from the Gaza Strip• Approximately 2,000 rockets launched from Lebanon and 30 from Syria

Overview¹

► **The southern arena:** IDF forces continued operating in the neighborhoods of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, and in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

► **According to unofficial data, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,500 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 590 of them soldiers and officers; 130 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 123 hostages have been released.**

► **Negotiations for a hostage deal:** Given the stalemated negotiations for a ceasefire and hostage deal, international parties have made different suggestions to promote a deal in the immediate future. According to reports, the Hamas delegation will soon leave for another round of talks in Cairo. Senior Hamas members stated that despite the offers they received, they adhered to their demands.

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

► **Aid for the Gaza Strip:** The United States Army's Central Command announced the departure of four vessels to the Middle East carrying equipment and supplies to establish a temporary pier in the Gaza Strip.

► **The northern arena:** During the past day, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 11 attacks. On March 12, 2024, Hezbollah launched the largest barrage of rockets (about 100, according to Hezbollah) since the beginning of the war. An operative in Hamas' military-terrorist wing Lebanon was eliminated in an aerial attack near Tyre.

► **Judea and Samaria:** A 15 year-old boy carried out a stabbing attack at the Tunnel Checkpoint, wounding two security personnel. He was shot and killed. A stabbing attack was attempted in the settlement of Givat Ronen south of Nablus. There were no casualties.

► **The Palestinian Authority (PA):** According to reports, Mahmoud Abbas has chosen Muhammad Mustafa to serve as the PA's next prime minister. The choice was made with the agreement and full backing of the United States and the Arab countries, but with the opposition of the Fatah movement.

► **The pro-Iranian militias:** "A source in the Iraqi resistance" said they would continue their "military operations" against "the occupied Palestinian territories" during Ramadan. The Houthis launched a ballistic missile at an American destroyer in the Red Sea. It did not hit the vessel and no damage or casualties were reported. United States military forces and the international coalition continued their operations against the Houthis.

The Southern Arena

► Palestinian media outlets reported on IDF activity during the past day. In **the northern Gaza Strip**, the IDF attacked in Jebalya; in **Gaza City**, in the Zeitoun and Daraj neighborhoods; in **the central Gaza Strip**, in Deir al-Balah; in **Khan Yunis**, IDF tanks attacked buildings in the Hamad neighborhood in the northwest of the city, where there has been a heavy exchange of fire (Ma'an, March 13, 2024).



IDF attacks in the Hamad neighborhood in Khan Yunis (right) and Qarara (left) (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, March 13, 2024)

► **The central Gaza Strip:** IDF forces continued their attacks on armed terrorist squads in the area (IDF spokesperson, March 13, 2024). In Deir al-Balah, the forces attacked and destroyed large numbers of terrorist facilities, including operational tunnel shafts, anti-tank launching positions and terrorist assembly sites (IDF spokesperson, March 13, 2024).



Right: Attack on Hamas anti-tank positions. Left: Attack on Hamas terrorist facilities (IDF spokesperson, March 13, 2024)



Israeli Air Force attack in eastern Deir al-Balah (Shehab X account, March 12, 2024)

Israeli casualties

► According to unofficial data, since October 7, 2023, approximately 1,500 Israelis have been killed. According to the IDF spokesperson, 590 of them are soldiers and officers (249 since the start of the ground maneuver on 27 October, 2023); 130 civilian and military

hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip; 123 hostages have been released.

The issue of the hostages and a ceasefire agreement

► Given the stalemated negotiations for a ceasefire and a hostage deal, international parties have made different suggestions to promote a deal in the immediate future:

◆ **Jake Sullivan, the American national security advisor**, said that they were determined to reach a ceasefire of at least six weeks, during which the hostages would be released. Once that had been achieved, they would try to move forward to a more permanent arrangement. He also noted that a military operation in Rafah would not protect civilians, and was not something United States President Joe Biden could support (Reuters, March 12, 2024).

◆ **Mohammed al-Ansari, spokesman for the Qatari foreign ministry**, said they were working towards a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, adding that the efforts to negotiate were ongoing and would be ramped up during Ramadan. He said that although they were not close to reaching an agreement, they were "optimistic" and trusted the United States to exert pressure on Israel during the negotiations (al-Jazeera, March 12, 2024).

◆ "Egyptian sources" reportedly familiar with the negotiations said Egypt had invited the Hamas delegation to Cairo in the coming days to examine "an improved American plan" for a ceasefire. The invitation was issued in an attempt to take advantage of Ramadan to reach a ceasefire agreement which would give the mediators an opportunity to "overcome" the disputed issues, and would give the Gazans an opportunity to "relax" during the first days of Ramadan. In the source's assessment, the Hamas delegation would visit Egypt in the coming days for updates on mediators' efforts to reach an agreement which could be described as a "humanitarian calm," rather than a "truce," with the aim of lessening the intensity of fighting and easing the lives of the Gazans. He added that behind the "improved proposal" stood the United States administration, which wanted to improve the conditions under which the Israeli hostages were being held and ensure the temporary delivery of medicine and food, because the deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip also affected the hostages (al-Araby al-Jadeed, March 12, 2024). **Musa Abu Marzouq, a senior Hamas figure**, claimed he had no information about the departure of a Hamas delegation to Egypt, but

said the possibility of reaching an agreement still existed (al-Araby al-Jadeed, March 12, 2024).

►"A Hamas source" said they had received an international proposal for a prolonged ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. He said it included the release of kidnapped children, women and the elderly. He also said they had agreed to a revised American initiative which stipulated a ceasefire and the gradual return of the displaced persons to their previous places of residence. According to him, a Hamas delegation would arrive in Cairo within a few days to discuss the details of the deal and begin implementing it (al-Arabiya, March 12, 2024).

►**Walid al-Kilani, responsible for Hamas media information in Lebanon**, reiterated that Hamas' demands were "purely humanitarian," such as the return of the displaced persons, the provision of shelter and the introduction of sufficient humanitarian aid, while Israel's demands were [allegedly] "malicious and inhumane." He claimed they continued to conduct consultations and contacts to reach an agreement that would satisfy the Palestinians, further their aspirations and compensate them for the "sacrifices" they made during the campaign. He claimed Israel wanted to gain time through a temporary truce, after which the fighting would resume, and of all the negotiations, Israel was interested only in the hostages. He yet again reiterated Hamas' demands for a comprehensive ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the complete withdrawal of the IDF, the introduction of humanitarian aid, supplies and shelter for the northern districts of the Gaza Strip and Gaza City, the return of the displaced persons and real negotiations on the issue of the hostages deal without any obstacles, without which there would be no agreement. He claimed the time would come when Israel would "submit" to their terms. He referred to the Gilad Shalit exchange deal, whose negotiations began with an Israeli offer of one prisoner in exchange, but after they had "hardened their position," 1,027 Palestinian prisoners were released (Arab World Press News Agency (AWP), March 12, 2024).

►**Ghazi Hamad, a member of the Hamas political bureau in Gaza**, said they had heard from several media outlets that Israel wanted to release the hostages and continue the war. He claimed the ball was currently in Israel's court. Hamas position, he claimed, was "positive and progressive," but it was not desperate to reach an arrangement "at any cost." He said that during a recent meeting of the Palestinian "organizations," they had been informed about the details of the negotiations, and Hamas listened to their opinions. He said they held many trump cards, and Israel would not be able to obtain what it wanted by means of [alleged] "massacres" (al-Mayadeen TV website, March 12, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

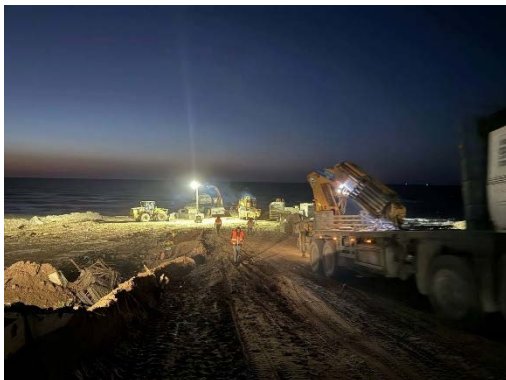
►The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported at 12:30 p.m., March 13, 2024, that during the past day 88 Gazans had been killed and 135 wounded, bringing the number of dead since the beginning of the war to 31,272 and the number of wounded to 73,024 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, March 13, 2024).

Aid for the Gaza Strip

►The United States Army Central Command (CENTCOM) announced the departure of four vessels to the Middle East, carrying equipment and supplies to construct a temporary pier in the Gaza Strip (CENTCOM X account, March 12, 2024).



The vessels en route to the Gaza Strip (CENTCOM X Account, March 12, 2024)



The beginning of the construction of the pier (Ramallah News Facebook page, March 13, 2024)

►The Hamas-controlled government media office in the Gaza Strip claimed that the efforts to help the Gaza Strip were minimalist. According to the office, at most the Spanish aid ship carried the contents of one or two trucks and it would take several days for it to reach the Gaza Strip and unload its cargo. The office called for all the border crossings to be opened for the introduction of aid (Palinfo website, March 13, 2024).

"The day after"

► **Husam Badran, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said they were in favor of the establishment of a Palestinian national consensus government, for a specified time, whose mission would be well-defined. He claimed they had had no contact with Mahmoud Abbas' office since the beginning of the war, but were in contact with the Fatah movement (al-Jazeera Mubasher Telegram channel, March 12, 2024).

Criticism of the Hamas leadership

► Criticism and anger on the Palestinian social networks were directed at the Hamas leadership, especially Isma'il Haniyeh and Khaled Mashal, because of the gourmet meal they ate in Qatar to break the Ramadan fast, compared with what the Gazans ate (X account of a Gazan surfer named Gufara, March 13, 2024).



The Hamas leadership's fast-breaking meal in Qatar compared to the Gazans' fast-breaking meal (X account of a Gazan surfer named Gufara, March 13, 2024)

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The Northern Arena

Hezbollah attacks

► During the past day, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **11 attacks** using anti-tank missiles, rockets, Katyusha rockets, and Burkan rockets, whose warheads weigh between 300 and 500 kgs (between 660 and 1,100 pounds) (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, March 12-13, 2024). On March 12, 2024, Hezbollah launched the largest barrage of rockets (allegedly about 100) since the beginning of the war.

► **Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament**, claimed Hezbollah's rocket barrage was "an appropriate response" whose objective was "to

prevent Israel from overreaching itself." He claimed they "had to continue their attacks in order to protect Lebanon." He also said that when the Israeli government stopped the [alleged] "massacre" in the Gaza Strip, the other ["resistance"] fronts would also stop, including the front in Lebanon. A ceasefire in the Gaza Strip would also apply to south Lebanon (The Wall Street Journal, March 13, 2024).

The IDF response

►The IDF spokesperson provided information about activities in Lebanon during the past five months. He reported that IDF forces had attacked more than 1,200 Hezbollah targets from the air and more than 3,100 from the ground in Lebanon and Syria. Among the targets were munitions warehouses, military buildings designated for Hezbollah's offensive activity and operational headquarters where terrorists gathered. Dozens of terrorist squads which planned to fire anti-tank missiles and launch rockets were attacked. Since the start of the fighting, IDF forces had killed more than 300 terrorists and wounded more than 750, including five senior commanders. The attacks damaged Hezbollah's air and ground capabilities and its top command (IDF spokesperson, March 12, 2024).

►Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked a Hezbollah terrorist facility near al-Adeisa and a military structure near Aita al-Sha'ab. Artillery attacked sources of rocket fire. In addition, warplanes attacked two Hezbollah military headquarters in the Ba'albek region, deep inside Lebanon, about 100 kilometers (about 60 miles) from the Israeli border, where Hezbollah stored weapons as part of its military buildup (IDF spokesperson, March 12, 2024). On the evening of March 12, 2024, the IDF attacked two Hezbollah military infrastructures in Syria (IDF spokesperson, March 12, 2024).



Right: Attack on a Hezbollah facility in Syria. Left: Attacks in Ba'albek (IDF spokesperson, March 12, 2024)

►On March 12, 2024, a GBU-39² Small Diameter Guided Bomb was located in Lebanon, which apparently fell from an Israeli F-35 fighter jet en route to attack in the Lebanese Valley; the incident was probably the result of a technical malfunction. The bomb was located near the main road in the town of Hrajel, about 35 kilometers (about 20 miles) west of Ba'albek. Lebanese security forces arrived at the scene and a demolitions expert neutralized the bomb (Fouad Khreiss' X account, March 12, 2024).



A GBU-39 type bomb, apparently dropped from an Israeli fighter jet in Lebanon (Fouad Khreiss' X account, March 12, 2024)

►In response to the IDF attacks, a "Hezbollah source " said the "resistance" in Lebanon would not remain silent in the face of Israel's attacks, and the response would be of the "same intensity," whether in south Lebanon, Ba'albek or anywhere else in Lebanon. According to the source, they were at war with Israel, regardless of where it took place all their options were open, and they were prepared for any situation (al-Araby al-Jadeed, March 12, 2024).

Lebanese fatalities

►Hezbollah reported the deaths of two operatives from the Beqa'a Valley (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, March 12, 2024):

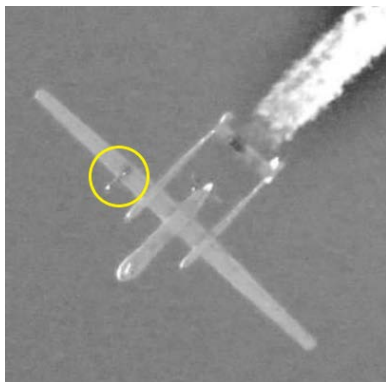
- ◆ Muhammad Ali Jamal Ya'qub, aka Yasser Zaghib, born in 1988, from Baalbek.
- ◆ Sadeq Hussein Jaafar, aka Kifah, born in 1970, from Jermash.

² The GBU-39 Small Diameter Bomb is a 250-pound precision-guided glide bomb that is intended to provide aircraft with the ability to carry a higher number of more accurate bombs.



Hezbollah fatalities (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, March 12, 2024)

► On the morning of March 13, 2024, it was reported that a UAV attack had been carried out against a vehicle at the al-Haoush junction near Tyre, and that there were fatalities (al-Akhbar, March 13, 2024). Hamas and its military-terrorist wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, announced that the man who was killed was **Hadi Ali Muhammad Mustafa**, from the al-Rashidiya refugee camp, who was a commander in Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Lebanon (al-Akhbar, March 13, 2024).



The IDF UAV that carried out the airstrike (al-Assefa News X account, March 13, 2024)



The vehicle that was attacked near Tyre (al-Akhbar, March 13, 2024)



Mourning poster on the death of Hadi Ali Muhammad Mustafa, killed in the airstrike (al-Akhbar, March 13, 2024)

Opposition to the war in Lebanon

► Posters were hung throughout Lebanon as part of the "Lebanon does not want war" campaign. They read, "Implementation of international resolutions strengthens stability" and "Implementation of international resolutions strengthens trust in Lebanon." The posters enraged several young men apparently affiliated with Hezbollah, who threw Molotov cocktails at them (Sawt Beirut International, March 13, 2024).



Poster reading, "Implementation of international resolutions strengthens stability" (Sawt Beirut International, March 13, 2024)



Young men throw a Molotov cocktail at the posters (Sawt Beirut International, March 13, 2024)

The Lebanese government

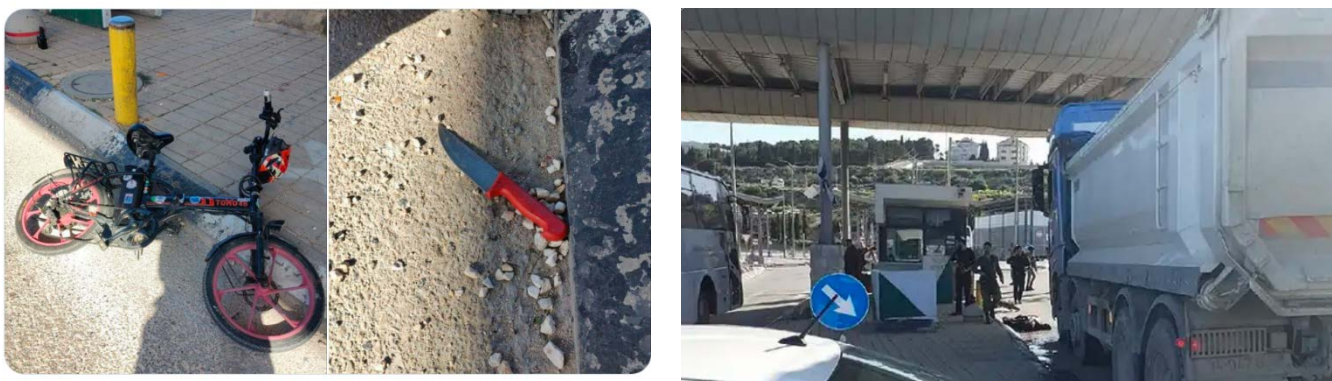
► **Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib** met in Beirut with **Constantinos Kombos**, **Cypriot foreign minister**. Bou Habib praised him for the decision to open a corridor to deliver aid to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. Kombos denied reports that Israel had purchased a seaport in Cyprus to control the sending of aid by sea to the Gaza Strip (Lebanese News Agency, March 12, 2024).

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Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

► On the morning of March 13, 2024, a Palestinian teenager rode his bicycle to the Tunnel Checkpoint (west of Bethlehem). When Israeli security forces at the crossing tried to examine him, he pulled out a knife and began stabbing soldiers. A soldier and a security guard at the scene shot and killed him. An IDF soldier and a security guard were wounded. The terrorist was reportedly Muhammad Murad Abu Hamed, 15 years old, from al-Khader (west of Bethlehem) (Israeli media, March 13, 2024).



**Right: The scene of the stabbing attack at the Tunnels Checkpoint (al-Quds, March 13, 2024).
Left: The knife used in the attack and the terrorist's bicycle (Shehab X account, March 13, 2024)**

► On the evening of March 12, 2024, a Palestinian armed with a knife came to the community of Givat Ronen (south of Nablus) and tried to stab an Israeli. The assailant fled after being frightened by the civilian's dog. There were no casualties. IDF forces searched the area (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, March 12, 2024).

Counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining seven wanted Palestinians. Since the beginning of the war, some 3,500 wanted Palestinians have been detained, more than 1,500 of them Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson's X account, March 13, 2024).

►On the night of March 12, 2024, Israeli security forces operating in the Jenin refugee camp seized weapons, uncovered and destroyed IEDs planted under roads and detained a wanted Palestinian (IDF spokesperson's X account, March 13, 2024). The Palestinians reported that special forces had surrounded a house in the camp and exchanged fire with armed men. Hamas' military-terrorist wing and the Jenin Battalion announced that their operatives had shot at Israeli forces. Two Palestinians were reportedly killed and two wounded (al-Jazeera TV, March 13, 2024). The two fatalities were Rabia al-Norsi and Mahmoud Abu al-Hija from the Jenin refugee camp. Their bodies were draped in Hamas flags (al-Aqsa Radio X account, March 13, 2024).



Documentation of the IDF activity (IDF website, March 13, 2024).

►The Jordanian foreign ministry condemned the killing of two Jordanians holding Palestinian ID cards in Tulkarm by Israeli security forces. The ministry called on Israel to fully investigate the incident, take responsibility and reveal its circumstances. It was also noted that the ministry would take all the diplomatic measures required in accordance with international law (al-Mamlaka, March 12, 2024). The incident referred to took place on March 12, 2024, in Tulkarm, where Israeli security forces eliminated a terrorist en route to carrying out an attack.

Ramadan



The prayer at al-Aqsa Mosque (Palestinian website Radar News X account, March 12, 2024)

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi spoke with Mahmoud Abbas, PA chairman**, and congratulated him and the Palestinians on the occasion of Ramadan. El-Sisi stressed Egypt's support for the Palestinian leadership and people and their intensive efforts to achieve a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Abbas thanked el-Sisi for Egypt's efforts to support Palestinian rights (Facebook page of the Egyptian president's spokesman, March 12, 2024).

► **Riyad al-Maliki, PA foreign minister**, met in Ramallah with **Catherine Colonna, chairman of the UNRWA assessment group**. Al-Maliki stressed that Israel wanted to end the work of the agency to eliminate the issue of the Palestinian refugees, saying they were ready to cooperate and provide the necessary information to facilitate the work of the assessment group. He expressed his concern about Israel's [alleged] "crimes" in Judea and Samaria and the restriction of Muslims from entering al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan (PA foreign ministry Telegram channel, March 12, 2024).

► "Palestinian sources" reported that Mahmoud Abbas chose Muhammad Mustafa to serve as the next prime minister of the PA, replacing Muhammad Shtayyeh. According to the sources, the move had the full consent and backing of the United States and Arab countries, but met with strong opposition to the choice by the Fatah Movement. Muhammad Mustafa previously served as deputy prime minister and economy minister in the PA. He currently serves as chairman of the Palestinian Investment Fund (QudsN X account, March 13, 2024).



Muhammad Mustafa, Palestinian prime minister-designate
(QudsN X account, March 13, 2024)

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Iran

► **Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader**, speaking at a meeting marking the month of Ramadan in Tehran, said the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip stood firm and would "rub the Zionists' noses against the ground." He said Israel could not strike the "resistance," adding that the Muslim world was committed to helping "Palestine" and that aiding the enemies of Palestine was forbidden in religious law. He claimed that several governments in the Muslim world were assisting the enemies of the Palestinian people and that with Allah's help, they would pay for that act of treason (Fars, March 12, 2024).

► **Hossein-Amir Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, spoke with Iraqi foreign minister Fouad Hossein. They discussed bilateral relations and developments in the Gaza Strip (Tasnim, March 12, 2024).

► In a letter to the foreign ministers of the Islamic countries on the occasion of the month of Ramadan, Foreign Minister Abdollahian called for the solidarity and unity of the Muslim world to deal with the [alleged] "aggression and crimes of the Zionist regime against Palestine" (ISNA, March 12, 2024).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq

► "A source in the Iraqi Resistance" said they would continue their military operations against posts in the "occupied Palestinian territories" during Ramadan as part of their plan to "encircle the enemy." According to the sources, they may attack stations and facilities of vital importance in addition to attacks in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to stop the American support for Israel (al-Akhbar, March 13, 2024).

Yemen

- ▶ The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that on March 12, 2024, between 2:00 a.m. and 4:30 a.m. (Sana'a time), the Houthis fired a ballistic missile at the destroyer USS Laboon in the Red Sea. The missile did not hit the vessel and no damage or casualties were reported. In addition, CENTCOM forces and vessels of the coalition countries destroyed two UAVs launched from Houthi-controlled areas (CENTCOM X account, March 12, 2024).
- ▶ According to a Greek defense ministry source, a Greek army vessel operating as part of the European Union's naval mission in the Red Sea fired at two UAVs, causing them to turn back (Reuters, March 13, 2024).