

# Week of March 2 Cable News Ratings: Middle East Conflict Fuels Viewership

This is TVNewser's basic cable network ranker and cable news report for the week of March 2, 2026.

The ongoing unrest and fallout in the Middle East are driving viewers to cable news networks. However, as the conflict extends, viewership has cooled off across all three networks compared to the start of military action, recording declines in total viewers and the Adults 25-54 demo during primetime and total day.

Despite bringing in more than double the total viewership of competitors, Fox News suffered the steepest week-to-week drop of all, down double digits in both measured categories during both dayparts.

## NETWORKS:

According to Nielsen big data + panel for the week of March 2, Fox News averaged 3.113 million total viewers and 362,000 A25-54 viewers during primetime. The network was down -21% in total viewers and -25% in the demo compared to the week prior (the week beginning February 23).

During total day viewing, Fox News averaged 2.042 million total viewers and 220,000 A25-54 viewers. Based on its average from the previous week's measurements, the network declined by -10% in total viewers and -15% in the demo.

Fox News ranked first in total primetime viewership and second in demo viewership among all basic cable networks. In total

day, it finished in first place in total viewers and dropped to second place in the total day demo.

MS NOW averaged 1.354 million total viewers and 160,000 viewers in the A25-54 demo for the week that just concluded. The network fell by -5% in total viewers and -4% in the demo compared to its average the week prior during primetime.

During total day, MS NOW averaged 796,000 total viewers and 91,000 demo viewers. It was down -6% in total viewers and -4% in the demo compared to the network's average the week prior.

Among all basic cable networks, MS NOW was in second place in total primetime viewers and remained in sixth place in the demo. It also remained at No. 2 in total viewers and at No. 6 in the total day demo.

CNN averaged 1.046 million total primetime viewers and 220,000 A25-54 viewers during primetime for the week of March 2. The network was down by -4% in viewers and -8% in the demo compared to the previous week.

During total day, the network had 724,000 total viewers and 135,000 viewers in the demo. CNN slid by -1% in total viewers and in the demo during this daypart.

Among all cable networks, CNN was stuck in fourth place in total viewers and dropped from third to fourth in the demo during primetime. It continued to hold the No. 3 spot in total day among total viewers and was also in third place in the demo.

When looking at these networks' performance during the same period a year ago:

- During primetime, Fox News was down by -21% in total viewers and -34% in the A25-54 demo. During total day, the network posted declines of -3% in total viewers and -21% in the demo—it was the only network to post year-

to-year declines within this comparison.

- MS NOW was up +15% in total viewers and +43% in the demo. During total day, the network was also up +23% in total viewers and +47% in the demo.
- In primetime, CNN grew by +46% in total viewers and +32% in the demo. During total day, it rose by +54% in total viewers and +55% in the demo.

## PROGRAMMING:

Fox News had 14 out of the 15 spots of the most-watched cable news shows of the week, with The Five on top with 4.519 million total viewers at 5 p.m. ET. MS NOW was represented in the chart by The Rachel Maddow Show, airing only on Mondays at 9 p.m. ET, which ranked ninth with 2.633 million total viewers.

**Jesse Watters** Primetime, which airs weeknights at 8 p.m. ET on Fox News, remained the most-watched program in the Adults 25-54 demo, averaging 454,000 viewers. Fox News held 11 of the 15 top spots in the demo, with MS NOW's The **Rachel Maddow** Show, airing only on Mondays at 9 p.m. ET, finishing in fourth place with 395,000 demo viewers. CNN had three shows in the chart. It was led by The Source with **Kaitlan Collins**, weeknights at 9 p.m., finishing in the No. 11 position with 261,000 demo viewers.

**March 2, 2026**

## Prime Time

|                  | Fox News         | MS NOW    | CNN       |
|------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| • Total Viewers: | <b>3,113,000</b> | 1,354,000 | 1,046,000 |
| • A25-54:        | <b>362,000</b>   | 160,000   | 220,000   |

## Total Day

|                  | Fox News         | MS NOW  | CNN     |
|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| • Total Viewers: | <b>2,042,000</b> | 796,000 | 724,000 |

|           |                |        |         |
|-----------|----------------|--------|---------|
| • A25-54: | <b>220,000</b> | 91,000 | 135,000 |
|-----------|----------------|--------|---------|

Week 3-2-26 Cable Ranker P25-54 BDP by Adweek

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