

## 0227\_282026 NEWS SPECIAL Don't miss Lev U'Neshama NOTE at end!

**Please Note: Due to family circumstances and time constraints the news will be less detailed with fewer highlighted areas and comments and more referrals to the Article resource sites for your further perusal. RDB**

### **US and Israel launch major joint assault on Iran; Trump indicates goal is to topple regime Strikes target Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Pezeshkian, Israeli official says; blasts heard throughout Islamic Republic; US president tells Iranian people: 'The hour of your freedom is at hand'**

By [Emanuel Fabian](#), [Jacob Magid](#), [Agencies](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 10:47 am Updated at 6:55 pm

*Israeli Air Force fighter jets carry out preparations ahead of strikes in Iran, including on missile launchers aimed at Israel, on February 28, 2026. (Israel Defence Forces); footage posted to social media shows plumes of smoke after reported explosions in Tehran, as well as near the cities of Tabriz and Sahand, following US and Israeli strikes against the regime. (Social media, used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law) [Go to website for video rdb](#)*

After long weeks of escalating regional tensions and burgeoning threats of conflict, Israel and the US launched a major joint strike on Iran on Saturday morning, with waves of attacks on sites across the Islamic Republic continuing throughout the day.

Strikes targeted Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and President Masoud Pezeshkian, an Israeli official said. Other top regime and military commanders were also targeted, according to the official. The results of the strikes were not yet clear.

Targets in the campaign, which began shortly after 8 a.m. Israel time, also included Iran's military, symbols of government and intelligence targets, according to an official briefed on the operation, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss nonpublic information on the attack.

Several senior Revolutionary Guards commanders and political officials were killed, an Iranian source close to the establishment told Reuters. Among them were the commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Gen. Mohammad Pakpour, and Iranian defense minister Amir Nasirzadeh, three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

US President Donald Trump announced that the US had begun "major combat operations in Iran," calling the



campaign "a massive and ongoing operation to prevent this very wicked, radical dictatorship from threatening America and our core national security interests."

"We are going to destroy their missiles and raze their missile industry to the ground. It will be totally... obliterated. We are going to annihilate their navy," he said in a video statement posted on his Truth Social account.

*This handout picture provided by the office of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei shows him during an address in Tehran on February 17, 2026. (Handout / KHAMENEI.IR / AFP)*

"We are going to ensure that the region's terrorist proxies can no longer destabilize the region or the world and attack our forces."

Trump indicated that the goal was to topple the regime, and he called on the Iranian people to seize the opportunity and take over their government.



*A plume of smoke rises following a reported explosion in Tehran on February 28, 2026, as the US and Israel announce the start of strikes (AFP)*

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in his own video message to the public that the operation was launched "to remove the existential threat" posed by the Islamic Republic, and "create the conditions" for Iranians to change their destiny. "The time has come for all parts of the Iranian people... to cast off the yoke of tyranny and bring about a free and peace-seeking Iran," the premier said.

Iran vowed a crushing response to the military campaign and launched repeated missile barrages at Israel starting at around 10 a.m., sending millions into shelters repeatedly as air

defenses worked to intercept the threats. As of 8 p.m., dozens of missiles had been launched at Israel, but there were no reports of direct impacts in residential areas.

The Magen David Adom ambulance service said it treated a total of 89 people who were lightly injured as a result of Iran's missile attacks, the vast majority of them indirectly.

MDA said a 16-year-old was hurt by shrapnel in Kfar Qasim, a man in his 50s was injured by a blast shockwave in Ka'abiyye-Tabbash-Hajajrem, and a 53-year-old was wounded after falling from a height following a missile fragment impact in Tirat Carmel.

The other 86 were injured after falling over while running to shelters, MDA said. Six others were treated for acute anxiety.

Iran was also reported to launch missile attacks on multiple countries hosting some of the tens of thousands of American troops deployed across the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Iran was in near total internet blackout, monitor Netblocks said, adding the move "matches measures used during last year's war with Israel."

Israel was preparing for several days of conflict, an Israeli official said.

### **Operation 'Roaring Lion'**

The attack came despite Washington and Tehran having ostensibly agreed on Thursday to continue nuclear negotiations next week, with US President Donald Trump saying Friday that he was "not happy" with Iran's conduct but that he hadn't yet made a decision on whether to authorize a military strike. In retrospect, this was apparently



an act of misdirection.

Israel said it had named its operation against Iran "Roaring Lion." Washington, meanwhile, said its name for the campaign was "Epic Fury."

***US President Donald Trump announces US strikes on Iran on February 28, 2026. (Screen capture/Truth Social)***

It came as the United States has assembled a vast fleet of fighter jets and warships in the region to try to pressure Iran into a deal over its nuclear program. US strikes were being carried out by air and sea, a US official said.

First news of the assault came in Israel at 8:13 a.m., when sirens blared throughout the country to alert Israelis to the start of the campaign and to warn them to stay close to shelters, ahead of an expected Iranian retaliation. A similar practice was employed at the start of the June 2025 12-day war, when sirens were activated across the country to notify Israelis that an attack had been launched.



***People take shelter in Tel Aviv on February 28, 2026 (Ilia YEFIMOVICH / AFP)***

Shortly thereafter, reports emerged of strikes taking place in Tehran and in other locations throughout Iran. Iranian media reported strikes nationwide.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement that Israel had "launched a preemptive strike against Iran to remove threats to the State of Israel." A US official told The Times of Israel that the strikes were being carried out jointly by the US and Israel.

Katz said he'd declared an "immediate state of emergency throughout the entire country." The IDF's Home Front Command warned civilians to stay close to bomb shelter and avoid non-

essential travel. It also said that all educational activities, gatherings, and work, except for essential sectors, will be prohibited.

Israel said it had closed its airspace to civilian flights until further notice.

Footage from Iran showed smoke rising in Tehran. Unconfirmed reports in Iranian opposition media said the homes and offices of Iranian leaders were being targeted.

An unnamed security source told Channel 12 that the operation had been jointly planned for months. The source said Israel was going "all out" in this operation, and the US was "on the same page." The source also said the "initial phase" of the joint attack was planned to last for four days.

The TV report said the timing of the initial strikes for the morning hours was designed to surprise the Iranians, who would not have expected a daytime attack.

US officials told The New York Times that the current bombing campaign will likely be much more extensive than Operation Midnight Hammer, in which US bombers struck key Iranian nuclear sites amid the 12-day war. A US official was also cited by The Times saying the US strikes were currently focused on military targets.

### **IDF: Regime fortified nuclear sites, boosted missile production**

The Israeli military said it had called up some 20,000 reservists, mainly in the Israeli Air Force, Intelligence Directorate, Home Front Command, and Israeli Navy. This was in addition to the some 50,000 reservists currently on duty.

The IDF said its strikes with the US included attacks on “dozens of military targets, and were carried out as part of a wide, coordinated, and joint offensive against the regime.”

In a statement, the military said the “joint, broad, and powerful operation” with the US is “aimed at a thorough strike against the Iranian terror regime and at eliminating existential threats to the State of Israel over time.”

“The Iranian regime has not abandoned its plan to destroy Israel,” the military says, adding that in recent months, “despite the severe blow” Iran sustained during June 2025’s war, “the IDF identified that the regime continued its attempts to fortify, shield, and conceal its nuclear programs, alongside the rehabilitation of its missile production process.”



*Boys stand on a launcher of an Iranian domestically built missile during an annual rally marking the 1979 Islamic Revolution at Azadi (Freedom) Square in Tehran, Iran, February 11, 2026. (Vahid Salemi/AP)*

According to the IDF, Iran had accelerated its production of ballistic missiles to dozens a month.

“In addition, the regime continued financing, training, and arming its operatives positioned along Israel’s borders. These are actions constituting an existential threat to the State of Israel and pose a threat to the Middle East and the world at large,” the military said. The IDF said that in the months preceding the operation, “close and joint planning was conducted” between the IDF and the

American military, which enabled the execution of the broad strike with maximum synchronization and coordination between the armies.”

“The IDF, across all its branches, undertook a meticulous and long-term preparation process for the operation, both in defensive arrays and in various attack plans,” the military says.

It also issued footage of some strikes, including on missile launchers primed to fire at the Jewish state.

Ahead of the assault, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir told Israeli Air Force pilots this morning that they were “making history.”

“Saturday dawn, Operation Roaring Lion begins — you are authorized to carry out (the mission), strike your targets — you are making history. I trust you. Good luck to us all,” Zamir wrote in a note that was delivered to the pilots ahead of the strikes.

Zamir oversaw the strikes from the IAF’s underground command center with IAF chief Maj. Gen. Tomer Bar and other top commanders.



*IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir (center), is seen alongside IAF chief Maj. Gen. Tomer Bar (left) and Deputy Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Tamir Yadai (right), at the IAF’s underground command center at the IDF HQ in Tel Aviv, February 28, 2026. (Israel Defense Forces)*

### **Trump to Guards: Lay down your weapons or face certain death**

“To the members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, the armed forces and all of the police. I say tonight that you must lay down your weapons and have complete immunity, or in the alternative, face certain death,” Trump said in his eight-minute video statement.

“Lay down your arms. You will be treated fairly with total immunity, or you will face certain death,” Trump said. “To the great, proud people of Iran, I say tonight that the hour of your freedom is at hand. Stay sheltered. Don’t leave your home. It’s very dangerous outside. Bombs will be dropping everywhere.”

“When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations.”

The US Embassy in Qatar implemented shelter-in-place guidelines for all its personnel, recommending that all of its citizens to do the same until further notice.

The Mossad spy agency, on its official Persian-language Telegram channel, [called on Iranians](#) to help “return Iran to its glorious days.”

“Our Iranian brothers and sisters, you are not alone! We have launched a highly secure and dedicated Telegram channel especially for you. Together we will return Iran to its glorious days,” the statement said. Mossad called on Iranians to “share photos and videos of your just struggle against the regime with us.”

Shortly before the strikes began, footage posted to social media purported to show missiles flying low over Iraq. Israeli opposition leaders gave their support to the campaign.

“I want to remind us all: The people of Israel are strong. The IDF and the Air Force are strong. The strongest power in the world stands with us,” wrote Opposition Leader Yair Lapid.

“In moments like these we stand together – and we win together,” he wrote, in English. “There is no coalition and no opposition, only one people and one IDF, with all of us behind them.”

Yisrael Beytenu chairman Avigdor Liberman referenced the upcoming Purim festival, set to begin Monday evening, in which Jews celebrate deliverance from a threat of destruction by Persian villain Haman.

“We overcame Haman, we will overcome Khamenei too,” Liberman wrote. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-and-israel-launch-major-joint-assault-on-iran-trump-indicates-goal-is-to-topple-regime/>

## After months of quiet, sirens wail again: Israelis spend Shabbat running in and out of shelters

**Initial warning of US-Israeli assault had many jumping out of bed; millions repeatedly rush to protected spaces as Iran launches dozens of ballistic missiles in response**

By [Emanuel Fabian](#), [Diana Bletter](#), [Noam Lehmann](#) and [Stav Levaton](#)

Today, 5:12 pm



*A person takes shelter as sirens sounded in Jerusalem on February 28, 2026, following the announcement that Israel had launched a preemptive strike on Iran. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Iran must not be allowed to gain nuclear arms and urged Israelis to "stand together" after Israel and the United States launched strikes against the Islamic republic on February 28. (Photo by AHMAD GHARABLI / AFP)*

At 8:13 a.m. on Saturday, alert sirens cut through the morning quiet across Israel for the first time in months, warning millions to brace for expected Iranian missile attacks, as Jerusalem launched a long-anticipated strike on Iran along with US forces.

The wail of the sirens — which had become commonplace since October 7, 2023, amid missile attacks from Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen and other fronts, but which most Israelis had not heard since the October 2025 ceasefire in the Strip — sent the country’s populace rushing to shelters, many people jumping bleary-eyed from their beds on what would normally have been a slow Shabbat morning.

People soon realized that there was no danger yet: Israel’s defense establishment had activated the sirens to alert people to the start of the campaign, and to prepare them for the expected missile threat — as it did at the start of the June 2025 12-day war.

The population emerged from shelters, and there followed a tense few hours of quiet, as news came in of massive Israeli and American strikes on the Islamic Republic, which the nations’ leaders indicated was meant to topple the regime.

Beyond targeting senior Iranian leaders, the first wave of strikes apparently hit Iran’s missile array, delaying and limiting its capability to strike the Jewish state. Soon enough, however, Iran began to launch its available missiles. For nearly two months, the public had been anxiously preparing for renewed conflict with Tehran. Widespread anti-regime protests across Iran, met with a brutal crackdown, were followed by US threats of military action. Iranian officials responded with counter-threats, warning that any American strike would prompt retaliation against Israel. Negotiations between Washington and Tehran then pivoted to the nuclear program. Still, by Saturday, Iran had evidently failed to convince US President Donald Trump it was serious about reaching a deal acceptable to him.

As of Saturday afternoon, at least 40 ballistic missiles were fired from Iran toward Israel in a series of limited barrages, according to preliminary IDF assessments.



**People take shelter in Tel Aviv on February 28, 2026 (Ilia YEFIMOVICH / AFP)**

Air defense systems intercepted several of the projectiles, while others struck open areas. There were also reports of missile and interceptor fragments landing across the country.

The barrages were so far much smaller than those Iran launched at Israel during the June 2025 conflict, when it often sent many dozens of missiles at a time to overwhelm Israel's defenses. Whether this was a result of the damage done to Tehran's capabilities during that war, an outcome of Saturday's initial Israeli-American assault, a product of confusion in Iranian ranks, or some combination of the above, was not immediately known.

A man in his 50s was lightly injured in northern Israel during the attacks, medics said. The Magen David Adom ambulance service said he was hurt after falling into a hole created by missile fragments.

Others were treated after falling while running to shelter or for acute anxiety, MDA added.

In response to the escalation, the Home Front Command announced that all large gatherings were prohibited until further notice. Several Purim events scheduled for the weekend were canceled, and anti-government protest groups said they were calling off their weekly Saturday night demonstrations.

"We support the fighters and all security forces in protecting the State of Israel," protest group Hofshi Be'Artzenu (Free in our Land) said, calling on all Israelis to follow IDF directives.

Ben Gurion Airport also announced it was halting operations until at least Monday, leaving countless Israelis stranded abroad and foreign nationals stranded in Israel as the airspace situation remains uncertain.



**A man carries two children as he runs to take shelter after sirens sounded in Tel Aviv on February 28, 2026, following the announcement that Israel had launched a preemptive strike on Iran. (Ilia YEFIMOVICH / AFP)**

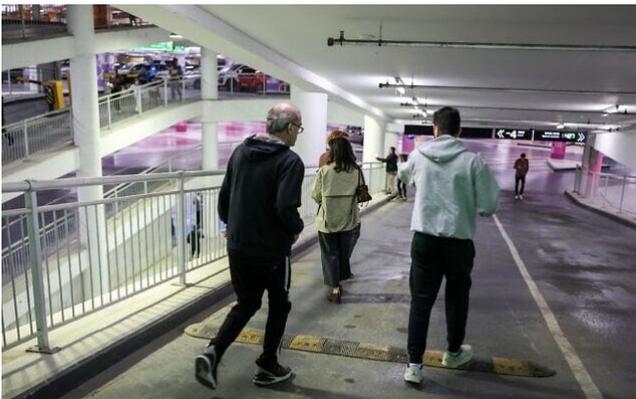
Upon the initial red alert on Saturday morning, residents of several cities across Israel, including Givatayim, Herzliya, Holon, Hadera and Givat Olga, complained of locked public bomb shelters, according to Hebrew media reports.

Channel 12 reported that the Home Front Command's instruction to open the shelters only reached local authorities on Saturday morning, with many municipalities not having time to open them before alarms sounded.

Videos circulating online showed Israelis huddled in public shelters — sharing snacks, trading nervous jokes, and in some cases joining together in song as they waited out the threat.

In one protected space in Tel Aviv, a local synagogue congregation continued its Saturday morning prayers as sirens blared and the normally bustling streets outside fell abruptly silent.

Others sought refuge in less conventional shelters, including nearby underground light rail stations and parking garages, descending below street level in search of deeper protection.



"We don't have a shelter in our building," Yael, a mother of two young children who arrived at Tel Aviv's Allenby Station, told Israel Hayom. "We live near Rothschild in an old apartment without a reinforced room. Every time there's a siren, we run to the stairwell, and it doesn't feel safe enough. Here, underground, I feel the children are more protected."

**People take shelter in a parking lot after sirens sounded in Tel Aviv on February 28, 2026, following the announcement that Israel had launched a preemptive strike on Iran. (Ilia YEFIMOVICH / AFP)**

"I live alone on the third floor without an elevator and without a shelter," Moshe, 78, told the news outlet. "Going down every time there's a siren is almost impossible for me. My daughter brought me here. It's not home, but it gives peace of mind."

Meanwhile, medical centers around Israel switched to emergency mode, according to Health Ministry directives, and moved critical patients and operations to underground complexes or are operating in protected spaces, warning that only emergency patients should visit.

Dr. Oshrat Fono at Petah Tikva's Beilinson issued a video from the hospital's fortified ward, saying patients able to go home have been released, while most others have been moved there.



*Patients and medical staff are seen in an underground parking area converted into a treatment ward at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, after many patients were relocated following the outbreak of war and missile fire from Iran toward Israel, February 28, 2026. (Flash90)*

“The hospital has already begun processes of descending to the emergency parking lot, where an emergency hospital has been opened inside a large bunker capable of accommodating a large number of patients,” said Dr. Lena Koren Feldman, director of Rabin Medical Center. “Patients who do not have to come to the hospital should not come.”

“All of our Medical Center staff reported promptly and in record numbers,” said Prof. Masad Barhoum, director of

the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya. “We are prepared for every scenario and are taking all necessary measures to safeguard our patients and our teams.” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-months-of-quiet-sirens-wail-again-israelis-spend-shabbat-running-in-and-out-of-shelters/>

## Some Iranians celebrate Israeli-US strikes as Khamenei said targeted, his palace destroyed

*Satellite images show supreme leader's Tehran compound reduced to smoldering rubble, unclear if he was hit; state media says at least 40 killed in strike on girls' school in south*

By [Tol Staff](#) and [Agencies](#) Today, 2:36 pm



*Vehicles cross an intersection following Israeli and US strikes in Tehran, Iran, February 28, 2026. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)*

As Israel and the United States launched a massive wave of [strikes](#) across Iran on Saturday, the picture of what was happening on the ground in Tehran and other cities was unclear amid a major internet blackout, though videos posted to social media appeared to show some Iranians celebrating as they saw regime targets go up in smoke.

According to Prime Minister Benjamin [Netanyahu](#) and US President Donald [Trump](#), the strikes aimed to cripple the Islamic Republic's

military and political leadership, with the two leaders urging Iranians to seize the opportunity and topple their government.

Among the targets struck Saturday morning was the Tehran palace of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, which was completely destroyed, as well as dozens of other military and regime targets across the country. Khamenei, President Masoud Pezeshkian and top regime and military commanders were targeted, according to an Israeli official, though the results of the strikes were unclear.

Targets in the campaign also included Iran's military, symbols of government and intelligence targets, according to an official briefed on the operation, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss nonpublic information on the attack.

*Then-commander of the ground forces of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour, attends a military parade as part of a ceremony marking the country's annual army day in Tehran, Iran, on April 17, 2024. (ATTA KENARE / AFP)*



Several senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders and political officials were killed in the strikes, an Iranian source close to the establishment told Reuters. According to Israeli officials, Israel assesses that the commander of the IRGC, Gen. Mohammad Pakpour, was likely killed, as well as the minister of defense and chief of intelligence.

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The assessments have yet to be confirmed by Iran or by the IDF, though an Israeli source told Channel 12 of “very significant” harm to senior figures in the Iranian regime, and “indications” of direct hits.



Images circulating on social media Saturday showed smoke rising from dozens of buildings across Tehran.

According to satellite imagery published by The New York Times, Khamenei’s palace in the heart of Tehran was completely destroyed, with smoldering rubble seen where the once-grand building stood hours earlier.

***Iranian women walk past a banner bearing a portrait of Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during the Iranian-Islamic fashion design fair at the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosque in Tehran on February 22, 2026. (AFP)***

It was not immediately clear whether Khamenei was present at the site, and Iranian media reported earlier in the day that he was moved to a “secure location.”

Images also showed thousands of Iranians flocking to the highways to flee Tehran.



***Motorists flock to the highways in Tehran amid the US and Israeli strikes on Iran, February 28, 2026. (ATTA KENARE / AFP)***

Other videos circulating on social media appeared to show Iranians celebrating, with some laughing, as they saw smoke rising from the area surrounding Khamenei’s palace complex in central Tehran.

Another video from a high school showed students laughing and celebrating, with one saying in English: “I love Trump.”

In Tehran, a video appeared to show people dancing in the streets as they celebrated the strikes.

While the number of casualties suffered in Iran in the initial wave of the joint Israeli-US strikes was unclear, Iran’s state-run IRNA news agency reported Saturday afternoon that one strike hit a girls’ school in southern Iran, killing at least 40 people, including students.

At least 45 others were wounded in the attack in Minab in Iran’s Hormozgan province, the report said.

The IRGC has a base in the city.

Other reports in Iran said strikes hit at least a dozen cities across the country, as well as several major bases belonging to the military IRGC and Basij militia.

The Israeli and US strikes come after weeks of escalating tensions between the US and Iran, including three rounds of indirect nuclear talks that failed to produce a deal, a massive American military buildup in the region, and Trump’s warning during his State of the Union address that Iran was working to rebuild the nuclear program the US “obliterated” in strikes last June. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/some-iranians-celebrate-israeli-us-strikes-as-khamenei-said-targeted-his-palace-destroyed/>

## Missile impacts reported in central Israel as Iran launches heavy retaliation



**Over 200 missiles were launched toward Israel as the joint Israel-US campaign continued to strike targets across the Islamic regime.**

***By* [TOBIAS SIEGAL](#) **FEBRUARY 28, 2026 10:14** **Updated: FEBRUARY 28, 2026 20:34****

***Fire and Rescue Services at the scene of a direct hit in central Israel, February 28, 2026. (photo credit: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE) By* [TOBIAS SIEGAL](#) **FEBRUARY 28, 2026 10:14** **Updated: FEBRUARY 28, 2026 20:34****

Sirens sounded across central Israel on Saturday during an Iranian missile attack on the country, launched in response to the joint Israeli, US preemptive strike earlier that morning.

At least 125 missiles were fired against Israel by Iran during their first barrage, with 35 entering Israeli airspace and the rest being intercepted earlier. As a result, sirens sounded in central and northern Israel.

According to Fire and Rescue Services, missile shrapnel impacted on a 20-story building in Tirat Hacarmel and penetrated into the 17th floor. One person was lightly injured in the strike, Hebrew media reported.

### **Direct hits, minimal injuries**

Later Saturday, the IDF said a second barrage was underway, reminding people to adhere to public safety guidelines and remain near shelters.

Some 15 missiles were reportedly launched toward northern and central Israel in a second barrage shortly before 4 p.m., as the IDF said it was working to neutralize the threat.

Just before 5 p.m., unconfirmed reports suggested a direct hit on a residential building in a city in central Israel. No injuries were reported.

MDA said it was treating a 17-year-old who sustained light shrapnel injuries to his lower body, as paramedics were dispatched to multiple sites of reported rocket impacts across central Israel.

Paramedics provided medical treatment to around 89 people throughout Saturday, noting that all sustained light injuries, either from shrapnel or from injuries sustained while running to shelters. Six people were treated for anxiety.

*Fire and Rescue Services at the scene of a direct hit in central Israel, February 28, 2026. (Credit: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES)*

### **Over 10 Iranian UAVs shot down, IDF says**

Separately, suspicious UAVs were reported entering Israeli airspace near the Dead Sea. The IDF later said the threat had been neutralized, and the Home Front Command announced it was safe to leave shelters in the area.

The IDF released Saturday evening footage showing the interception of a hostile UAV that was launched from Iran, marking the first video published from the current war.

The IDF said the drone was identified entering Israeli airspace and was successfully downed by air defense forces.

The statement did not specify where the UAV was shot down.

More than 10 Iranian UAVs have been shot down since Israel launched Operation Roaring Lion on Saturday morning, the IDF said.

*Footage shows the IDF shooting down an Iranian UAV, February 28, 2026. (Credit: ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES)*

### **IDF on high alert over possibility of Hezbollah joining offensive**

As of 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, just over 200 missiles and UAVs were reportedly launched toward the Jewish state.

Tehran later claimed it launched some 1,200 missiles and UAVs against targets across the Middle East since Saturday morning, according to reports in Iran.

Some of the missiles fired at Israel on Saturday morning were launched from Lebanon, according to a military source. The IDF later denied the claim.

The IDF said it remains on high alert over the possibility that Hezbollah could decide to join the offensive and open a new front.

The Jordanian military later issued a statement saying it had intercepted 49 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and missiles that were launched from Iran toward Israeli territory.

*Footage of Iranian missile strike on northern Israel, February 28, 2026. (FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES)*

### **US, Israel launch strikes against Iran**

Iran's retaliatory attack against Israel came after [United States President Donald Trump](#) confirmed the US began an operation against the Islamic regime.

"When we are finished, take over your government, it will be yours to take," Trump told the Iranian people in a pre-recorded message.

"Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime," Trump added. "Iran can never have a nuclear weapon."

The joint attack carried out by Israel and the US on Saturday morning initially targeted missile launchers and stockpiles across Iran, aiming to degrade IRGC capabilities to strike Israel's home front.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement that the aim of the operation was to remove the Ayatollah's regime from power.

The operation "will create the conditions for the brave Iranian people to take their destiny into their own hands," he said. "The time has come for all sections of the people in Iran... to remove the yoke of tyranny from (the regime) and bring a free and peace-loving Iran," he added.



*Smoke in the sky over Jerusalem, after missiles were launched from Iran towards Israel, following Israel and US strikes on Iran, February 28, 2026 (credit: REUTERS/AMMAR AWAD)*

### **Gantz urges patience**

Speaking to N12 on Saturday evening, National Unity chairman Benny Gantz said that changing the Iranian regime is a global and regional interest.

Asked if Israelis should expect a prolonged campaign, Gantz said the nation should be prepared for a long campaign. He noted that the reality in Iran could change, but warned that it would require sustained and well-executed action. "There is a historic opportunity here," Gantz said. "It would be a shame to miss it."

He added that the US military and the IDF must act cautiously, saying the process needs to be carried out responsibly.

Addressing US support for Israel, Gantz said, "This isn't aid, this is a joint effort."

Amir Bohbot, Yoav Etiel, and *The Jerusalem Post* staff contributed to this report. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-888258>

## **How Israel pulled off a second surprise against Iran**

**Months of intelligence work, real-time surveillance and a coordinated deception campaign allowed Israeli forces to strike senior Iranian leaders in the morning — a timing shift that caught Tehran expecting an overnight attack**

[Itamar Eichner](#) | 12:51

[Mossad](#)

Roughly 12 hours after the launch of Operation Roaring Lion, officials said the central story was how [Israel managed to surprise Iran](#) for the second time in less than a year — despite months of public discussion about the possibility of war.

Officials described the achievement as a tactical surprise rather than a strategic one, but said it fundamentally shaped the opening phase of the campaign.

*IDF strikes in Iran (Photo: IDF) by [Taboola](#) [Go to website for video rdb](#)*

**According to security officials, the surprise was the result of months of intensive intelligence work aimed at mapping patterns of activity among Iran's senior leadership, identifying routine gatherings and determining when key officials would be least prepared for an attack.**

Military intelligence and the Mossad assessed that Iran was expecting a strike overnight. Instead, the operation began in the morning, a decision officials said created an unexpected window of vulnerability.

The effort required real-time intelligence to pinpoint locations and senior figures, with the goal of eliminating as many high-value targets as possible in the opening blow. Officials said the window for such action narrows significantly after the first strike, as leadership disperses and security tightens.

The political leadership was closely involved in what officials described as a broader deception campaign. The security Cabinet approved Operation Roaring Lion early Saturday morning, after ministers had received updates in recent days about the possibility of a preemptive strike.

Senior Cabinet members were summoned to the military command bunker Saturday morning, where they managed the operation as it unfolded.

A security official said the decision to strike in the morning was driven by operational considerations and by the goal of confusing Iranian decision-makers. "All the conduct in recent weeks was designed to mislead them.

Everything was planned in advance," the official said.

As part of the deception effort, ministers and senior government officials who were briefed under strict secrecy agreements were instructed not to make concrete preparations that could signal an imminent operation — including avoiding unusual logistical steps such as purchasing food for emergency command centers ahead of the weekend.

Some officials reportedly made routine purchases only after the operation had already begun. In the days leading up to the strike, officials who were asked about the timing said it would not happen Friday — which proved accurate, as the operation began Saturday morning.



**US F-22s in Israel (Photo: MizarVision, מתוך X)**

Shortly before the attack, the Chinese satellite company MizarVision, which has published imagery of U.S. force buildups in the Middle East, reported that American fighter jets in the region were “all in position” and that there were no signs of large-scale activity. The company also suggested that any Israeli preemptive strike would likely be carried out independently.

Both assessments appeared to be incorrect after it became clear the campaign was a coordinated Israeli-U.S. operation. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, like U.S. President Donald Trump, released a prerecorded video message shortly after the operation began, including a call to the Iranian people to rise up. After the campaign was underway, Netanyahu spoke with Trump. The Prime Minister’s Office

released a photograph of the conversation showing Netanyahu in the command bunker, seated beside a large map of the Middle East.

In the opening hours of the war, about 200 fighter jets struck roughly 500 targets. Officials said that since the start of the campaign, Israel and the United States have used more than 2,000 munitions.

The primary mission, officials said, is to hunt missile launchers in order to degrade Iran’s ability to fire ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones toward Israel.

Despite the intensity of the opening strike, officials cautioned that it is too early to speak of a collapse in Iran’s command structure. They described the Iranian leadership as experienced and warned that the coming days would reveal how it adapts after the initial shock.

Initial retaliatory responses were already visible shortly after the opening blow, with air raid sirens sounding repeatedly across Israel. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/rko5i2ef11#autoplay>

## Netanyahu: Khamenei’s compound destroyed, signs suggest he is gone

**PM said the surprise morning strike marked a new phase in the campaign against Iran and expressed growing confidence that the supreme leader was killed**

*Nina Fox* | 12:56

**Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that Israeli forces destroyed the compound of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a surprise strike and that there are growing indications Khamenei may no longer be alive.**

“In a powerful surprise attack this morning, we destroyed the compound of the tyrant Khamenei,” Netanyahu said in a televised statement. “Signs are increasing that Khamenei is no longer with us.”



*(Photo: GPO)*

He added, “With God’s help, the roar of our lion — of our soldiers, our pilots and our citizens — is heard around the world. The whole world knows the people of Israel live.”

Netanyahu also thanked U.S. President Donald Trump and said, “This war will lead to true peace.”

Iranian authorities have not confirmed [Khamenei’s death](#), and there has been no independent verification of Netanyahu’s claim.

### Renewed strikes after earlier claims of victory

The renewed attacks on Iran come months after Netanyahu and senior defense officials declared sweeping achievements during Operation Rising Lion, including the elimination of senior commanders and nuclear scientists, destruction of key facilities and significant damage to Iran’s missile array.

On June 17, during that operation, Netanyahu said Israel faced “a double existential threat — and we are removing it.” He described Iran’s nuclear program as the foremost danger and said Israel had struck senior scientists and severely damaged the Natanz enrichment facility, along with centrifuge production industries and a uranium conversion facility.

“We continue to systematically destroy nuclear targets,” Netanyahu said at the time.

He also said Israel was dismantling Iran’s ballistic missile production “one after another,” neutralizing hundreds of missiles and targeting launchers. “It doesn’t matter how many missiles they have. The question is how many launchers they have — and we are taking them down one after another,” he said.

Netanyahu said Israel had eliminated senior Iranian security leaders, including three chiefs of staff, the air force commander, two intelligence chiefs and the head of operations.

Security officials said Saturday that in the opening blow of the renewed campaign, several dozen senior Iranian officials were killed simultaneously, likely more than 25. According to assessments, Khamenei may also have been among those killed.

In June, Netanyahu said Israel had established control over the skies of Tehran and had destroyed roughly half of Iran’s drone fleet. He said Israeli forces struck major radar systems, regime targets, headquarters and the state broadcasting authority.



(Photo: GPO)

After the United States joined the earlier campaign, Netanyahu said unprecedented achievements had been secured and that U.S. forces struck Iran’s nuclear facilities at Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan.

When that operation concluded on June 24, Netanyahu declared what he called a “historic victory,” saying Israel had removed two immediate existential threats: destruction by nuclear weapons and destruction by 20,000 ballistic missiles.

“For decades I promised you that Iran would not have nuclear weapons,” Netanyahu said at the time. “We thwarted Iran’s

nuclear project. And if anyone in Iran tries to restore it, we will act with the same determination and the same strength to cut off any such attempt.”

He said Israel destroyed dozens of missile production plants, severely damaged missile stockpiles and eliminated most launchers. “Iran’s malicious plan to threaten Israel’s existence within a few years with tens of thousands of ballistic missiles — that threat too has been removed,” he said.

Referring to Iran’s leadership, Netanyahu said Israel had delivered crushing blows to what he called a regime of evil, eliminating hundreds of operatives and striking bases and symbols of power.

In July, before departing for a meeting with Trump in the United States, Netanyahu described those talks as taking place in the context of “the great victory we achieved in Operation Rising Lion.” In December, after the end of the war in Gaza, he said Israel was emerging from what he called a war of revival with major achievements, adding that “the whole world is astonished how this small country strikes the axis of evil, Iran and its proxies.”

The renewed campaign now raises questions about why additional strikes were deemed necessary after earlier declarations that the principal threats had been removed. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hkc492eybx>

## ‘In Lithuania, there is institutional and legal antisemitism’

*The Lost Shtetl Museum in Seduva opens as antisemitism resurfaces in Lithuania’s governing coalition.*

By [ELDAD BECK](#) FEBRUARY 26, 2026 15:21 Updated: FEBRUARY 26, 2026 21:44



**LITHUANIAN SOLDIERS** lay a wreath during the Lithuanian-Jewish genocide commemoration ceremony honoring Holocaust victims, in Paneriai, near Vilnius. (photo credit: Petras Malukas/AFP/GettyImages)

**VILNIUS – In the forests surrounding the small Lithuanian town of Seduva, hundreds of Jewish men, women, and children were shot to death in the summer of 1941. Their names, once erased from memory, now line the walls of a new museum built to commemorate a world that vanished with them.** Yet as [Lithuania](#) struggles to confront its

past, antisemitism is once again finding legitimacy in the country’s present.



Seduva, a town of just 2,400 people located about a two-hours' drive north of Vilnius on the road to neighboring Latvia, was for decades little more than a forgotten dot on the map. Until recently, its main attractions were an old windmill and a nearby restaurant hosting occasional events. Few Lithuanians, let alone foreign visitors, had any reason to stop there.

PRESIDENT ISAAC HERZOG signs the guest book during his visit to the Lost Shtetl Museum, August 2025. (Credit: The Lost Shtetl Museum)

That changed last September with the opening of the Lost Shtetl Museum, a unique private Jewish museum that has transformed Seduva into a place of historical reckoning. The museum does not merely tell a local story. It confronts Lithuania with a vanished Jewish civilization, and with uncomfortable truths that much of the country still prefers not to face. [More-  
https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-888114](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-888114)

**OP EDJ**

## Gov. Newsom Frees the Worst Child Rapists in America

*Thu, 26 Feb 2026 10:00 AM PST by Daniel Greenfield*



Even while Epstein drama is consuming the country, David Allen Funston is being set loose.

Funston became notorious for luring children as young as four years old in Sacramento into his car with candy and dolls then raping them. A little girl [had a knife held](#) to her throat while he raped her so badly she bled. One 5-year-old girl was raped, beaten and left by the side of the road. He raped a little boy and kidnapped two sisters, 4 and 5, before he was finally

stopped.

Funston was known as “the monster parents fear the most” and was sentenced to three life terms in prison in 1999. But in 2020, even as he was having surfers arrested and small business owners shut down, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed AB 3234 into law which took the state’s already generous ‘elder parole law’ and redefined ‘elder’ as being any criminal over the age of fifty.

Now, Funston, who was convicted of 16 counts of kidnapping and child molestation, is being granted ‘elder parole’ under Newsom’s law to the horror of the children he once abused.

California’s original ‘elder parole’, passed by state Democrats and signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown, had jettisoned life sentences for criminals over sixty. Newsom’s expanded addition lowered the age to fifty and effectively eliminated life sentences for most criminals.

Including the child rapists now potentially headed for the exits.

Other child rapists who benefited from Newsom’s free pass for pedophiles included Israel Ceja, a Mexican convicted in 2000 of over 20 counts of forcible rape for crimes that began when his victim was 11-years-old and included attempted murder and other assaults to induce a miscarriage, who qualified for parole despite a sentence of 139 years in prison.

Michael Dausey, who raped his 14-year-old niece at knifepoint, and had previously raped a minor in Oregon, has also qualified for parole.

Cody Woodsen Klemp, who was sentenced to 170 years in prison after raping at least 5 women and girls, after charges that included 20 counts of committing a lewd and lascivious act on a child, 10 counts of rape, and 10 counts of forced oral copulation on a child, was deemed by the parole board to be at ‘low risk for violence’ and was set for release. The decision was only overturned after major protests by victims, one of whom warned, “He will absolutely rape again. He has been committing rapes since he was eighteen years old. The only time he did not rape was when he was in prison.”

Republican Senate Minority Leader Brian Jones introduced SB 286, also known as Mary-Bella’s Law, in an attempt to block rapists, child abusers and murderers from qualifying for elder parole at an appearance with key victims including those who had been assaulted by Charles Mix, sentenced to 350 years in prison for the 2005 kidnapping of a 5-year-old girl, and Cameron Hooker, of the ‘girl in the box’ story, also suspected of the murder of

Marie Elizabeth Spannhake.

As of February 2026, the bill has been blocked in the California state senate.

While most of these predators have not yet been released, Alvin Ray Quarles, known as the 'Bolder Than Most Rapist', who had raped a series of women and was diagnosed with sexual sadism disorder, voyeuristic disorder and antisocial personality disorder, was released despite the pleas of his victims, only to be rearrested again for an undisclosed parole violation.

Merle Wade Wakefield, convicted of lewd acts on a child and rape by force, who was also classified as a violent sexual predator, was released and has not yet been rearrested.

While individual communities, victims and DAs continue to fight the tidal wave of rapists and child molesters headed for the exit because at the age of fifty they're considered 'elders', and pleading with Gov. Gavin Newsom for mercy, many California Democrats are doubling down.

Aubrey Rodriguez (he/they), a former legislative director with State Sen. Catherine Blakespear, and a legislative advocate for the state ACLU, claimed [that he would feel](#) comfortable living next door to a rapist. "We believe people have the capacity to change, and that we don't want to sentence them for the rest of their lives for a mistake that they committed in the past."

Kim Su, of Uncommon Law, a pro-crime group backed by the Obama Foundation that represents some of the criminals being set loose, suggested that victims, some of whom had been sexually abused as children, were just suffering from irrational "stranger danger".

Even while victims have to go it alone, pro-crime groups like Uncommon Law are backed by millions in funding from radical groups and taxpayers.

Uncommon Law received a \$3 million grant from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development. Gov. Newsom has not been able to answer what exactly freeing sex predators and other criminals to commit more crimes has to do with business development.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, whose eyes are on the 2028 presidential election, has been careful to skirt parole approvals for truly controversial cases like the RFK assassin, and Frederick Woods, the millionaire kidnapper who buried a bus full of kids under the earth and had Newsom's father lobby for him, but set loose David Weidert, who forced a developmentally disabled man to dig his own grave, beat him with a shovel, stabbed him with a knife, choked him with a telephone wire and then buried him alive. And he may play a game of blocking parole for individual child predators if the protests are loud enough, but it was his signature that enabled all of this.

A 50-year-old child rapist is not an "elder" and the only reason that the monsters sentenced to over a century in prison are being tracked for parole is Newsom's signature on a bill.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, like other California politicians, including Rep. Ro Khanna, have tried to exploit the Epstein case, but California Democrats have paved the way for the release of abusers who make Epstein look like Mother Teresa, monsters who abused little girls and boys, who used knives and weapons, who made them bleed and locked up victims for years.

Newsom has a lot to say about Epstein, but the Clinton-linked sex predator was 66-years-old at the time of his death and 54-years-old during his original arrest. Under Newsom's law, California would not have considered him a dangerous predator to be locked away for life in prison, but an "elder".

*[Daniel Greenfield](#) is a [Shillman Journalism Fellow](#) at the [David Horowitz Freedom Center](#). This article previously appeared at the [Center's Front Page Magazine](#).*

<https://bkdvk-zgpvh.campaign-view.com/ua/viewinbrowser>



BS"D

## STEP BY STEP

STEP BY STEP: Good news is that many friends and supporters of Lev U'Neshama (Heart and Soul) donated towards the Education Fund project to provide basic school supplies for actually 350 children within our Lev U'Neshama families.

We are grateful that the school supply part of our effort has been successful.

According to the Israel Population and Statistics office, Tzfat's population is about 40,000, and one third live at the poverty level. We do what we can so at least the children within our struggling LUN families can get the things they need.

Every week we are providing new sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses to the children on our request list. However, previous donations are rapidly dwindling. I am reaching out now before the fund has been emptied and we will have to say "no" to additional requests.

We work with two local shoe merchants who give Lev U'Neshama a discount but they advised us the cost of the shoes has increased. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount but his cost is stable.

Lev U'Neshama is an Israeli registered non-profit charity organization, volunteer run, no business expenses whatsoever and every \$ goes into our programs.

Shoes: \$45 per pair regular and \$60 for First Steps, baby shoes.

Eye Exam/Eyeglasses: \$60 per child.

Your support is urgently requested.

Or use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at [mortsmo@aol.com](mailto:mortsmo@aol.com) for bank information.

US Donors may also send checks made payable to

Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer. Send to:

Rabbi Simcha Smolensky, 6739 N Mozart St Chicago IL 60645

**Your support will be appreciated.**

Yaffa Smolensky